
The Service Line

Volleyball News from the MSU SideOut Club
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New Coaching Staff Is Off and Running!

New Spartan Head Volleyball Coach Cathy George and her coaching staff are settled in at Jenison and have a lot of exciting new ideas for the program.

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Cathy's letter to SideOut Club members (on page 6) outlines some of her plans and we can expect many more exciting announcements in the months ahead.

Cathy brings both enthusiasm and a wealth of experience to her new position. Her 367-216 career coaching record ranks her among the top 50 for wins in collegiate volleyball history. In all three of the stops in her 18 years as a collegiate head coach she has earned conference coach of the year honors. She has spent the past 11 years as the head coach of Western Michigan, where she compiled a 187-131 record and led the Broncos to the MAC Championship in 2000.

Prior to that she spent five years at head coach of Texas-Arlington, where she won three conference championships – and in 1989 became the first woman to coach in the NCAA Division I Final Four! She began her head coaching career with two seasons at North Dakota State, where she compiled an 87-11 record, won two conference championships, and two selections as conference and regional Coach of the Year. She was named the NCAA Division II National Coach of the Year after guiding the Bison to a third-place national finish in 1988.

Cathy George's teams have been just as successful in other areas. In her eleven years at Western, the volleyball team has had a 100% graduation rate and maintained a GPA of over 3.0. In 2003-04 the Broncos received the national AVCA Team Academic Award with a cumulative team GPA of 3.30.

Western also led the MAC in total attendance in eight of her 11 seasons.

Cathy is a 1985 graduate of Illinois State, where she served as team captain and helped the Redbirds win three consecutive Missouri Valley titles. She also holds a master's degree in education from Central Michigan in 1987. Cathy and her husband Jerry have two sons, T.J., 12, and Conner, 7.

Accompanying Cathy George to East Lansing are her two assistants at WMU, **Russ Carney** and **Ron Arenz**. Russ Carney spent the last 11 years as her lead assistant, with duties that included recruiting, scouting and video work. Before that, he coached Kellogg Community College in Battle Creek to the National Junior College Athletic Association National Championship in 1980 and served as head coach of Wisconsin from 1982 until 1985. Russ also led the men's East squad to the gold medal at the 1981 U.S. Olympic Festival. He holds a bachelor's degree in physical education from Ball State University. Russ and his wife, Sherry, have a daughter, Jessica, 16, and a son, Branden, 12, and will reside in Battle Creek, Mich.

Ron Arenz has coached at Western for the past three years, where his duties have included team defense, statistics management, assisting with recruiting, and helping out with team travel, summer camps and daily administration. He also has coached at such clubs as the California Juniors Volleyball Club, the Colorado Foothills Volleyball Club Kalamazoo's Dead Frog Volleyball Club. Ron holds a bachelor's degree from Long Beach State and a master's in education from National University.

Also joining the Spartan staff will be **Zakiya Pope** as the Director of Volleyball Operations. Zakiya is a graduate of East Lansing High School and Western Michigan who played as a middle blocker for Cathy George's 2000 MAC champions. She was the MAC Player of the Year that season and a two-time all-conference selection. Zakiya is now pursuing a master's degree in public relations at Michigan State.

The team began spring practice on March 3 and will be playing a challenging series of spring tournaments that will pit them against such powers as Hawaii, USC and Wisconsin. The only opportunity for MSU fans to watch the team play at Jenison will occur on April 9. The Spartans will take on Bowling Green at 4 p.m. followed by a reception and meal afterward where fans will have a chance to talk to the coaches and players and wish Marley Bellwood a happy birthday. Don't miss it!

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Chuck Erbe – Tribute to a Legend

by Jenny Bond, SOC President



Chuck Erbe announced his retirement on December 2 after twelve seasons as Michigan State volleyball head coach. He leaves behind a legacy of accomplishments so long and impressive that it hardly seems possible that they all belong to one man. He also leaves behind many loyal and supportive SideOut Club members, former players and assistants.

When Chuck was hired as head coach in 1993, he brought extraordinary credentials that included national championships on three different levels. He began his coaching career in 1973 by leading Marina High School of Huntington Beach, California, to a perfect 20-0 record and the National High School Volleyball Championship. He then led the United States to back-to-back titles in the Pacific Rim Junior Championships in 1975 and 1976, highlighted by the first-ever victory by a USA volleyball squad over Japan at any level of competition.

He became a college head coach with the University of Southern California in 1976 and never missed a beat. He led the Trojans to AIAW National Championships in 1976, 1977 and 1980, and to the NCAA National Championship in 1981, the first year that the NCAA sanctioned women's competitions. Chuck's 1977 team, which compiled a perfect 38-0 record and included six All-Americans, is still widely considered to be the best collegiate volleyball team ever assembled.

Nonetheless, when Chuck arrived in East Lansing and boldly predicted a Big Ten championship there were many doubters. Not the least of them were the fans who had watched the Spartans go 3-37 over the previous two Big Ten campaigns and thought he was crazy. But Chuck delivered on his promise and did so faster than anyone imagined possible. We all became crazy – about MSU volleyball!

In his second season, the Spartans reached the NCAA Tournament for the first time in school history. The following year, MSU captured the Big Ten title with a 19-1 conference mark and made a stirring comeback in front of 7 MSU and 10,000 hostile fans in Hawaii to reach the Final Four. Another Big Ten title followed in 1996, and the program maintained a standard of excellence that resulted in ten straight NCAA Tournament appearances from 1994 though 2003.

His peers have honored him with such awards as Big Ten Coach of the Year, AVCA National Coach of the Year and Volleyball Magazine National Coach of the Year. Indeed a whole issue could be spent recapping Chuck's many triumphs on the court, but they should not overshadow his even more important legacy: his accomplishments off the court. The SideOut Club itself, which Chuck started from scratch, is one element of that legacy. He started Coach's Luncheons and had a weekly television show. He brought Tim Berkey to Jenison as an announcer and John Kreger to radio and the Internet as the voice of the Spartans. He raised many, many dollars for team trips to Japan and to Europe. He dreamed of a classy locker room and loyal fans responded to his request to support the lockers and other equipment for it. Fans also responded in late 2004 when he was fundraising for the new wooden court, which will be in place for the 2005 season.

Chuck mentored many young assistant coaches, including several who are now in head coaching positions and Todd Dagenais, who is with the National Team. When Todd, who was then the Associate Head Coach, had the opportunity to work with the national team, Chuck encouraged him. He explained that it was one of those opportunities of a lifetime for Todd.

—cont on page 4

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Much More Than a Coach

By Courtney DeBolt, Captain of the 1995 Spartans

Chuck is the toughest coach I have ever played for physically, mentally and emotionally. For 4 years, I was definitely on the craziest roller coaster ever created! He pushed me to reach past my potential and developed me into a leader. Through his coaching and training, he showed me the formula it takes to become a champion: diligence, focus, hardships, commitment, desire, success and failure. Chuck helped me build an inner strength and determination that inspired me as a player and now as a coach to never quit no matter how difficult it may get and to go after the goals that lie within my heart. After 13 years, I can still count on Chuck for guidance in my coaching career as well as in life! Chuck prepared me for dealing with the everyday challenges in society and as a result, I have the perseverance to knock down anything that stands in my way and the confidence to succeed. I am truly grateful to have had the incredible volleyball experience as a Spartan and thank you, Chuck, for taking us on one of the greatest roller coaster rides of my life!

Spartan Profile: Marley Bellwood

It's tempting when watching a gifted athlete perform to assume that everything must have come very easily for him or her. Senior libero Marley Bellwood is a classic example of how wrong such preconceived notions can be.



Photo: Al and Renee Schmitzer

Marley seems so much in her element at Jenison – instinctively positioning herself for a big dig, using her cat-quick reflexes to scrape up a short ball, hustling far and wide to track down an errant ball – that it's hard to believe that there was ever any doubt that she would play volleyball for Michigan State. That conclusion seems all the more reasonable since Marley's only sibling, Tracy, also patrols the Spartans' back court, after both starred for the Spartans of Battle Creek Lakeview High. And yet Marley's path to East Lansing was anything but straightforward.

To begin with, Marley grew up as (horrors!) a University of Michigan fan. While Tracy cheered for the Green and White, Marley's best friend came from a family of U of M alumni and they swayed her. She even wore a maize-and-blue shirt when Tom and Brooke Bellwood took their daughters to a Spartan volleyball match at Jenison – though Marley did end up buying an MSU shirt! Her allegiance finally changed for good in high school when she visited both universities and felt out of place in Ann Arbor but immediately at home in East Lansing. She now realizes that the nickname of her high school team was fitting and she proudly describes herself as "a Spartan forever."

Another challenge was settling on a sport. Soccer was Marley's primary sport at Lakeview and she won four varsity letters and was a three-time all-state selection. She also earned three letters apiece in basketball and volleyball, but why would a 5'8" girl choose to focus on sports that emphasize height? Yet Marley Bellwood has never been one to be limited by preconceptions, and she finally chose to play volleyball at MSU over the many schools that wanted her to play soccer.

Marley's path to Michigan State was also impeded by a far more serious problem. As a young girl, she would sometimes complain to her mother, "My heart hurts." Her mother at first assumed that it must be her stomach, but when they went to a doctor, Marley was diagnosed with sinus tachycardia and a prolapsed mitral valve. Essentially, a defect in the nerve surrounding her heart meant that, from time to time, her heartbeat would accelerate to four times its normal rate.

As she grew older, her heart muscles weakened and when she was 16, her cardiologist recommended surgery. She was bedridden for a week and had to watch from a wheelchair as her high school baseball team competed for the state championship. She was allowed to participate in sports again, but during her sophomore year at MSU, she began to experience the same symptoms. Marley underwent heart surgery for the second time last July 27 and was in the starting lineup when the Spartans started their season five weeks later. She still occasionally feels her heart racing, but courageously doesn't look at it as an impediment to playing volleyball.

Having overcome so many barriers to play volleyball for Michigan State, Marley Bellwood is very appreciative of the opportunity she has. When asked about the time constraints that student-athletes face, she looks on the bright side by saying that they force you to become more disciplined and grow up faster. She admits that there are times she wishes for a day off – but is quick to add that every time she has one, she finds herself itching to get back on the volleyball court. It is small wonder that teammate Brooke Langston says that Marley is "one of those people who reminds you of why we do what we do ... cause we love it!"

The 2004 season saw Marley's dedication pay off with a record-setting performance. Her 4.29 digs per game shattered the previous school record of 3.68, which had been set by Jill Krumm in 1989. She improved as the season went along, posting a sterling 4.48 digs per game in Big Ten conference play. She also broke or tied her previous single-game best digs total no fewer than seven times, highlighted by 27 in the Spartans' upset of Illinois.

Marley is a student-athlete in the true sense of the word because she brings the same characteristics that enable her to excel on the volleyball court to her work in the classroom. She is majoring in Apparel and Textile Design in the College of Human Environment and is on track to graduate in the spring of 2006. She is looking forward to a career as a fashion designer or fashion illustrator. One of the aspects about a career in fashion that intrigues her is that she sees clothing as not just "what you wear on your body, but an expression of your personality." The more she learns about



her chosen field, the more she becomes aware that there is no limit to what a good designer can dream up – if he or she has talented people to help make it a reality.—cont on p. 7.

Photo: Al and Renee Schmitzer

Year of the Freshman

The 2004 season saw the Big Ten solidify its status as one of the nation's elite volleyball conferences, with three schools reaching the final eight of the NCAA tournament. Not only that, but the emergence of arguably the best class of freshmen in conference history means that the future is still brighter.

Maggie Griffin of the Spartans was chosen to the conference's All-Freshman team along with Jen Hynds of Illinois, Katie Bruzdinski of Michigan, Ami Stevens of Ohio State, Kate Price of Penn State and Jackie Simpson of Wisconsin. Maggie's selection was an especially impressive accomplishment in light of the stiff competition.

The season-ending statistics saw freshmen place among the Big Ten leaders in every category. Melissa Walbridge of Penn State was second in hitting percentage while Taylor Reineke of Wisconsin ranked seventh, but neither made the team. Three freshmen – Griffin, Simpson and Stephanie Obermeier of Illinois – finished in the top six in assists per game. Bruzdinski tied with MSU's Kim Schram for the conference leadership in aces per game, while two other freshmen, Stevens and Indiana's Christine Nilles, also ranked among the top ten. An amazing four freshmen placed in the top five in blocks – Walbridge, Hynds, Lyndsay Miller of Michigan and Reineke. And yet another freshman, Wisconsin's Jocelyn Wack, finished fourth in the conference in both digs and digs per game.

With so many standouts, the Big Ten All-Freshman team would have needed to be two or three times as big to honor all the worthy newcomers. In any other year, two other Spartans would have received serious consideration – Meghan Schoen (who became the first MSU freshman since Val Sterk to lead the team in hitting percentage) and Katie Johnson (who placed second on the team in kills). As it was, being selected in the Year of the Freshman is all the more of a noteworthy honor for Maggie Griffin.

Banquet Recap

The season-ending banquet at Hawk Hollow on November 28 gave fans a chance to bid farewell to the 2004 Spartans and honor three graduating seniors – Michaela Kopka, Kim Schram, and Diana Steplyk. Each member of the trio also picked up a major award. Michaela received the Top Grade-Point Average Award for the third straight season, becoming the second three-time winner in school history. Kim was selected as the team's most valuable player as well as being a unanimous first-team All-Big Ten choice, an AVCA all-region choice and an honorable mention All-American. Diana took home the Andrea DeLuca Spirit Award, which is given to the member of the squad who puts the team before personal gain. All three seniors were chosen to the Academic All-Big Ten team for the third straight season, and were joined on the team by teammates Brooke Langston, Mickey Davis and Miken Trogon.

Many other Spartans also took home well-deserved awards. Brooke Langston and Megan Wallin received the Captains' Award for their service as team captains this year. Meghan Schoen became the first freshman since Val Sterk to earn the Hitting Efficiency Award. Maggie Griffin was selected to the Big Ten All-Freshman team and also received the team Sportsmanship Award. Cathy Caswell took home the SideOut Club's Service Award.

As always, the senior speeches were the most anticipated element of the banquet. Michaela, Kim and Diana gave gracious speeches in which they reflected touchingly on their four years as Spartan volleyball players and thanked the many people who had provided support. They will be missed but never forgotten!

Chuck Erbe—cont from page 2

But the achievement that Chuck Erbe has always been proudest of is his role in helping young women to maximize their potential. His success at doing that on the court has led to twenty-two different players receiving All-Big Ten honors and six All-American selections. Chuck put just as great an emphasis on realizing one's academic potential, an approach that has yielded 73 Academic All-Big Ten recipients since 1987, eleven different players being selected to the CoSIDA Academic All-District team and three Academic All-Americans.

At the banquet that culminated each season, MSU volleyball fans got a glimpse of what mattered most to Chuck Erbe. First came Becky, the first lady of volleyball, a favorite of the fans and a huge asset to the program. Second was his team. At the banquet each member of his senior class would stand up and offer her heartfelt reflections on her years as a Spartan. Then Chuck would speak about how gratifying it had been to watch each of them mature into thoughtful, poised adults. Those young women, who have represented Michigan State with such grace and dignity and who will continue to do so wherever they go, will always be Chuck's greatest legacy.

Chuck, thank you for developing a competitive program – one with real class. The Board and fans found it easy to support you because we recognized your high professional standards and ethics. Thanks for the time you gave to SideOut Club members. We shall miss the coach's luncheons with your philosophical as well as your technical discussions. Best wishes to you and Becky. You both have a special place in our hearts and thoughts. Thanks for so many very special memories!

Academic Progress Rate

Beginning next year, the NCAA will be grading programs on their Academic Progress Rate (APR) and will penalize schools with poor rates with the loss of scholarships. This year, the NCAA released the rates of programs on an informational basis only. It will come as no surprise to anyone familiar with Chuck Erbe's emphasis on academics that the MSU Volleyball program was one of five Big Ten schools with a perfect 1000 score, meaning that every student-athlete in every semester measured was on track to graduate.

President's Message

By SOC President Jenny Bond

Happy Spring, SOC members! I know it is spring because the calendar says it is and because April 9 is the first time we will see the "Spring VB team." I hope you will come to this event, as it will be the first chance for many of you to meet Cathy George, the new coach. And it has been months since the SOC "family" has been together.

The year-end banquet was successful. We are very grateful to the volunteers who attended to all of the details, which enabled us to end up in the black financially. Thanks to all of you who attended, sponsored team members and/or Court Crew. We were especially pleased that the SOC could present Chuck Erbe with a check for \$8,000 for the volleyball program, specifically for a new wooden court. A highlight of the banquet was the fantastic speech by Diana Steplyk. My husband, who does not tend to exaggerate, was most impressed. He commented that this would not be the last time we heard from Di. We fully expect that she will someday be a media personality, president of a major company or perhaps in Congress. She represented the outstanding young women we have been privileged to support, cheer for and come to know as friends on Chuck's teams. I just cannot imagine how proud her parents must have been of her performance.

Volleyball fans, especially those who were at the banquet the previous weekend, were surprised to learn of Chuck's unexpected and sudden retirement and the quick replacement of the position. He has contributed so much to the Michigan State Volleyball program, as discussed in the tribute elsewhere in this newsletter. If you have not already done so, I suggest that you send him a thank you note (4285 Tacoma Blvd, Okemos, MI 48864). The Board is discussing how we will formally honor him later.

Cathy George, the new coach, is someone for whom Chuck has much respect. We anticipate that Cathy will bring much to MSU and will continue the excellent program that Chuck built from the ground (some might even say the sub-basement, given the state of the program, facilities and fan base when he arrived). The SOC Board met with her recently in a "strategic" planning session. We discussed future activities, which we will share with the full membership as they develop. Stay tuned in – which means to be sure that you renew your membership for next year when the call for renewals is made later.

I need your opinion on two ideas the club is considering – you can email me at jbond@msu.edu or phone me at 517-676-2676. You can also talk with any Board Member at the April 9 event. First, would you be interested in a "chalk talk" by Coach George before the home matches? It probably would start about 60 minutes before the match and would be some place in Jenison. We are thinking of alternating these talks with the traditional coach's luncheons we have had in the past. Second, if the SOC gets approval for using portable seats with backs in the bleachers, would you be interested in renting one for a match? This idea is in the embryonic stage. When we were at Nebraska, many fans rented seats; this is a major fundraiser for their booster club.

We are always interested in ideas and comments from our members. Do not hesitate to share them with us. There is increased interest in and support for women's teams as a result of the success of the basketball team. We need to capitalize on this to bring more people to Jenison. We need your help!

Thanks for your continued support of the SideOut Club. Get your volleyball gear out for April 9!

Go State! Jenny Bond

Ed Tolentino

by Diana Steplyk

At the beginning of the 2004 volleyball season, the MSU athletics administration was in a very tough position to find a replacement who could adequately fill the vacancy left by former Assistant Coach Todd Dagenais, when he decided to pursue his dream of coaching the US National Team in Colorado Springs, Colorado. However, Ed Tolentino was the perfect fit for what this program needed, and I don't think anyone could have done a better job than Ed. They found the perfect coach to balance the coaching staff, bring a new energy and vitality to the team, and add more knowledge about skills and strategy to our team.

I saw a lot of myself in Ed, whose office door was always open if anyone ever needed to talk. His outgoing personality, his contagious energy and enthusiasm, and his intensity and willingness to do anything that anyone ever asked him to do were just a few of the qualities I admired in him. He was always the first one off the bench to congratulate someone on a great play, but also the first one to offer to work individually with you if

you were struggling with a part of your game. I am proud to say that Ed was my coach and a part of my career here at State. He will always have a special place in all of our hearts, and I wish him the best of luck in all of his endeavors!

Alumni News and Notes

Kelly Penney attended Michigan State's match at Northwestern in November and brought her fiancé along because she wanted him to understand why MSU volleyball had been such a big part of her life. Kelly works as an account manager for CDW-G in Vernon Hills, IL.

Kayleen Cook is the volleyball coach at DeWitt High School and recently led the Panthers to the district championship in the state volleyball tournament.

Nikki Colson married Corey Harrington in a beautiful ceremony in her hometown of Lincoln, Nebraska, on December 30. Many former teammates attended the ceremony, including Stephanie Knopp, Sara Villwock, Emmy Miller, Kyla Smith and Emily Engel. Nikki and Corey have settled in Omaha.

A Tribute to Daune Rensing

by Jennifer Rood

I should like to say thanks to all the wonderful coaches I've had the privilege of being coached under at MSU – Chuck Erbe, Todd Dagenais, Laura Abbinante, Daune Rensing, Tim Wakeham, and Lianna Hadden. Although the MSU volleyball program is approaching a season of exciting new beginnings, I believe it is important to recognize, remember, and honor these coaches and staff members for their achievements, contributions, and sacrifices toward building the program into the respected, reputable program it is today. Each individual has in their own special way made a lasting impact not only on the program, but also in the lives of players who have competed for Michigan State over the years.

Although I wish I could take the time to adorn them all with the compliments they deserve, I only have a couple of paragraphs, hahaha. Regardless, I would still love to take the chance to say goodbye to a coach who I consider myself truly blessed to have known and trained under – Mrs. Daune Rensing.

Daune, you are truly an amazing woman. As I sit back and think of the outstanding contributions you've made to this team and program, I truly am amazed. I remember the first day you came to MSU to meet the team – who would have thought that lady dressed up in a skirt and scholarly glasses could pack such heat behind a volleyball? But you could Daune, and you did. Day after day in practice, you drilled us. Day after day, you challenged us that we could be better. I still remember "Defense with Daune." You would teach us new Chinese defensive drills and passing form techniques you learned at Georgetown. You would teach us ... then you would place that ball an extra inch outside our comfort zone ... stretching us ... challenging us. When we conquered that extra inch and got the ball up, you were the first to let out a shout of praise ... then stretch us another inch. And we loved you for it. For all of you folks out there curious to know more, Daune brought a whole lot of strength and kick-butt attitude to the coaching staff at MSU. Daune, it was here where the team related to you the most: you led your team to a conference title and you were an All-American at Maryland. You knew what it took to be the best because you'd been there.

On game night, fans and parents alike could see Daune coaching from the sidelines. People wandering through the Jenison Field House around 3:30 pm might even get a glimpse of her drilling Spartan players on defense in practice. However, very seldom do people see or hear about the extra hours invested when the Spartan theme song is not blaring from Jenison. I cannot count the hours this woman spent with me – before practice, after practice ... sometimes even on her lunch break! – to work with me on fixing my arm swing. The spring when she first arrived on staff, she would come in early (6:00 in the morning early!) while the setters were training with Chuck and work with me on arm swing and footwork drills. Just ask Marley Bellwood how many hours Daune spent serving balls at her before practice. Ask Katie Johnson how Daune would come in early and work with her on her shot-making. She always made herself available.

Cathy's Corner

by Head Coach Cathy George

It is a great honor and privilege to be named the Head Volleyball Coach at MSU and to succeed such a fine coach in Chuck Erbe. Chuck and Becky have long been friends of ours and we have always respected the class, knowledge and integrity that have long been associated with MSU Volleyball. It was exciting to hear that Chuck has decided to help out USA Volleyball in their development programs and I am sure he will be an invaluable asset to our country. Our best wishes go out to Chuck and Becky.

Where to begin.... So much has happened in three months. Individual training sessions started almost immediately once the team returned from their holiday. Team practices began over two weeks ago and needless to say, our team is itching for some competition. On April 2nd we will be able to do just that as we compete in the Palos Courts Invitational. This is considered one of the strongest spring tournaments around.

On April 9th we return home to take on Bowling Green State University at 4 p.m. in a 3-out-of-5 match at Jenison Field House. Since we have not had a chance to meet many of our loyal alumni, boosters, and season ticket holders, we thought we would throw a reception after the match to kick things off. Please come by and introduce yourself to me and to all the coaches and players. We conclude our spring session at Purdue and at the Loyola Marymount tourney, which will feature such powerhouses as USC, Hawaii, Long Beach State and many others.

Hope you all enjoy this spring and please keep your eyes open for the exciting events that we are planning for the fall. Looking forward to meeting you all soon! GO SPARTANS!

And that's just coaching! It would be difficult to add up the number of hours this woman (along with other coaching staff members) must have spent reviewing film, editing tapes, creating scouting reports, arranging recruiting visits, contacting recruits, organizing volleyball summer camps – the list goes on and on – in their efforts to continue building the success of Michigan State's Volleyball Program. If there was an opponent's tendency, weakness, strength – Daune knew it. She was willing to contribute everything she could to give our team every chance to succeed.

Coaches like Daune Rensing don't come along every day, and her sacrifice and love for the team will forever be remembered among the players she has coached, as well as the coaches who have had the privilege of working with her. We love you, Daune! As for the other coaches I had the honor of being trained under at Michigan State – Chuck, Todd, and Laura – they are now moving on to other stages, challenges, and places in life; however, their marks will forever be engraved in the history of Michigan State Volleyball.

One last note, even though I didn't get the chance to "technically" be coached by Ed Tolentino... Ed, you rock too!

Tim Berkey

Longtime public address announcer Tim Berkey has decided to step down. His son will be a senior in high school this fall and Tim doesn't want to miss any of his events. Spartan fans will greatly miss Tim's infectious enthusiasm, his quips and his knack for saying just the right thing on the spur of the moment. It will be just as hard to replace his knowledgeable comments, which are the result of years of experience as a coach. Many Spartan fans may not be aware that Tim coached Marley Bellwood in high school.

Tim commented, "When I first put the mike on at MSU in 1995, I was scared to death because I was an outsider who literally knew nobody in Jenison except for Chuck Erbe and Val Sterk. I had never worked in a situation like that before and was worried about how I would be treated. So I am so grateful from the bottom of my heart for the warm welcome I received from the SideOut Club, the fans, the parents, the players and coaches and the University itself – which has continued for the past ten years." Tim reports that even though he had no previous connection with MSU, his classroom is now bedecked with so much Michigan State memorabilia that most of his students assume that he is an alumnus.

Marley Bellwood—cont from page 3

That emphasis on being part of a team is another way in which Marley expects that her years on the MSU Volleyball team will be of benefit in her career. As her senior year approaches, she said that she already has made memories and friendships that will last a lifetime. She recounts some of the many wonderful moments, such as Megan Wallin's ability to make her laugh, or driving around with Brooke Langston and just "screaming out girlie stuff" or receiving sweet and sour lip gloss from Andy Hansen with a full-page description of the similarities between the lip gloss and Marley. More than any single moment, what will stay with Marley is the fond recollection of a group of teammates who became so close that they are like sisters.



Photo: Al and Renee Schmitzer

Marley also credits her family with making it possible to pursue her dreams. She says that playing with her sister Tracy for the last two years has been a great blessing that has brought them still closer. Marley admits that when she was younger, she was so bound and determined and stubborn about everything that she wasn't always the easiest child to raise. But instead of trying to eliminate that stubbornness, her parents taught her how to harness that trait into what Brooke Langston calls Marley's "fire for competition." She is deeply grateful for all they have done and sacrificed to make sure that their daughters are safe and secure.

The Spartans' only home spring appearance will take place on April 9, which happens to be Marley's 22nd birthday. Make sure to turn out to cheer on Marley and her teammates and to marvel at the athletic feats that they make look so easy. But don't make the mistake of thinking that those feats are anywhere near as easy as they make them appear!

Cathy Caswell Receives the 2004 SOC Service Award

by Jenny Bond, SOC President

Cathy Caswell deservedly received the SideOut Club Service Award at the 2004 banquet. Her contributions to the club began at the first organizational meeting on March 30, 1994, and continue to this day with the annual tailgate that she facilitates. She has attended MSU volleyball matches for 25 years. In Chuck Erbe's first year, he purchased 100 T-shirts that Cathy and Chris Wolf sold at a table, while also collecting names of people who were interested in forming a booster group. Cathy was a founding board member and was responsible for getting the club registered as a non-profit organization. Through the years she has sold 50-50 tickets, worked at the merchandise table, assisted with preseason tournaments and done everything else that we have asked of her. She prefers to let others take center stage, seeking no glory for herself. In fact, I had to insist that she come to the banquet and receive the Service Award. I am not sure she would have if we had not already had her plaque engraved. It was my real pleasure to present Cathy with the award for her tremendous contributions over 10 years to the SOC and the program. Thank you, Cathy! We look forward to at least one tailgate this year – without last year's cold rain.

Although the SOC celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2004, the SOC Service Award has only been presented 7 times. This award "honors a SOC member whose volunteer efforts have been instrumental in promoting Spartan volleyball." Chris Wolf was the first recipient and a most worthy one. His contributions to the program are legend – one of the founders, secretary, newsletter editor for 9 years and many others. Andy Kurtz was recognized in 1998 for his contributions during the club's early years and for creating and maintaining the SOC website.

In 1999 Kay Schmid became the first woman to receive it based on her enthusiastic support of the volleyball program as a Board member and major contributor. When you see the volleyball banners along the road to Jenison, you have Kay to thank. Dean McCracken was recognized in 2000 for his contributions to the Board. He served as President during a critical period of the Club's history and also served on the official statistics crew.

The only posthumous award was given to Norma Guyer in 2001. In accepting it, her husband Gordon Guyer (a former President of MSU) said he most wanted to express Norma's feeling that, "These young ladies are THE class of the University." We agree with her and benefited from her support. Based in part on his service as a Board member and Treasurer, Dave Pike was honored in 2002. Dave was instrumental in starting and operating the 50/50 raffle, a major fundraiser for the club. The first player-parent to receive the award was Fran Rood in 2003. Fran sold 50/50 tickets relentlessly for two seasons and still works for the club although Jenny no longer plays. She received her own sales apron with a star and monogram in addition to a plaque, which has been given to all recipients.

The volleyball program and SOC have benefited greatly from the sustained contributions of these award recipients. Of course there are many other members whose contributions have made a difference. The Board agreed several years ago that Board members are not eligible for the Service Award during their tenure, so that it is not the Board voting for the Board. This in our opinion makes the award a true SOC member award.

TENTATIVE FALL BIG TEN SCHEDULE

Day	Date	Opponent	TV	Time	Result
Wed	09/21/2005	MICHIGAN		7:00 PM	
Fri	09/23/2005	@Indiana		7:00 PM	
Fri	09/30/2005	@Minnesota		7:00 PM	
Sat	10/01/2005	@Iowa		7:00 PM	
Fri	10/07/2005	PURDUE		7:00 PM	
Sat	10/08/2005	ILLINOIS		8:00 PM	
Fri	10/14/2005	@Ohio State		7:00 PM	
Sat	10/15/2005	@Penn State		7:00 PM	
Fri	10/21/2005	WISCONSIN		7:00 PM	
Sat	10/22/2005	NORTHWESTERN		7:00 PM	
Fri	10/28/2005	@Illinois		8:00 PM	
Sat	10/29/2005	@Purdue		7:00 PM	
Fri	11/04/2005	IOWA		7:00 PM	
Sat	11/05/2005	MINNESOTA		7:00 PM	
Wed	11/09/2005	@Michigan		7:00 PM	
Sat	11/12/2005	INDIANA		7:00 PM	
Fri	11/18/2005	@Northwestern		8:00 PM	
Sat	11/19/2005	@Wisconsin		8:00 PM	
Fri	11/25/2005	PENN STATE		7:00 PM	
Sat	11/26/2005	OHIO STATE		7:00 PM	

SPRING TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

April 2, at Palos Court, Chicago
 April 9, **HOME** at Jenison 4 pm vs. Bowling Green
 April 16, at Purdue
 April 23, at Loyola Marymount

There will be a reception following the April 9 match. Be sure to turn out to meet the coaches and players and see the new floor and configuration of Jenison!

**FALL NON-CONFERENCE MATCHES
(tentative)**

Aug 29, 6:30pm, Alumne & "Green and White" Match (free admission), at Jenison
Sept 3-4—Coca-Cola/MSU Volleyball Invitational, **HOME** at Jenison
Sept 9-10—Univ. Kansas Tournament
Sept 16-17—Univ. Miami Tournament

The tentative fall schedule can be viewed at the SideOut Club website: <http://www.msusideout.org/>

Please see the program's website, <http://msuspartans.collegesports.com/sports/w-volley/spec-rel/032805aaa.html>, for additional details.



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