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Campus Watch

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SOLAR CAR TEAM BACK ON TRACK

by Joe Irwin  photo by Kristy Shalla  illustrations by Melinda Cerney

Tucked away in an old corner of Sweeney Hall is the outer shell of a solar car, decorated with bright yellow paint and the name “ExCYtor” emblazoned on the side. It serves as a reminder of the Iowa State solar car team’s past trials as it works toward new goals.

“We’re in the process of selecting a name for the new vehicle now,” said Alan Ihlefeld, a junior in industrial engineering and project director of Team PrISUm.

As many as 130 people will visit the small shop to help in the many phases of design and construction of the new vehicle, PrISUm Phoenix.

“About 50-60 people show up on a weekly basis, and a lot more show up whenever they can,” Ihlefeld said.

The team is looking toward the summer of 1999, when the next race is tentatively scheduled. Members are hoping for better luck than they received during Sunrayce ‘97.

“We should’ve done a lot better, but it wasn’t bad after rebuilding in only five weeks,” Ihlefeld said.

Team PrISUm managed to finish 26th out of 36 qualifying teams in the race from Indianapolis to Colorado Springs, despite a great deal of adversity.

A van and trailer, which were bringing Team PrISUm and ExCYtor back from a regional qualifier in Mesa, Ariz., ran off the road just outside of Topeka, Kan., injuring several team members and totaling the car.

“The only thing not hurt was the frame,” said Brian Moorhead, a junior in electrical engineering in charge of systems integration for the team.

Iowa State’s team recovered with help from a number of sources.

“It was amazing, the support we received,” Ihlefeld said, citing several departments on campus, individual contributors, car dealers and others.

The solar car team is used to support from outside sources, as nearly 90 percent of the next two-year, $314,000 budget will come from outside contributors. It also receives help with extra space when the area in Sweeney is too small for construction phases.

“It gets very cramped,” Ihlefeld said.

Some of the major work on PrISUm ExCYtor was done at Bob Brown Chevrolet in Des Moines.

“I was there four weekends in a row,” Moorhead said.

The solar car circuit Iowa State runs with is not limited to Iowa, the Midwest or even the United States. It is open to any North American college or university. There are quite a few teams from warm-weather states like California, but teams come from all over.

“There were quite a few from Canada last time,” Moorhead said.

Team PrISUm uses volunteers from nearly every college and program in the university, and most participants work about three hours per week. They print a newsletter called The Sundial and can be contacted with questions by e-mail at: solarcar@iastate.edu
Haul out the cake and party hats! The Marston water tower, an Iowa State landmark, celebrates its 100th birthday this year. The water tower was designed by Anson Marston, the first dean of the College of Engineering. Built in 1897, it was the first steel water tower west of the Mississippi River. The need to supply water to campus prompted the construction of the water tower, Civil Engineering Professor David Kao said. The water tower, which is no longer used, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

So you may wonder, how old is the rest of Iowa State University? The following is a brief age sampling of various Iowa State landmarks:

- Queen, the cow, a resident of the ISU Dairy Teaching and Research Center, is 2 1/2 years old.
- Campus radio is 48 years old.
  The first campus radio station consisted of two turntables, a small transmitter, a public address system and three friends. It was originally headquartered in a residence hall room on 4th floor Friley. (Information from First 100 Years of Residential Housing at Iowa State University 1868-1968 by J. C. Schilletter).
- The policy of having a telephone in every residence hall room is 36 years old.
- The original swans, Sir Lancelot and Elaine, would be 62 years old.
- The zodiac in the Memorial Union is 69 this year, but the superstitious practice of walking around the zodiac is 68 1/2 years old. According to Kathy Svec, Memorial Union marketing coordinator, the architect who designed the zodiac made it so the brass castings would be higher than the floor. As people walked over them, the castings would wear down; he felt this would allow the people of Iowa State to be a part of the building. When the building opened in the fall of 1928, students were wary of the zodiac because of the upraised castings and were walking around it by 1929, she said.
- Onion’s Convenience Store is 5 years old.
- The Homecoming celebration is 85 years old.
  The football team lost the first Homecoming game to the University of Iowa, 7-20. (Information from The Bomb 1893-1993)
- GSB President Rob Wiese is 23 years old.
- Iowa State University President Martin Jischke is 56 years old.
- Iowa State football is 105 years old. The team played two games during its first season, ending with a record of 1-0-1. (Information from The Bomb 1893-1993)
- The campanile is 99 years old. The tradition of campaniling started back when the university enforced. Students had a curfew (around 1930, the Friday night curfew was 10:30 p.m., according to Schilletter). A couple would make plans to meet under the Campanile at midnight, but, if they were caught, the man had to buy the woman one rose for every minute they were out past curfew, and the woman was assigned cleaning chores. (Information from the Student Alumni Association 1996-97 tour script).
- The nickname Cyclones is 102 years old.
- Cy, the Iowa State mascot, is 42 years old.
- Uncle Beast, ethos mascot, is 1 year old.
- Electricity on campus is 113 years old.

**HOW BIZARRE**

If you’re bored or looking for an out-of-the-ordinary reason to celebrate November, check out the Bizarre American Holidays website at portia.advanced.org/2886/nov.htm.
Feeling morbid? Try “Plan Your Epitaph Day” on November 1.
Looking for a good invasion? Check out “Waiting for the Barbarians Day” on November 4.
Holidays are listed by month and by category. The site also includes links to topics related to selected holidays. For example, National Cashew Day, Nov. 23, is linked to a recipe for stir-fried chicken with cashews.
But if this leads you to conclude America is too weird, take advantage of “Start Your Own Country Day,” November 22, and make up your own nation with your very own holidays!