A coast-to-coast trek for a worthy cause

Leigh Gauthier Savage

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MARRIAGE: Derek Oliver and Camilla Wiley, June 11. Derek is director of psychology training, a predoctoral internship, and postdoctoral residency program, at Eleanor Hospital Medical Center at Fort Gordon, Ga.

THIS YEAR IS REUNION! Jason W. Seef is welcomed to share his experience in the Orlando, Fla., law firm of Graydon & Reilly. He has been appointed to the City of Orlando Municipal Planning Board and has been named to a one-year term on the board of directors of the Blanker School Foundation, which provides the school with technology enhancements, summer service and reading camps, academic enrichment programs and music education. He has also elected to a one-year term on the Orange County Redistricting Advisory Committee, works with the Heart to Heart organization, and is a graduate of Leadership Orlando.


BIRTHS: Michael-Todd and Birmingham, Ala. and Will Wilson, Lawrenceville, Ga.

BIRTHS: RACHEL MAE McCANDLESS, a daughter, Hannah Taylor, May 18, live in Alexandria, Va.

BIRTHS: Rich and Christen Boyle Bremoen, a son, Michael Aidan, August 28. They live in Washington, D.C.

BIRTHS: Todd and Anna Reine Reihl, a son, Reef, November 16, 2010, Atlanta, Ga.

BIRTHS: Leigh Unterman, an English teacher at Travelers Rest (S.C.) High School, has been named the school’s Teacher of the Year. She was the subject of a recent feature in the Greenville News.

BIRTHS: Jake and Cara Rhodes Bostrom; a son, Jonathan Paul, November 2. Jake, an optometrist, is from Hagerstown, Md. They live in Gainesville, Fla.

BIRTHS: John and Jennifer Todd Carter, a son, Jack, October 16, 2010. They live in Lyman, N.H.

BIRTHS: Searl, a son, Michael Aiden, August 9, live in Alexandria, Va.

BIRTHS: Colin David Bonfiglio and Laura Elizabeth Snyder, September 24. They live in Nashville, Tenn. David is an occupational therapist at the Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Rosen is a postdoctoral fellow with the Williamson County Rehabilitation Institute at the Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

BIRTHS: Margarita and Kevin Klein, November 12. They live in Greenville, S.C. David told The Greenville News in December that they live in Antioch, Tenn.

BIRTHS: Matthew and Taylor Dobbs, a son, Anderson, November 27. Matthew is completing his radiology residency at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., and will begin a neurology residency at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif., in July.

BIRTHS: Jake and Kaitlynne Tustin Knottsmeier, a son, Grady Allen, August 23, Greenwood, S.C.

BIRTHS: Richard and Christy Louise Moore Wier, a daughter, Sarah Louise, September 17. They live in Chapel Hill, N.C., where Jeremy works as a postdoctoral fellow with the Carolina Population Center. She earned her Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Texas.

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BIRTHS: Caredy and Gurney Harry Hughes, a son, Elton Wayne, August 24, Coryne has his own law practice in Greenville.

BIRTHS: Erik and Hilary Dossmann Rodriguez, a daughter, Anna Emma, January 24, 2011. They live in Langhorne, Pa.

BIRTHS: Jennifer Scholz Smith received her Doctor of Psychology degree in clinical psychology from the Georgia School of Professional Psychology and is a postdoctoral fellow in a private practice in Carrboro.

BIRTHS: Patricia Southard, a daughter, Sarahanna-Creese, December 7. They live in Antioch, Tenn.

BIRTHS: Beth and Taylor Dobbs, a son, Anderson, November 27. Matthew is completing his radiology residency at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., and will begin a neurology residency at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif., in July.

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04 by FURMAN ALUMNI NEWS

ONE COAST-TO-COA TREK FOR A WORTHY CAUSE

Many people will go to great lengths to help a friend, but few would go as far as Alastair McCandless ‘97. He’s walking 3,600 miles — all the way across America — to raise money for the Wounded Warrior Project in honor of Ken Dwyer, a U.S. Army Special Forces officer wounded in August 2008 in Afghanistan. Dwyer was hit with a rocket-propelled grenade and lost his left hand and left eye, among other injuries. For McCandless, the trek is both a way to support a great cause and a time for personal renewal.

After spending 14 years in the food service industry, he felt the need to pursue something more fulfilling. He came up with the idea of “taking a long walk” to raise awareness and funds for a worthy program. He was still undecided on which organization to support, though, when he placed a call to Dwyer, his P-Kappa Phi fraternity brother at Furman. “I was asking him what I should do to train for a long walk, because he’s in Special Forces,” says McCandless. “He would know what I needed to do to walk 20 miles a day.”

Dwyer provided more than training tips. He told McCandless about the Wounded Warrior Project, which played a major role in his own recovery — and suddenly McCandless had his cause. He decided to walk from Delaware to California along the northern route of the American Discovery Trail, with a goal of raising $25,000 for the WWP.

Dwyer, now back on active duty as a major in command and support operations, says, “I told him it would take a while to train, but he has certainly done it, and I’m impressed with what he’s trying to do.”

McCandless, a 25-year-old Iraq war veteran, was critically injured in Operation Iraqi Freedom in November 2007. He was shot in the abdomen, had a technique he learned by watching one-handed pitcher Jim Abbott. Dwyer, Julia, 3, grasps her prosthetic without a second thought and has even slept with it once occasion.

McCandless, an Iraq war veteran, lost his left hand and left eye, among other injuries. He received a backpack from the Wounded Warrior Project. When they received a backpack from Wounded Warrior Project, they maintained a pace of 20 miles per day while carrying a 40-pound backpack. Along the way he lost 30 pounds. Each night he looked for a campsite, a church, or a person willing to take him in. In the he says he was amazed by how much help people offered when they learned what he was doing and why.

McCandless’ account of his walk and to donate Visit www.thoughtsaskew.blogspot.com to read for the Wounded Warrior Project he is currently live in California, hopes to be in San Francisco when their friend completes his journey this fall.

As for McCandless, when acquaintances ques- tioned his sanity, he knew there was one person who understood that or the limitations they chose to set for themselves. “Others didn’t think he could do it,” says Ken. “But I told him, ‘You can do whatever you put your mind to.’”

— LEIGH GUTHRIE SAVAGE

Visit www.thoughtsaskew.blogspot.com to read McCandless’ account of his walk and to donate for the Wounded Warrior Project.