Alumni send greetings from Iraq and Kuwait

IU School of Optometry graduates go on to make a difference in the communities they serve, and some even take their services to an international level. Two such alumni are Todd Peabody and Kristian Dugger. They not only represent their profession and their school to the highest degree of excellence, but they also have undertaken the task of selflessly serving their nation in a time when their skills are needed most.

Lt. Todd Peabody, BA’99, OD’03, is the best coalition optometrist in Kuwait and the best Navy optometrist in the entire Middle East. How do we know with such absolute certainty? Well, as it turns out, Peabody told us he is the only coalition optometrist in Kuwait and the only Navy optometrist in the region.

You may be wondering, “What does a deployed optometrist do during wartime? Does he sit on the front lines repairing glasses and performing battlefield refractions?” At Expeditionary Medical Facility Kuwait, Peabody and his staff provide optometric and ophthalmologic support to any and all coalition staff members. This includes routine refractions and ordering/fitting glasses from the comfort of a well-supplied and climate-controlled optometry clinic on Camp Arifjan in central Kuwait. They also treat ocular pathology and trauma from Kuwait, Afghanistan, Iraq, and ships in the Persian Gulf. Peabody reports that over the last month, some of his more interesting cases have been a sailor from a ship in the Persian Gulf who had a four-millimeter central corneal ulcer; a soldier from southern Iraq with a traumatic iritis after being attacked by a rocket-propelled grenade; a contractor with end-stage glaucoma that had never been diagnosed; a soldier from Iraq with vision loss secondary to conversion disorder; and a soldier who arrived in the country without her spectacles. In essence, Peabody and his crew see it all. An average day consists of seeing 12–15 patients and taking two to three phone consults from providers throughout Kuwait and on ships in the Gulf: Being “the only game in town” — and on call 24/7 — Peabody stays busy.

From Peabody’s perspective, though, the practice of optometry in the desert of Kuwait is really quite similar to optometry in the United States and, according to Peabody, is “just hotter and sandier.”

From Camp Anaconda in Balad, Iraq, Maj. Kristian Dugger, BS’92, OD’94, of the Iowa Army National Guard, will be stationed in Iraq until fall 2007.

Maj. Kristian Dugger, BS’92, OD’94, sends his regards. He provides comprehensive primary care to members of the military, Department of Defense civilians, Department of Defense contractors, and local and foreign nationals. Dugger and his partner are two of only 12 ODs currently in Iraq. Dugger says of his daily work, “It is an amazing array of a patient base. Primarily, I take care of the U.S. Army soldiers, a job in which I am honored and privileged to perform.”

Dugger graduated from IU Optometry in 1994 and spent four years on active duty in the Army. He has been in practice in Nevada and Iowa since 1998 and serves in the Iowa Army National Guard. In August 2006, he was called to duty in Iraq and will be stationed there until fall 2007. Dugger and his wife, Angie, have 9-year-old twin daughters, Peyton and Sydni. “Considering the circumstances, they are doing well back home. Our faith, family, and friends are getting us through this year,” he says.

If you’re wondering how you can help support fellow colleagues deployed overseas, Peabody suggests: “The immediate and easy answer would be, ‘Send us mail, especially packages!’ But truthfully, the best way to help is to just continue to support the troops from your community and pray for their safety and security.”

The IU School of Optometry is proud to have trained such fine servicemen who now use their professional skills to help others in a perilous environment. Their service is deeply appreciated.
School welcomes alumnus Kevin Houston to faculty

Dr. Kevin Houston joined the clinic faculty at Indiana University School of Optometry in January 2007 as a specialist in low vision and vision rehabilitation. Houston received his doctor of optometry degree from the Indiana University School of Optometry in 2003 and has degrees in zoology and chemistry from Eastern Illinois University. Born in Phoenixville, Pa., and raised in Chicago, Houston is the youngest of six children.

What have you been doing since graduation from IU?

I worked in private practice at the Gottlieb Vision Group in Atlanta, a clinic internationally recognized for treatment of complex vision loss. My special interests include rehabilitation after brain injury (birth trauma, brain tumors, automobile accidents), degenerative eye conditions, congenital eye conditions, degenerative neurological conditions, and stroke.

What brought you back to IUSO and Indianapolis?

I wanted to devote more time to clinical study and collaborate with researchers. I hope to become more involved in seeing patients after brain injury.

My wife and I are from the Midwest and are returning home.

How are things going at IECC?

I have been busy working on developing contacts for both research and technology.

Several companies have been contacted to help update the digital magnifiers and bioptic telescopes to use in the clinics.

I am also working with IU adaptive technology to install software at IECC for text enlargement and reading for visually impaired, such as ZoomText and Kurzweil.

Neuro-ophthalmology and glaucoma experts have been contacted for referral cases. We have had a few neuro consults and at least one glaucoma referral for visual-field expanders already.

One of my more interesting projects involves working with a neuropsych expert in fMRI at IUPUI who is interested in studies on neuroimaging to determine the effects of prism adaptation on hemispatial inattention. I also have talked to IUSO researchers about an idea to use biofeedback to train eccentric viewing.

The Rehabilitation Hospital of Indianapolis is interested in adding vision rehabilitation to their services. I am hope-

injury and stroke at a couple neurology groups, the rehabilitation hospital, and for the voc rehab counselors.

What plans do you have for the Low Vision Clinic?

Currently, there is no place at IECC to demonstrate programs like Kurzweil, Jaws, or ZoomText for vocational rehabilitation. Brad Sutton and I have selected a room at IECC that will be an adaptive tech room. Digital magnification is the future of low vision, and it is essential that our students see and work with these technologies.

What do you do in your spare time? What are your hobbies?

I am interested in running and am currently training to do the half-marathon in Indianapolis in May. I also enjoy nature photography and hikes with my wife, Lindsey, and our dogs, Jack and Roxy.

The School of Optometry welcomes Kevin Houston, OD’03, home to IUSO — as a new faculty member.

ful that IUSO will be involved with the project for the long term. I have been asked to speak about vision rehab after brain

Dean’s report

Our faculty excel at IU and beyond

The School of Optometry faculty continue to be very productive in many ways. At the December American Academy of Optometry meeting in Denver, our faculty and students gave more than 30 presentations. We also had four of our faculty, Steve Burns, Ann Elsner, Kevin Houston, and Kim Kohne, become fellows of the academy this year, along with a number of IU graduates. It is great to see so many IU faculty and graduates as fellows and active in the academy.

Kevin Houston is the latest addition to our faculty. He is a 2003 graduate of the IU School of Optometry (see story above). He will be concentrating his efforts in the low vision and rehabilitation program in our Indianapolis Eye Care Center and at the IU Eye clinic in Carmel.

The School of Optometry was very fortunate to have received three Faculty Research Support Program awards. Ann Elsner’s project "Retinal Imaging and Function"; S.P. Srinivas’s project “Real-time Measurement of Electrical Resistance Across the Corneal Endothelial Cells”; and Bill Swanson’s project (along with Nicholas Port and Suresh Viswanathan) “Assessing Neural Structure and Function in a Model of Experimental Glaucoma” were all funded.

The total amount funded was more than $237,000.

John Ashman received a 2006 President’s Award from the Indiana University Alumni Association for his long-term excellent service to the IUAA. Ashman serves on the IUAA Executive Council as a representative of the School of Optometry and is a Hooiers for Higher Education community captain. He is past president of the Woodburn Guild, and in 1992–93, he was national chairman of the IU Alumni Association. We thank him for all he has done for the School of Optometry and Indiana University.

— Gerald Lowther

Share career advice at IUAlumniCareers.com.
1960s
Charles Comer, BS/MS’60, is an association manager and meeting planner for the National Optometric Association. He retired in August after operating his private optometry practice for 42 years. He also practiced optometry for more than three years in the U.S. Air Force. Comer lives in East Chicago, Ind., with his wife, Shirley.
Bloomington optometrist Edwin C. Marshall, BA’68, BS’70, OD’71, MS’79, was named 2006 Optometrist of the Year by the Indiana Optometric Association for his work in public health. Since 1973, Marshall has been a professor of optometry at the IU School of Optometry in Bloomington, where he is also associate dean for academic affairs and student administration. Since 1992 he has served as an adjunct professor of public health at the IU School of Medicine in Indianapolis.

1970s
Felix M. Barker II, BA’70, BS’71, OD’73, is a professor and associate dean for research and academic development at the Pennsylvania College of Optometry. His daughter, U.S. Army Captain Adrienne R. Barker, BA’02, has completed two tours of duty in Iraq. Barker serves with the 440 Signal Battalion and is stationed in Germany. She was a platoon leader in the 2003 Iraq invasion and was the deployment officer for the battalion’s recent redeployment.
James F. VanWagner, BS’71, OD’73, has an optometry practice, Down Home Optometry, in Alpena, Mich. He writes that his son is studying to become an optometrist.
Keven C. Reed, BA’73, OD’77, writes, “After practicing almost 30 years in the [U.S.] Naval service, including working on three islands a cumulative 14 years and being a hospital director of 160 employees, I am now devoting [my] energy to writing a book about the coral reefs of the Ryukyu Islands [in Japan]. I study coral taxonomy, diseases, and tropical coral ecology.” He and his wife, Kiyoko, live in Orange Park, Fla.

1980s
Since 1982, optometrist Edward T. Brajdic Jr., BS’80, OD’82, has owned a private practice in Greensburg, Pa., where he and his wife, Barb, live.

David J. Seay, BS’83, OD’87, returned to Dr. Tavel’s Family Eye Care in Indianapolis as an associate optometrist in May. He had worked with Dr. Tavel’s from January 2001 through November 2004. During his hiatus from Dr. Tavel’s, Seay worked at Dixie Vision Center in Louisville, Ky.

1990s
Lisa L. Stafford, BS’94, OD’96, has a private optometrist practice in Frankfort, Ind. Her husband, Thomas W. Adams, BA’93, is the founder and president of Epic Eyewear, which deals exclusively with private-practice optometrists. They live in Lebanon with their daughter, Samantha Grace Adams. Tom can be reached at tadams@epiceyewear.com.
Jill P. Buck, OD’99, is an optometrist in Greenwood, Ind.

2000s
Angela Tsai, BS’04, OD’06, is an associate optometrist for a three-doctor private practice in Fredericksburg, Va. She performs general practice and specialty work in ocular disease and pediatrics.
Jana L. Bertke, OD’04, and Thomas Tsai, OD’04, married on Sept. 23, in Huntington, Ind. They each have a private optometry practice in Virginia — Jana in Fredericksburg and Thomas in Dumfries. Jana can be reached at jlynnod@aol.com. The couple lives in Fredericksburg, Va.
Carolina M. Guzman-Glass, ‘05, and Ronald C. Glass, MLS’02, had a daughter, Jasmine Danielle Guzman-Glass, on Sept. 4. The family lives in Coconut Creek, Fla.
Wendy L. Day, OD’06, of Florence, Ky., is an optometrist at Timothy Hamilton and Associates in Florence.

School of Optometry alumni reunions
Class of 1987
20th Year Reunion
Cindy Seibert Lang, BS’85, OD’87, and Susan Kovacich, BA’83, OD’87, are coordinating this reunion. It will take place Wednesday, Oct. 3, during the IOA Fall Seminar in Bloomington. Location and time TBA. For details, contact Lang at lang2585@rtccom.net.

Class of 1997
10th Year Reunion
Kathleen Henry Busby, OD’97, and Maureen Geraghty Mulac, OD’97, are coordinating this reunion. They have planned it for April 21, during the weekend of the IOA Convention in Indianapolis. Location and time TBA. For details, contact Mulac at mulac@verizon.net or (724) 861-6666, or Busby at Kathleen_Henry@hotmail.com or (317) 896-1552.

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Book explores life of Irvin Borish, O.D.
Borish, written by William “Bill” Baldwin, OD, explores the private and professional life of Irvin Borish, OD. Borish is and has served as a clinician, researcher, inventor, educator, and philanthropist. He played a key role in founding the Indiana University School of Optometry and became the first optometrist voted into the National Optometry Hall of Fame. Enjoy this journey through Borish’s personal and professional life and learn more about the man and his passions. Don’t miss Borish, a detailed history of a modern-day Renaissance man. To obtain a copy of the book with a greeting and Borish’s signature, visit www.opt.indiana.edu/bcor/borishbook/index.htm.
ALUMNI FOCUS

This newsletter is published twice a year by the Indiana University Alumni Association, in cooperation with the School of Optometry, to encourage alumni interest in and support of Indiana University. For activities and membership information, call (800) 824-3044, or e-mail rualumni@indiana.edu.

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Optometry Alumni: What’s new with you?

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