And the Beat Goes On

The painstaking, exhausting work in the sun-baked sands of the Caesarea Martima dig is over for the day. The laborers at this Israeli archeological site retire early in anticipation of the pre-dawn wake-up call that will return them to the scraping, shoveling, sifting and measuring that slowly is uncovering the long-buried port city built by Herod the Great beginning in 22 B.C.

But not everyone sleeps. A solitary figure in a battered hat pauses on stone steps leading to the emerging foundation of Herod’s temple. Here I stand, he muses, perhaps in the very spot where Pontius Pilate or St. Peter or St. Paul once stood. He gets chills whenever he tells the story, and so do his listeners.

Sooner Magazine readers will recognize this scenario as another chapter in the adventures of OU classics professor Farland Stanley Jr. and his intrepid team of Sooner student excavators. Their discoveries recounted in the Winter 1994 cover article took us right up to the temple steps. The unearthing of the temple itself—and Stanley’s appointment as director of the entire temple area and third in command of the Caesarea site—occurred just this past summer. With some 4,000 acres of this ancient city as yet uncovered, this story seems destined to become another of the University’s never-ending tales.

There really ought to be a “where are they now” department, for Sooner Magazine seldom features its subjects at their absolute zenith, although it usually seems so at the time.

Take some of the “notable alumni” articles, for instance:

A 1984 cover story on Admiral William J. Crowe Jr. dealt with the 1942 OU freshman class president as commander in chief of the U.S. Pacific Command. Pretty lofty stuff. But within months he was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and capped his career as ambassador to Great Britain. He could have been a series.

The business journals were touting OU alumnus and value fund manager Michael F. Price as a Wall Street whiz kid, spawning a Sooner Magazine profile in 1990. But Price was just getting started. Today he is acknowledged as the most influential person in the fund industry, powerful enough to force management changes and mega-mergers. And on the home front he is the $18 million donor whose name now graces OU’s Michael F. Price College of Business.

In a 1983 Sooner Magazine article, Max Weiszchenhofer was the Tony Award-winning producer of “Dracula” and the nominated “Pump Boys and Dinettes.” Still in his future, however, were a second Tony for “The Will Rogers Follies” and an active role at his alma mater as producing director of the OU Musical Theater Program.

Alumnus Rich Taylor was manager of talent resources for Disney World, and Sooner Magazine was duly impressed in 1991. Last year and several promotions later, Taylor became Mickey’s new best friend as vice president for all aspects of entertainment at the theme park that dominates central Florida.

Readers met 25-year-old OU gymnast Bart Conner in 1983 as he qualified for his third Olympics. Ten years later, they were invited to his glittering international wedding to Nadia Comaneci, as the couple turned their sport into a Norman-based business bonanza.

The beat goes on within the University as well:

The OU chemistry/biochemistry department’s Bruce Roe articulated better than anyone else the value of research as a teaching medium in a 1993 Sooner Magazine interview. In the current issue, his research breakthrough, with that of colleague Philip Klebba, is drawing national attention to the University.

The second issue of the revived Sooner Magazine in 1981 focused on the tornado chasers of the Department of Meteorology. Who would have guessed at the time that the strength of this discipline would be the engine driving the weather-forecasting world to Norman, Oklahoma?

Of all the articles written about the ever-changing natural history museum—first as the Stovall, then the Oklahoma and now the Sam Noble Oklahoma—none have been nor will be definitive. And periodic update visits to the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art and the Western History Collections continue to be mandatory.

One question often asked about Sooner Magazine is easily answered: Do you ever run out of story ideas? At this University? Never. Someone is always coming up with something new or putting a new twist on something old. Sooner Magazine’s problem is not having too little about which to write but having too much.

—CJB