

# SPOTLIGHT

Spotlight features the unique personalities in the Department of VCAPP



From skiing to climbing, Joe Harding is truly a man for all seasons.

aid of her cat. This wild tale of tree-climbing heroism, and the cat's ultimate rescue, make for a fingernail-biting narrative, undoubtedly

Still, he used to be even *more* of a rascal.

"It took Barb a few years to tame me down," he said when describing such by-gone-days' activities as paragliding and rock climbing, "but Barbara put an end to all that. We were climbing together, and she was on a ledge above me. She accidentally started a rock slide that came crashing toward my head. I guess watching rocks as big as desks come down on me, as I jumped in and out of a crevice to avoid being hit, was too much for

intensified by Joe's rock-climbing skills of yesteryear.

Joe, whose father was always a skilled craftsman, also loves creating things with his hands. He and Barbara have been remodeling their home for a number of years, and as each project is completed, they take on yet another. These are not small projects. The two have nearly rebuilt their entire home, and the craftsmanship is astounding.

Joe's one Achilles heel is that he harbors a bit of a sweet tooth. It does no harm, however; all that energy and constant activity help him retain his youthful physique.

Joseph Harding is something of a rebel. He refuses to give in to pain, and he refuses to buckle under to anything that vaguely resembles a malady of aging. Any evidence of slowing down has eluded Joe's conscious life. After his knee surgery, Joe was seen *jogging* within two days; the weekend following a gall bladder removal, Joe made his way to the *ski slopes* (but was a bit cautious in making his usual jumps); in a contest with a group of professional bicycle racers, Joe took *first place*. The younger cyclists had a tough time matching Joe's pace and were so impressed with his abilities that they invited him to join their team.

her. I had to give up climbing *and* para-gliding both."

His grin indicates he didn't mind accommodating his wife's desires. "She was really panicked over that one," he admitted.

When one first meets Joe, this devilish attitude is not the image most readily observed (although there is always a bit of an impish gleam in his eye). Joe is first and foremost a true gentleman, and that attribute comes across immediately. He is kind, considerate and always the first to offer help when the need arises. **Melinda Cumming**, a former student in the Harding lab, relates a story about Joe's coming to the

According to Barbara, Joe has always been a free spirit (he claims with characteristic modesty that *she* is the scholar of the family and the one from whom their two children received their superior intellect). "When we met in college, I was his chemistry tutor," Barb says. "But he would much rather spend time in the gym than in the lab," she sighed. "I really had my work cut out for me."

Joe has ultimately settled into a nice blend of his physical and intellectual endeavors. And no matter what he pursues, Joe always embodies a wonderful spirit of accomplishment that puts him squarely into our VCAPP spotlight.