

## A “high” calling for Elon homeschooler Senior receives appointment to U.S. Air Force Academy

By **SHELLEY D'ALMADA**  
Staff Writer

Dressed in shorts and pretty in blonde curls, Kirsten Buslinger is serving just-baked warm cookies and talking about her family's rural Elon meat goat business.

“I think we're up to 20 babies—we've got little ones running around now from 1 ½ days to two weeks old,” she tallies.

Kirsten might be any wholesome country girl. But that description only skims the surface of the 18-year-old home school senior's persona.



The cadet-to-be in her Civil Air Patrol (CAP) uniform. She is a CAP cadet Lieutenant colonel and her unit's cadet squadron commander.

Beneath her friendly smile and sincere, welcoming demeanor lie a steely determination and a penchant for excellence and leadership. Just the sort



Kirsten Buslinger holds one of the young goats she is helping to raise on her family's farm.

of qualities the U.S. Air Force is looking for in its future officers.

Kirsten received her appointment to the highly competitive United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado in January after receiving a “letter of assurance” from the academy in November.

She will report in June and undergo basic training before being named a Fourth-Class cadet (the equivalent of freshman status at a traditional col-

lege).

Getting into the Air Force Academy is no small accomplishment. The process begins with a “precandidate questionnaire,” the first sieve through which aspiring cadets must pass.

Next, students must be nominated to the elite school by a U.S. senator or congressman, each of whom may nominate up to 10 students based on high school transcripts, SAT/ACT scores, a resume, lengthy essay, and letters of recommendation from authority figures well acquainted with the student.

In Kirsten's case, she was nominated

by both senator Richard Burr and congressman Brad Miller.

Having successfully passed through both the first and second hurdles, hopefuls receive a “candidate kit” detailing next steps in the process and must pass an academy medical exam and candidate fitness assessment during their senior high school year.

Although it has no shortage of applicants (Kirsten and her mother, Ruth, estimate that 900-1,000 of about 10,000 applicants per year are accepted), like other colleges, the academy encourages high school students to consider it as

an option.

“Perhaps you should consider bigger goals,” it challenges. “Deeper learning. And a more rewarding future.

“Here,” continues the challenge, “you'll get a world-class education. The opportunity to fly. And a guaranteed career right out of college. You'll create bonds that last a lifetime. And you'll develop into something—and someone—extraordinary.”

It seems that this home schooled student has gotten an impressive jumpstart on that process.

She has been dually enrolled, since 10<sup>th</sup> grade, in Piedmont Community College and in the family's home school with brother, Will, who is three years younger. (Sister Lauren, 25, works at the National History Museum in Raleigh).

“Most of my classes are at PCC,” she clarifies, adding that she “did Calculus I [there]; that was my real test [of] whether I'm ready for college.”

She earned an “A” in the class.

At home, Kirsten, who plans to major in biochemistry at the academy, studied the rigorous Apologia science program. “I taught myself in that,” she says matter-of-factly.

“She was so self-motivated,” her mother marvels.

Beyond academics, the cadet-to-be has been preparing for the role since her eighth grade year, when “a friend down the road” took her and her father, David, to a meeting of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP), an auxiliary of the Air Force.

“I was hooked,” she recalls, adding a family historical note: “Dad went to the [Air Force] Academy for a short period of time, but broke his arm playing football for them.”

Kirsten entered CAP's cadet training program for teens, where she learned drill and teamwork and spent three summers at Fort Pickett, Virginia.

Remembering the first of those summers, as a “basic” at the encampment, she jokes, “You learn to get yelled at. We [also] get to go flying in helicopters, rappelling, [do] obstacle courses, [and] lots of physical training, too.”

The second summer, she returned as (See **AIR FORCE, 8B**)

## Ex-biker takes Jesus to the streets

By **SHELLEY D'ALMADA**  
Staff Writer

Gene “Bones” Boswell sums up his life this way: “I'm a three-time loser, but a one-time winner.”

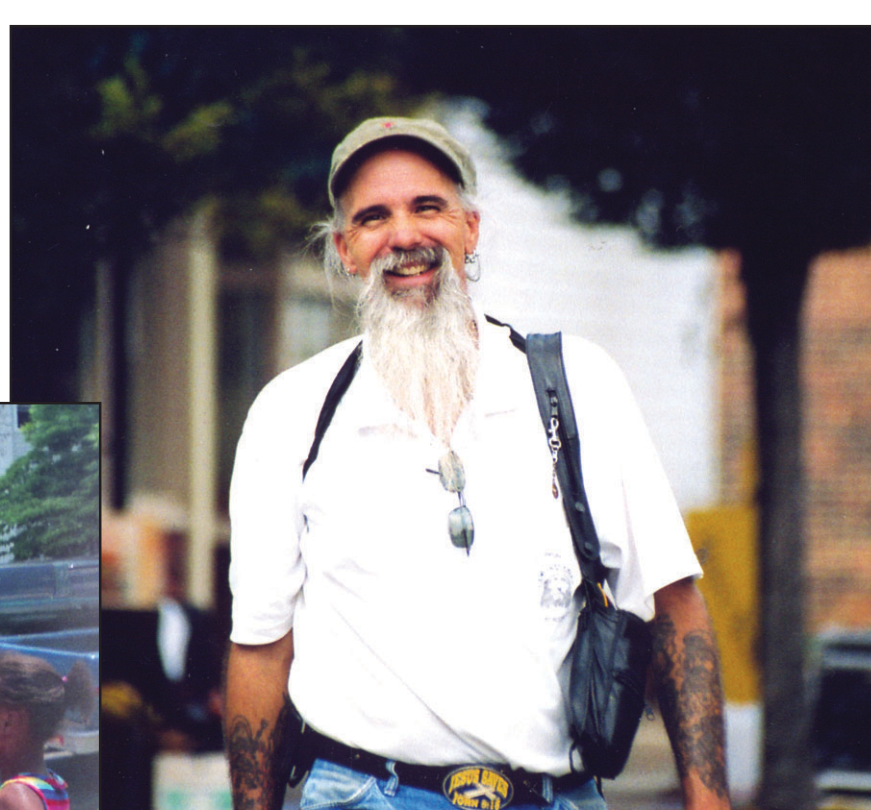
Tattooed from his near-bald head down, wearing a black leather vest and multiple earrings, Boswell still looks the part of the biker he was from the late 1970's through the mid-1980's.

He explains his statement: he was sent to prison three times on felony con-

When he exited prison for the last time in November of 2003, the ex-con says, he was “a crackhead” and “a general in Satan's army; life didn't mean nothing to me.”

That was before Boswell met D.Q. Roberts, who, together with his wife, Beth, founded Christian Riders Ministry in 1991.

“The Lord brought him to me as a vessel,” says the ex-biker. “[Before that], I was doing drugs and had been in rehab three times.



Gene “Bones” Boswell “on the street.”

Armed with not much more than a zeal to spread the good news that had changed both of their lives, Boswell and his wife, Brenda, began “walking the streets [of Burlington]” handing out Bibles.

In the beginning, he carried a bag on his shoulder. Later, the fledgling ministry “progressed to tents” and volunteers “started holding up signs.”

Lost Souls Ministry was incorporated in September of 2005 and given tax exempt, non profit status. It has “been growing ever since,” a flyer summarizes.

The former biker is as eager to reach the biking “community” (Lost Souls went on the road to the Daytona Bikeweek and Bikefest at the end of February) as he is street people, those in housing projects, children, and anyone else who will listen.

“The thing about a street ministry,” he comments, “is [that] it is for every-

by me; he does what He wants to.”

Equipped with a tent, a puppet stage, portable baptistry, and ministry volunteers, Boswell says that the ministry tries “to go to underprivileged neighborhoods” in and around Burlington.

Working with the Weed and Seed Initiative, a police effort which calls itself “a law enforcement strategy to improve the quality of life in East Burlington,” and with local churches in Burlington and other surrounding towns, Lost Souls goes into housing projects with its Christian message of hope.

“Helping a hurting and dying world starts in your own community,” say ministry materials. “You don't have to look abroad to see the hungry, the poor, the lost, the abused. They are all around us.”

Boswell has appeared before local city councils to request the closing of streets to facilitate what he calls “a day in the park” for residents of underprivileged neighborhoods.

One of those festive days, for example, found Lost Souls' volunteers at Mebane's Tanglewood Apartments complex, where they organized Frisbee and kickball games, temporary tattoos applied by Boswell, bubble blowing, hotdogs and drinks, and music (pro-



Boswell talks with children as they watch a puppet show.

visions before he handed his life over to Jesus Christ and became committed to spreading the gospel.

“The first time I thought I was a thief, but I didn't do too good at it,” Boswell recounts with a chuckle. The second time, I wasn't *any* good at it. The third, I switched over to doing drugs.”

Boswell's spiritual about-turn did not happen in prison, and although he believes that genuine life change *can* happen in that setting, he also believes the security of the prison walls make the appearance of change “easy” to maintain.

“When you get out, all of [the temptations] of the world [are] still there. The seed has to be planted deep.”

“I met my wife in '93 and enabled her to use cocaine. I went through \$350,000 in a year – my father had died and left me an inheritance. I [suddenly] had more friends than Carter had liver pills.”

After going through the money, the “friends,” and multiple jobs (“Most people thought I was an alcoholic”), Boswell met Roberts.

“He put a \$200 Pentecostal handshake in a drug addict's hand. I cried that day. December 14, 2003, I submitted to the will of Jesus Christ; He [Christ] said, ‘You're not an addict; you don't need recovery.’ Two months later, He took that addiction away [and, the same year, a smoking addiction].”



His “biker style” leather vest with ministry patches.

one. [The apostle] Paul said, ‘I am all things to all men’; I can go anywhere and be anything for any man that God needs to use me for. God's not limited

vided by Travis May of Greater Love World Outreach, of which the Boswells are members).

(See **LOST SOULS MINISTRY, 8B**)



