

Coffee, Yoga, and a V

by Jeff Kelly

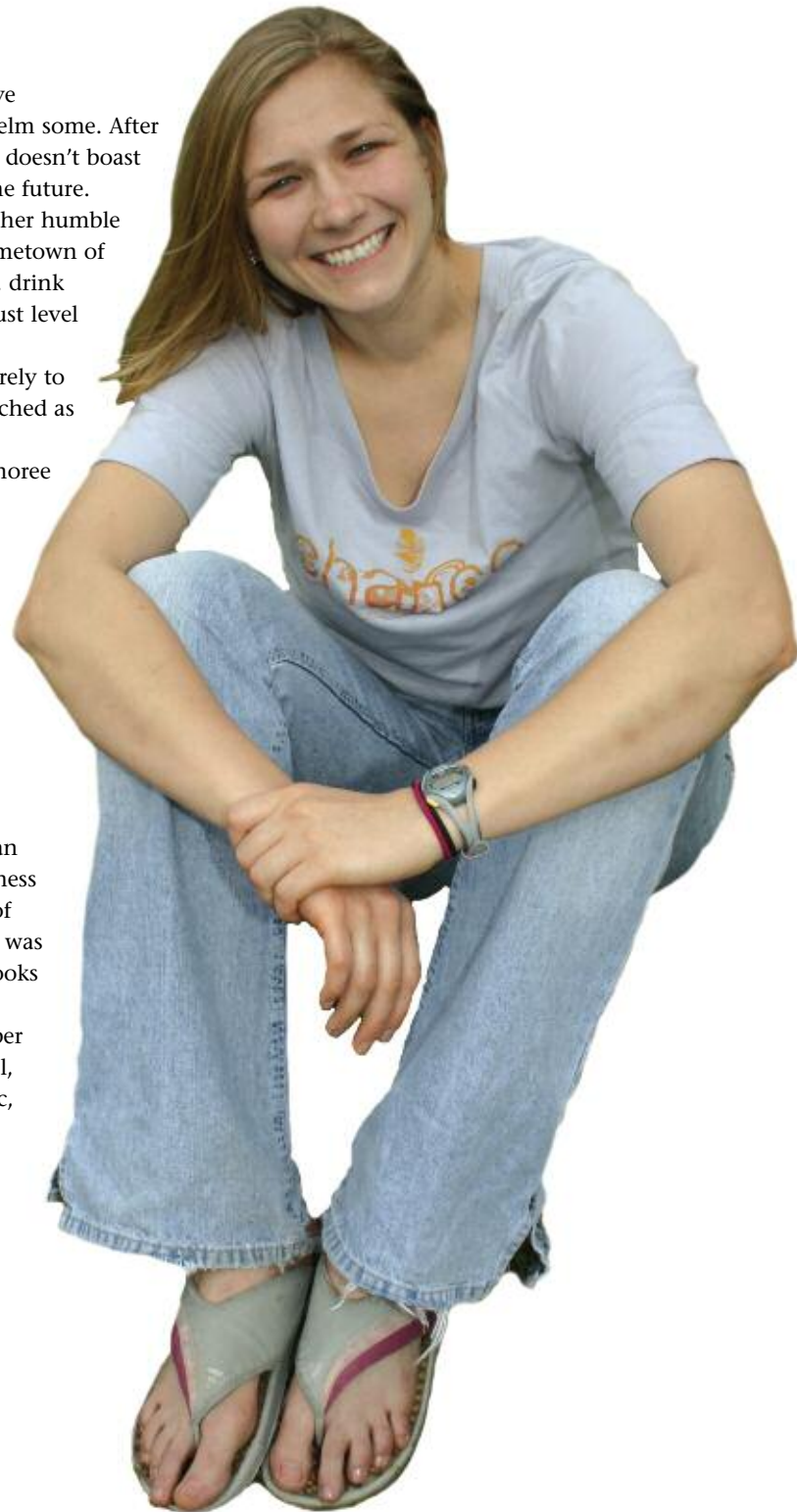
Annie Laski is a humble person. Her impressive accomplishments and activities would overwhelm some. After all, there are only 24 hours in a day. Yet Annie doesn't boast about what she's done or what she plans for the future.

Her immediate plans are simple, befitting her humble nature. After graduation she headed to her hometown of Lubbock, Texas, to spend time with her family, drink some coffee, do some yoga, and as she said, "just level out before the real world hits me."

And when it does, her ultimate goal is merely to save the world. For Annie, that is not as far-fetched as it might seem.

Annie has been a Dean's List honoree for the entirety of her Austin College career, earning a 3.97 grade point average. She has completed a Lilly internship and participated in the Posey Leadership Institute, the Mentors in Violence Program, and the Catholic Students Association. In 2005, she was named the College's Outstanding Freshman, and this spring, she earned departmental honors in political science for her thesis.

Meanwhile, she managed to play a little basketball. A four-year player for Coach **Deb Hunter**, there was no more diligent worker than Annie, spending countless hours in Dickey Fitness Pavilion and Hughey Gymnasium for benefit of her team. Playing basketball for the Kangaroos was a humbling experience for Annie. When she looks back, she said, she won't particularly recall opponents or specific games. "When I remember basketball, I remember the way it made me feel, and that is some complex mixture of joy, panic, anticipation, frustration, excitement, exhaustion, and empowerment," Annie said. "Every time I got to play in a game, I felt like one of the luckiest people on the planet."



World to Save

Annie's success on the court and in the classroom, as well her many campus involvements, might suggest she had been able to strike a perfect balance. She doesn't see it that way. "I work at extremes," Annie said. "I can't tell you how many all-nighters I've pulled, especially this year working on my thesis. Sometimes it's just a matter of ignoring normal sleeping patterns."

Though Annie continues to pile up achievements and accolades, she takes little credit for her success. Instead, she points to her support system of friends and family. "Ultimately any success I have had is because of all the people who have helped me along the way, given me second chances, adjusted their schedules to accommodate mine, or just put up with how bad I smelled when I didn't have time to shower after practice," Annie said. "If everyone were as self-absorbed in their activities and schedules as I have been, no one would ever get anything done, and that's a fact."

Extra activities and a full and demanding course load challenge any student. Annie also had to manage emotional trauma as, during Annie's sophomore year, freshman teammate **Brittany Simpson** died in a car accident mid-season and teammate **Libby Kellum '06** was severely injured in an auto accident that same year. Then last August, Annie received news that Coach Hunter had suffered a stroke. (*See update on Coach Hunter on page 37.*)

"I think anyone involved with any of those situations would tell you that none of us would have made it through alone," said Annie. "It is a trial and we all have survived together. We have leaned on each other, hugged each other, counseled each other, and understood each other merely from our collective experience. That is the only way I could have dealt with any of the major hits we've had as a team. We have been strong because we have had each other."

Given all Annie faced through academic and athletic challenges as well as emotional trials, it's easy to see why she looks forward to a summer of drinking coffee and doing yoga. Eventually she will pursue graduate school, and hopes to travel abroad. Ideally, she'd like to work with an economic development consulting group.

So, watching Annie accept her diploma as a *summa cum laude* graduate May 18, those who know her were confident that the best is still to come. After all, she's out to save the world. Or, as she said, "at least a little part of it."

"A" Association Call for Nominations:

ATHLETIC HALL OF HONOR



COACH JOE SPENCER AWARD

Austin College is accepting nominations for 2009 Athletic Hall of Honor inductees and the Coach Joe Spencer Award for Meritorious Service and Lifetime Achievement in Coaching. Nominations may be faxed to (903) 813-3196; mailed to Austin College Athletics, Attention: Sandra Miller, 900 North Grand Ave. Suite 6A, Sherman, Texas 75090; or completed online: www.austincollege.edu/Form.asp?1842.

Hall of Honor nominees should be distinguished Austin College athletes who graduated at least five years ago; possess sportsmanship, character, and integrity; and have brought distinction to themselves and Austin College. Former Austin College coaches, managers, trainers, or ardent supporters may be considered for "honorary" membership.

Nominees for the Coach Joe Spencer Award should be a coach who has had some association with Austin College and whose career evidences outstanding contribution to the coaching profession.

Nominations for 2009 awards close June 30, 2008.

Men's Basketball Team Makes SCAC Playoffs

The Kangaroo men's basketball team took a big step in its second season as a Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference (SCAC) team, also the first year under head coach **Rodney Wecker**. After going winless in the SCAC in 2006–2007, the 'Roos posted a 6-9 SCAC record, 9-16 overall, and earned a berth in the conference tournament — the first postseason appearance in the program in a decade.

Leading the way for Wecker was guard **Kola Alade '10**, who garnered Third Team All-SCAC honors after averaging 18.2 points per game, good for third best in the conference. Alade also led the 'Roos with 73 assists and 31 steals, and was among the SCAC leaders with his 81.2 percent free throw shooting.

After missing the early part of the season due to injury, **Chris Sturtevant '10** came back strong for the 'Roos and finished the year as the team's leading rebounder, grabbing 6.5 boards per contest. He proved a capable scorer as well, with an average of 14.2 points per game. Alade and Sturtevant led a stellar sophomore class that keyed the turnaround from the previous season.

That sophomore class also included **Spencer Burke**, who finished among the national leaders in blocked shots, guards **Kyle Lintelman** and **Arron Mewbourn**, and forward **Taylor Beatty**.

Lone senior **Emmanuel Nwelue** provided strong leadership, starting in 24 games and proving integral in the team's success through his tenacity on the glass and on defense. In May, he received the Robert T. Mason Sportsmanship Award, and the Sig Lawson Dedication and Commitment Award for basketball.

Adam Bishop '09 also made solid contributions to the team with some late-season heroics against Southwestern, scoring 11 straight second-half points in Austin College's win.

Southwestern and Austin College were tied in SCAC standings at season's end. Deadlocked through six potential tiebreakers, the two teams resorted to a coin toss — won by Austin College — to determine which team would go to the SCAC tournament.

Swimming and Diving Season Topped with New Records

Several new swimming and diving records were set by the Austin College teams under the direction of **Trey Sullivan** in his first coaching season at the College. The Kangaroo women finished eighth and the men came in ninth at the Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference (SCAC) Championship Meet in February.

Marjory Gibson '08, whose career included numerous record-setting performances, was fourth in the 1650 freestyle with a time of 18:15.77. Gibson shattered her own Austin College record in the 500 freestyle with a time of 5:16.17, topping her old record by more than six seconds.

Lisa Holloway '11 gave a record-breaking performance at the SCAC meet, finishing sixth in the 100 freestyle with a time of 54.82 and breaking the previous Austin College record by nearly two seconds. Earlier in the season, Holloway broke another College record when she swam the 200 backstroke in 2:20.51.

Elise Koestner '10 was honored this season, named the SCAC Diver of the Week, when she won the 1-meter board event at the Austin College Invitational, scoring 279.65. She finished seventh in 1-meter diving and sixth in 3-meter at the SCAC Championship.

The men's 400 freestyle relay team of **Clement Durand '08**, **Jesse Booher '08**, **Tayyar Unal '10**, and **Brent Burk '08** finished seventh at the SCAC Championship with a time of 3:29.00. Durand finished eighth in the 200 butterfly and Burk took 10th in the 1650 freestyle.

Lacrosse Team Earns Tournament Berth

The Austin College men's lacrosse club team earned a berth into the Lone Star Alliance Playoffs on May 3. Seeded No. 3 in the LSA B Division, the Austin College team was defeated by No. 2-seeded St. Edward's University in the tournament. The tournament was played at Texas Stadium and the team was able to see much of the stadium, dress in the visitors' locker room, and enter the field through "the tunnel" for play. This was the first playoff berth for the Austin College men's lacrosse program in its 19 years.

The Lone Star Alliance, the premier college lacrosse conference in Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma, is part of the Men's Collegiate Lacrosse Association.

Young Women's Basketball Team Begins SCAC Advance

The Kangaroo women's basketball team had a tough season, dealing with youth and a preseason blow when Coach **Deb Hunter** suffered a stroke in the offseason. Hunter, however, was on the sidelines by the season opener and the 'Roos came within one unlucky break of making the Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference (SCAC) tournament.

That unlucky break came on the final day of the season when, after defeating Southwestern to seemingly clinch a playoff spot, the team learned that an unexpected loss by Hendrix changed the standings and ended the Kangaroo season.

The 'Roos finished with an overall record of 7-18, but a 6-9 mark in SCAC play. **Katy Williams '10** led the way for Austin College, reaching milestones and earning numerous accolades along the way. In the season finale Williams pulled down 23 rebounds, the most of any SCAC player in over a decade. In that game — her 50th — Williams surpassed the 500-rebound mark, becoming the second fastest player in conference history to do so.

Williams finished the season second in the SCAC in scoring, posting an 18.7 points-per-game average, and led the conference with 11.8 rebounds per game. She was the only player to average a double-double in the conference. For her efforts, she was named Second Team All-SCAC, but was the only player from the conference to earn a spot on the D3Hoops.com First Team All-South Region squad.

A trio of sophomore guards used their strong perimeter shooting to help the 'Roos all season. **Amber Stafford**, **Maegan Fitzgerald**, and **Kayla Redden** were among the conference leaders in 3-pointers. Fitzgerald averaged 11.8 points per game and was near the top of the conference with her 61 3-pointers, while Stafford knocked down a team-best 38.4 percent of her 3-point attempts. Stafford was even better in conference play, hitting 43.5 percent.

Lone senior **Annie Laski** had her best season at Austin College, getting her first career double-double when she scored 12 points and grabbed 10 rebounds against Oglethorpe in February. She also finished second on the team in rebounding, pulling down 4.8 per game. She received the team's Hustle Award and was the female athlete with the highest grade point average, earning her the Bo Miller Scholar Athlete Award for 2008.

Deb Hunter Rebounds from Stroke

Austin College women's basketball coach **Deb Hunter** suffered a massive stroke July 14, 2007. After four hours of brain surgery, the cause of the stroke was still a mystery to doctors. Miraculously, though, within two days of the surgery Hunter was walking, and on the third day, was discharged from the hospital.

It was little surprise to those who know Hunter that by the time the basketball season rolled around, she was back on the court, prowling the sidelines for the 'Roos. Hunter coached the entire season, with the help of her father, Dick, and **Marissa Hesse '99**, one of Austin College's all-time great players who returned to Sherman to assist the coach.

Hunter is learning to deal with fatigue, medication, and blood draws as regular elements of her life. She developed a blood clotting disorder and takes medication to control it. Incredibly, her brain has completely healed itself, and a recent medical test showed no evidence of damage. "The Austin College community has been unbelievable supportive from the very beginning," Hunter said. "I have felt only encouragement and a willingness to help in any way I needed. This is a great place to be."

PHOTO BY AARON FLORES



Joy and David Simpson established The Brittany Simpson Endowed Memorial Scholarship after their daughter Brittany, an Austin College freshman, was killed in an automobile crash in 2006. In May, they presented a check for \$45,000 to Coach Deb Hunter, center, toward the scholarship. To date they have contributed more than \$150,000 to the fund that supports a master's-level student in the College's Austin Teacher Program.

Listol Is First 'Roo All-America First Team Choice

PHOTOS BY AARON FLORES



Kaitlin Listol



Justin Duncan

The Austin College volleyball program reached a new summit with the announcement of **Kaitlin Listol '08** to the NCAA Division III First Team All-America roster, earning the third highest vote in Division III from the American Volleyball Coaches Association. She had already been named Southern College Athletic Conference (SCAC) Player of the Year.

Listol, an Honorable Mention All-American in 2006 and a multiple All-Region honoree, led the 'Roos to a program-record 38 victories and the second round of the NCAA National Tournament in 2007. During that season, she twice was named SCAC Player of the Week and was the MVP at four tournaments. She ranked in the top 10 nationally in hitting percentage (.411) and in the top 15 nationally in kills per game (5.01), while setting the conference record for single-season kills and the school record for season and career kills. She also topped the school record for most digs in a career.

Listol Named Outstanding Female Athlete of the Year

In May, Listol received the Austin College Gene Day Outstanding Female Athlete Award and was selected by her teammates as volleyball's most valuable player. The Gene Day Award, named to honor long-time women's coach, the late Imogene Grinnell Day, who taught for 35 years at the College, is chosen by the coaching staff.

Listol, who completed an interdisciplinary major in mathematics and exercise and sport science with a minor in educational psychology, *cum laude*, will pursue her master's degree in teaching through the Austin Teacher Program. She will serve as graduate assistant for the College's volleyball team this fall.

Justin Duncan Named Outstanding Male Athlete of the Year

Justin Duncan '08, a four-year member of the football squad, received the 2008 Pete Cawthon Male Athlete of the Year Award, named for the football coach who led the team in the 1920s. Named First Team All-Southern Collegiate Athletic Association (SCAC), Duncan was the anchor for the football team's offensive line, which led the SCAC and was among the national leaders in rushing for the second straight season. Also a SCAC Academic Honor Roll member, Duncan was part of an offensive line unit that was named to the D3Football.com Team of the Week during the season and piled up more than 400 yards rushing on multiple occasions.

Duncan, who earned a major in music and minor in history, received a teaching assistantship from Texas Tech University, where he will pursue the Master of Music in Choral Conducting.

Tim Jubela Freshman Athletes of Year Honored

Women's volleyball player **Morgan Ballard** and football player **Chris Hickson** were selected by the coaches as the Tim Jubela Freshman Athletes of the Year. Look for information on these students in the September issue of *Austin College Magazine*.

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2008 Athletics Award Honorees