



March 10

**Stephens' stagehands are among the best**

There are no awards or accolades for the hard work stagehand crews endure before, during and after big productions, but the Stephens Auditorium crew, consisting of mostly ISU students, knows it's among the fastest in the nation.

March 10

**Senate squeezes in other business around continued policy debate**

Revisions to the early tenure review policy were approved, and three other items were introduced at the March 8 Faculty Senate meeting. Discussion of proposed changes to the post-tenure review and conduct policies will continue next month.

March 10

**50 years of service ... each**

Paul Ness and John Verkade were honored for 50 years of service to Iowa State. Ness is a senior research technician with the U.S. Department of Energy's Ames Laboratory, and Verkade is a University Professor of chemistry.



50 years at Iowa State

March 10

**Council debates salary recommendation**

Professional and Scientific Council members are considering a stance on FY12 salary adjustments that would recommend salary increases despite the possibility of position cuts. The resolution, introduced at the March 3 council meeting, will be up for a vote April 7.

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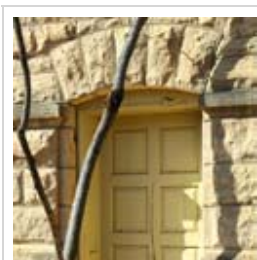
**Where's Bob?**

Do you know where university photographer Bob Elbert spotted this (former) doorway?

March 10

**Ombuds office creates online resource guide**

A new online resource for ISU employees was built with software designed for creating class resource guides.

**Announcements**

- Heed international travel warnings over spring break
- Amarasinghe will present Osborn Club lecture on March 21
- ISU alum to speak at 2011 Reiman Entrepreneurial Speaker Series
- Judges needed for science and technology fairs
- Learn about ISU's MBA program at March 23 luncheon
- Student club will tune up your lawnmower
- New accounts and process in place for campus Fed Ex users; rate discounts transfer to new accounts

**Search forums**

Executive director, ISURF/OIPTT

- Lisa Lorenzen, March 22
- Raj Aggarwal, March 23

**Arts & events***Six Characters****Six Characters* at Fisher Theater**

Ames theater buffs will get a rare look at the not oft-produced *Six Characters* when ISU Theatre brings an adaptation of it to the Fisher stage March 24-27.

**Honors & awards**

- Amy Andreotti, Scott Boyken, Drena Dobbs and Robert Jernigan
- Bruce Babcock

**Around campus**

- ISU engineer studies damage

March 10

### Section of Union Drive will close during spring break

Construction work will close a portion of Union Drive and reroute CyRide buses during spring break, beginning March 12.



Where's Bob?

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- caused by New Zealand earthquake
- Iowa's high marginal tax rates hinder labor productivity

#### Inside tools

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ISU student Laura Ellis, a construction engineering major, hustles to unload props from a semitrailer prior to the March 3 *Fiddler on the Roof* production. Ellis is part of the speedy 40-member Stephens Auditorium stagehand crew -- comprised mostly of ISU students -- that is known in theater circles for its quickness and efficiency. The crew wears many hats, from unloading equipment (like sound systems and office chairs, pictured below) to setting up lights and assisting actors with costume changes. *Photos by Bob Elbert.*

## It's a tough job, so let the stagehands handle it

by Paula Van Brocklin

Thousands of people enjoy Broadway productions, plays and concerts at Stephens Auditorium every year. But none of those events would be possible without the rotating 40-member Stephens stagehand crew, which is regarded as one of the fastest, most efficient in the nation. That's pretty significant when you consider that Iowa State students -- with their varied and demanding schedules -- make up about 75 percent of the crew.



### No Oscars for stagehands

There's no awards show or fancy certificate that recognizes outstanding stagehand crews. But the Stephens crew knows that it's one of the best in the nation because that's the word in theater circles. Plus, big shows continue to book at Stephens.

### Anatomy of a stagehand crew

From Broadway to community theater, stagehand crews typically are divided into five departments: carpenters, electricians, sound, props and wardrobe. Carpenters build the scenery; electricians run the cables and put up lights; sound crews assemble speakers and amps; the props people organize objects on stage, like tables,

As part of its many varied tasks (see sidebar), the Stephens' stagehand crew unloads up to five semitrailers before big shows, like the March 3 production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. The crew also reloads the semis after the last curtain call. Unloading -- called the load-in -- often is a full day's work that begins at 8 a.m. Reloading after the show -- called the load-out -- starts immediately after the show's final curtain, usually around 10 p.m. On average, load-out lasts about three hours.



### **The need for speed**

So what makes the Ames crew so speedy? It's a combination of things, according to Mark North, Stephens' executive director.

He credits a well-planned building design for efficient load-ins and load-outs. He said Stephens' two loading docks, which are directly behind the stage, make loading and unloading quick and smooth.

"There are some places where the semi backs up to an alley and [the stagehand crew] pushes stuff down an alley, up a ramp, into elevators and around corners. Some places are nightmares," North said. "We've got a good setup here."

He said there's a sense of pride among the crew as well. For large productions, the show usually comes with all of its necessary equipment and a road crew, which directs the Stephens crew.

"Our philosophy with shows always has been to make [the setup and tear down] as painless as possible," he said. "If the [show's people] are bored, we're happy. If they're not bored, there's a problem."

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chairs, dinner plates, etc.; and wardrobe prepares costumes and wigs (they even assist the actors with quick changes during the performances).

In addition to these responsibilities, the Stephens crew often works the night before a show, removing seats to accommodate the stage or preparing the orchestra pit for the musicians. The day of a show, the crew members perform light and sound checks. They also set up sound and lighting equipment for smaller performances. This is, of course, in addition to their load-in and load-out chores.

In addition to stage productions, the Stephens stagehand crew assists with a variety of other events, including commencement, college convocations, concerts, dance recitals and political events.

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## Senate squeezes in other business around continued policy discussions

by Erin Rosacker

Revisions to the early promotion and tenure review policy passed unanimously at the March 8 Faculty Senate meeting, but work still remains on two *Faculty Handbook* items that have generated lengthy debate since December.

The changes allow early reviews for faculty who have completed requirements for promotion and tenure. Previously, early tenure reviews were granted only with documentation of "truly exceptional accomplishments."

### Related policies

Acknowledging concerns about the relationship of the post-tenure review ([section 5.3.5](#)) and conduct ([section 7.2](#)) policies, senate president Micheal Owen submitted an extensive clarification document to senators prior to the meeting. He also illustrated the connection between the two policies with a flow chart during his remarks to the senate. Both are available on the [Faculty Senate website](#).

"We have a number of checks and balances," Owen said. "This is not an administrative decision policy. The opportunity for the faculty to weigh in on these decisions exceeds that which is described [by] the AAUP."

Senators approved two amendments during discussion of the post-tenure review policy, and then agreed to table the discussion and review the modified document prior to the April 5 meeting. Time constraints also postponed discussion of the conduct policy (unacceptable performance of duty), which was debated and amended last month.

### Other business

Three new items were introduced in the final minutes of Tuesday's meeting. The motions, which will be up for discussion and a vote at the next meeting, include:

- A requested name change for the women's studies program, to women's and gender studies
- Proposed changes to the requirements for academic program approval
- Creation of an outcomes assessment committee to review undergraduate learning and academic requirements

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## Doubling up

Paul Ness (left), a senior research technician with the U.S. Department of Energy's Ames Laboratory, and University Professor of chemistry John Verkade were honored for 50 years of service to Iowa State during the university's annual 25 (plus) Year Club celebration March 3. Employees who have worked at Iowa State for [25](#), [35](#), [45](#) and [50 years](#) were recognized. *Photo by Bob Elbert.*

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## Council debates salary recommendation

by Erin Rosacker

Although poised to push through a recommendation on salary increases for fiscal year 2012 at their March 3 meeting, members of the Professional and Scientific Council will wait until April for a decision.

"This is not an easy discussion to have," said Virgil Schmitt, chair of the compensation and benefits committee. "It looks like the best case scenario is that we will have level funding from the state. It is very likely it is going to be less as we look forward for this year, and perhaps for coming years also. Any salary increase, the money for that is probably going to be at least partially offset with a decrease in faculty or staff numbers."

"The proposed resolution recounts measures that have impacted P&S salaries in the last two years, including:

- Lack of state salary appropriation increases since FY09
- Mandatory furloughs
- Temporary reduction in university contributions to TIAA-CREF accounts
- Increase in employee health care contributions

Citing the loss of the "best and brightest," the proposed resolution recommends salary increases for employees who receive performance appraisals of satisfactory or better. Use of additional funds for performance, market, equity and retention also is recommended.

Schmitt said the committee felt that the "share the pain" sentiment of two years ago, which favored salary freezes over position cuts, has diminished.

"We recognize that anything we do might appear self-serving, because it could be at the expense of other people," said president-elect Ken Kerns. "I think it's important that we make our voice known, no matter how painful it is for us. This will affect a lot of people we work with, but also us and our families. It's not a good thing to talk about, but it's a reality that we're facing right now."

Some said the changes of the last few years no longer are temporary, and that the university already is different and continues to evolve.

"I think there is a perception out there that funding will get better in the future. Des Moines has set a precedent over the last two years, and that's probably not going to be the case. So, are we just delaying the inevitable?" said council member Dave Biedenbach.

## **In other business**

- Senators approved a motion to change the timing of elections, moving them closer to the end of the academic year. A new president-elect will be selected in March and officers will be voted on in May.
- Carla Espinoza, vice president for human resource services, said 43 employees have been approved for the phased plus retirement program (19 faculty, 13 P&S, 11 merit). The application deadline is April 30.

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## Where's Bob?

University photographer Bob Elbert found this door-like panel on the south side of Catt Hall.

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## **New ombuds resource guide built on a familiar platform**

A new online resource for Iowa State employees was built with software designed for creating class resource guides. The builders -- ombuds officer Elaine Newell and librarian Jeff Kushkowski -- think they're on to something.

"I saw a resource guide created for the College of Business and immediately thought it would be a perfect vehicle for my office to provide a variety of information about conflict resolution and other issues that people typically bring to the ombuds office," Newell said.

The ombuds office offers confidential, impartial help to employees and graduate students with problems in conflict resolution.

### **Library assist**

Kushkowski helped Newell set up the [Ombuds Office Guide](#), a useful collection of materials not only for those who visit the ombuds office, but also for those who are reluctant to take that step.

"Sometimes people are nervous about coming to talk to me," she said. "This gives them information that they can use anonymously."

The guide contains information about university resources and the bread-and-butter issue for ombuds offices -- conflict resolution. The guide links to books in the university library about conflict in the workplace, handling difficult conversations and dealing with difficult people. Future updates to the guide will provide users the ability to search for journal articles.

"One of the most interesting sections in the guide is a set of vintage videos on workplace conduct," Newell said. "Even though some of the videos are more than 50 years old, their content still is relevant for today's workplace, and they're more fun to watch."

Kushkowski said the office guide is built with the LibGuide software that ISU librarians use to create resource guides for individual classes and general subject areas.

"We currently have more than 230 guides on topics ranging from anthropology to zoology," he said. "About 60 guides each semester support specific classes."

### **New use for academic software**

Newell and Kushkowski believe their ombuds resource guide is unique.

"Many other ombuds officers around the country have resources included on their websites," Newell said. "But as far as I can tell, Iowa State is the first ombuds office to partner with the library and use this software to provide self-help information for people who are trying to deal with conflict."

"I'm always happy to work with people in a face-to-face meeting," she added, "but for those who'd rather try to work out their own conflicts, this guide may give them just what they need."

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## Section of Union Drive to close during spring break

by Erin Rosacker

Construction work will close Union Drive during spring break as crews continue work on the pedestrian skywalk between Beyer Hall and the State Gym addition. The shutdown runs Saturday, March 12, through Sunday, March 20.

The street and sidewalks will be fenced off along Beyer. The south doors of the Thielen Student Health Center will be open, but pedestrian access will be available only from the north and west. The southeast entrance to Beyer also will be accessible.

Access to the parking area near Thielen (Lot 2) is available from Sheldon Avenue. The parking area at the Union Drive Community Center (Lot 59B) is open from the east on Union Drive.

### CyRide rerouted

The road closure will impact CyRide service on the Red (No. 1), Green (No. 2) and Purple (No. 7) routes ([see map](#)). The reroutes will close all bus stops on Union between Sheldon and Bissell; the Green and Purple stops along Bissell (south of Osborn Drive); and the westbound Red stops south of Osborn on Union and Welch Road.

The westbound Red route will be redirected south along Sheldon (via Bissell to Pammel Drive) to West Street, while the eastbound Red bus will go south on Sheldon to Lincoln Way before turning north on Welch. The Purple and Green routes will be diverted from Bissell to Sheldon and Pammel.

### Eye in the sky

Get a birds-eye view of construction work at State Gym with live web cams positioned on the **north** and **south** sides of the project.

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(left to right) Jeff White (the Son), Mat Wymore (the Father), Madison Welterlen (the Stepdaughter) and Brittney Rebhuhn (the Mother) play four of the six in ISU Theatre's production of *Six Characters* March 24-27. Photo by Nancy Thompson.

## ISU Theatre takes on rarely produced play this month

by Anne Krapfl

Director Matt Foss said ISU Theatre's upcoming production, *Six Characters*, "lays bare the process of making a play work" in spite of human forces that might stand in the way; vanity, for example.

The ISU production is an adaptation (including work by Foss) of the 90-year-old play by Italian writer Luigi Pirandello. In it, a present-day theater team is rehearsing when it is interrupted by six related but undeveloped characters from a different time and place who, we learn, have been going from theater to theater for a very long time looking for someone to finish their story. In fact, in this version, the two youngest children in the family are so undeveloped they're merely costumes on hangers.

At first, the director doesn't believe the intruders, but they persist. While he's not a writer, he agrees to help them complete their story on his stage, to the dismay of his existing cast who are pulled into the process. The six characters' family story, it turns out, is one of abandonment and dysfunctionality.

Foss, who studied *Six Characters* during his Ph.D. research and has performed it, said audiences enjoy the play, but theater groups don't select it very often because "it holds theater accountable." He has been working on this adaptation for ISU Theatre for nearly a year.

"We have a whole spectrum of students who are having a lot of fun with this," he said. "They have

been so imaginative during our working rehearsals. I don't think it would matter if they were performing in the Memorial Union or Black Engineering," Foss said.

While Foss credits the cast with evolving as "a very strong ensemble," students in primary roles include seniors Mat Wymore as the Father, Madison Welterlen as the Stepdaughter and Caleb Woodley as the director; and juniors Jeff White as the Son and Brittney Rebhuhn as the Mother.

Performances on a bare-bones, curtainless Fisher Theater stage begin at 7:30 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, March 24-26, and at 2 p.m. Sunday, March 27. Tickets are \$15 (seniors \$13, students \$8) and available through [Ticketmaster](#), the Stephens ticket office or at the door.

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