



Fall 2015



DO THE SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE **Q & A with Gene Cernan**

RAZING THE BAR
Lessons from India

THE GREAT STEFFANO
How Perception Affects Thinking

GET CLEAR. WORK HARD.
ASK BOLDLY.
Do What You Are Meant to Do

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Celebrate! Innovation Magazine is published biannually by Des Moines Area Community College West Campus. For advertising or content inquiries, contact:

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COVER PHOTO:

Earthrise over the Moon's surface during the Apollo 17 mission. Courtesy NASA.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The Risk of Hello

East of Des Moines, in Pleasant Hill, rests Copper Creek Lake. Like many sculpted suburban lakes, it sits encircled by a paved trail, a playground, bricked-in restrooms, restaurants, condos, and a boat ramp—nothing remarkable. Lakes and trails like it dot suburbs across America. On the trails, families tote pink-faced children in wagons, sweaty men and women run by with determination, and bicyclists—the nice ones—yell “on your left” to prevent carnage. If a trail is to be tread, this is the scene.

A confession: I don't like the outdoors. Nearly all of my passions involve a computer. I hate bugs. The wind destroys my already impossible hair. In general, not my thing. Yet I find myself on this trail at least once a week battling mosquitoes and the shame that comes when people twice my age lap me. As they approach—walking, running, cycling—these older folks always do the same thing. They say hello.

I once read someone on Twitter say Iowans feel obligated to say hello. Sure, we're nice, but, more important, if we don't say hello, someone might think us rude. (And it's true. When I lived in Kansas, no one ever said hello on the sidewalk, and I couldn't wait to move back home where people seemed nicer. Not all Kansans are rude, of course.) On the Copper Creek Trail, every now and then, someone older than I will not say hello, and I'll think, “Geez, that was rude.”

But it's different when those younger than I pass by on the trail. They won't say hello. They won't even make eye contact. And each time, I have that judgmental, crotchety thought: *What is wrong with young people today?* Naturally, that's the surefire sign I am getting old, yet it does make me wonder. What is the risk one takes in simply saying hello? Why do young people seem so reluctant to do so? Is it a generation raised to beware of stranger danger? Is it a lack of confidence? A failure of communication? Or simply a lack of manners? Having worked with enough college students, I'm not convinced it's the latter. Still, I wonder—what might failing to offer a simple hello prevent young people from accomplishing? Are they missing out on opportunities to find and fulfill their life's passions? What can the rest of us do to get them to simply say hello and take that chance?

It's people—young, old, and in-between—taking that very chance that Mitch Matthews explores in this issue. In fact, every article here comes down to taking chances. Each of our authors—famed astronaut, Gene Cernan (the last person to walk on the Moon . . . for now); traveler and writer, Sara Stibitz; man of many titles, Tony Paustian; and motivational speaker, Matthews—connects the importance of taking chances to achieve our goals. Each author takes perception, flips it, and turns it into reality. And if only one of our readers realizes how

important it is to take those chances—no matter how terrifying and awkward—I imagine all of the authors would be pleased by the results.

I've come to like Copper Creek Lake and Trail. I like checking in on the ducks and their ducklings as they waddle across the concrete. I like spying a glimpse of the resident cat and her kittens. I even like seeing the people doing yoga on paddleboards, though the mere thought of that blows my mind. But more than any of those, I like that people in Iowa still take the chance to say hello. And maybe, with a little prompting, some of the younger Iowans will start taking their chances and saying hello as well.



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