

THE College

S P R I N G 2 0 1 0

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE • ANNAPOLIS • SANTA FE



Virginia Woolf

AND THE NOVEL AT ST. JOHN'S

ON VIRGINIA WOOLF

The first time I came across her, I really disliked Virginia Woolf. I was a reluctant member of a seminar on Woolf in my senior year at a large university. (A class on Shakespeare's tragedies was full. Everything else was full.) The graduate student who led the course was dismayed by those of us who couldn't summon compassion for Mrs. Dalloway, thought Mrs. Ramsay was a loser, and were hopelessly baffled by *The Waves*.

Ten years later, I was ready to read Woolf, starting with "A Society," a biting satire of men and women and books. In the story, as a group of women are having tea one day, Poll begins reading to them from a collection of books from the London Library. Declaring each book to be awful, the women decide they left far too much to men while they were busy raising children:

So we made ourselves into a society for asking questions. One of us was to visit a man-of-war; another was to hide herself in a scholar's study; another was to attend a meeting of business men; while all were to read books, look at pictures, go to concerts, keep our eyes open in the streets, and ask questions perpetually. We were very young. You can judge of our simplicity when I tell you that before parting that night we agreed that the objects of life were to produce good people and good books. Our questions were to be directed to finding out how far these objects were now attained by men. We vowed solemnly that we would not bear a single child until we were satisfied.

By the time they conclude their investigations, at least one of the women regrets being taught to read at all.

It's an interesting story from a woman who educated herself by reading books. The boys in her family were sent to school, but Virginia and her sister, Vanessa, were educated at home. She roamed her father's library, reading and translating Homer and Sophocles. Surrounded by books, she determined at a young age to be a writer. "She scarcely needed formal education," wrote Nigel Nicolson in *Virginia Woolf*. "She was her own guide through history and literature. She was learning all through her life."

This issue of *The College* explores the place of the novel at St. John's. It's hard to imagine not reading Dostoevsky or Jane Austen in seminar, but it's interesting to imagine what novels could occupy that special place on the seminar list in the future. (Cormac McCarthy? Toni Morrison?) *Moby-Dick* lives in preceptorials, where authors such as Borges, E.M. Forster, and García Márquez turn up. We polled alumni to ask what books they enjoyed reading the most and what they'd like to see added to the reading list. And we talked to a few tutors and alumni in academe about what they think makes a novel truly great. Susan Stickney made me think of Woolf when she talked about seeing novels in a whole new light when we read them again after many years, discovering something new in them (or in ourselves).

Woolf turns up in language tutorial, where students in some classes read *A Room of One's Own*. *Mrs. Dalloway* is sometimes read in precept and tutorial as well. Santa Fe seniors complete their St. John's career with two seminars on *To the Lighthouse*. I'd love to know what they think of the book if they re-read it 10 years from now.

Also in this issue, we look at an entirely modern phenomenon, Facebook, and how Johnnies feel about social media. We look back over the last five decades of St. John's with two long-serving tutors who are still very much a part of life at the college and we profile four alumni who are bringing the ideals of St. John's into special projects in their professional and volunteer work.

—RH



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Virginia Woolf
Illustration by David Johnson

THE LIGHT-BULB FACTOR IN THE YOUTUBE ERA

St. John's adopts new approaches to recruit students

On a cool morning in early April, Gabe Luzier (A10) led two sets of mothers and their teenagers on a tour of the Annapolis campus. He answered questions about mathematics, what the dorm rooms were like, and of course, what St. John's graduates do. Luzier, a seasoned tour guide for Admissions, took all the questions in stride, but he really lit up when one of the parents asked what brought him to St. John's.

"All of the material I was getting from colleges looked the same to me," said Luzier, who is from Brandywine, Md. "When I read the booklet from St. John's, I knew it was exactly what I was looking for. I applied to Johns Hopkins as a safety school, but my heart was already at St. John's."

To recruit students, the college has always counted on the "light-bulb" factor: a student learns about St. John's and is drawn to the college's academic program immediately. No other college will do. To make sure St. John's is reaching the high school students who are awaiting that flash of insight, the college has tapped one of the nation's top admissions consulting firms, is revising admissions material, and has begun incorporating new media and video into electronic communication with prospective students.

In 2008 the college hired George Dehne and Associates to evaluate recruitment efforts on both campuses and identify ways to increase the college's applicant pool. The firm's recommendations led to a new college-wide model for student recruitment.

John Christensen, admissions director in Annapolis, explains that the college shifted to a "prospect management" approach. "Fundamentally, prospect management is an effort to identify and cultivate early in their high school careers those prospective students most likely to apply, be accepted, and ultimately enroll in St. John's," he says. The college employs a point system based on the contact prospective students have with the college, and staff cultivate those students through personalized communications.

Under the new model, counselors are assigned geographic territories (usually states) selected by a market analysis of the College Board's Enrollment Planning Service. St. John's tracks applications to the college over the last 10 years and then sends counselors to the most fertile ground. The counselors group the prospective students in their states into three tiers by points and



JENNIFER BEHRENS

TOUR GUIDE GABE LUZIER (A10, CENTER) KNEW ST. JOHN'S WAS RIGHT FOR HIM AS SOON AS HE LEARNED OF THE COLLEGE. A NEW ADMISSIONS INITIATIVE—INCLUDING NEW PUBLICATIONS—WILL CAST A WIDER NET FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE RIGHT FOR ST. JOHN'S.

focus most of their communication and travel activities on top-tier prospects.

Admissions staff on the two campuses work closely together in this effort. Each counselor in Annapolis has a partner in Santa Fe. Each shares information about students they've contacted who may be interested in the other's campus. Together, staff plan receptions, travel, and conduct on-the-road interviews. Making everything easier is a new collegewide database that grants easy access to information about individual prospectives and ensures that staff aren't duplicating efforts.

Finally, the college will start reaching out to high school students in their sophomore year and will keep up the stream of communications to willing

students through the fall of their senior year. Prospectives will be getting viewbooks and other brochures, but they'll also be getting links to videos about academic and student life at the college.

For the last 10 years, St. John's has been using a suite of award-winning publications with an understated style that stood out dramatically among the glossy color pamphlets that flooded student mailboxes. The college will continue to integrate its favorite tagline, "The Following Teachers Will Return to St. John's Next Year," into its publications and electronic media, but it will introduce new print publications including a new four-color viewbook. There will be a multimedia virtual tour of the college on the web and increased use of e-communications.

The college isn't moving away from a serious presentation of the academic program; it's simply placing it in the context of the whole college experience, says Larry Clendenin, Santa Fe's admissions director. "We have always managed to distinguish the college from other institutions through our presentation of the Program, but we have never managed to capture fully what it is like to study and live in the communities of learning on our two campuses," says Clendenin. "We hope that our new publications continue to attract the core following we have always had among college-bound students, but we are extending our reach to prospective students we may have missed in the past." ❖

—ROSEMARY HARTY

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT ST. JOHN'S?

We asked readers of The College to tell us how they learned about St. John's—was it the catalog, a teacher, a happy accident?

MORTIMER ADLER

I was reading Mortimer Adler's book *How to Read a Book*, in which he mentions St. John's and the great books. It took me another year (with encouragement from others) to apply. Richard Weigle came to San Francisco on business and invited me to meet him at the Sheraton Palace, where he was staying. I was accepted and offered some modest scholarships and a job at the library. St. John's was a form of "salvation" for me, as I was then in my mid-20s.

—JERRY MILHOLLAN (CLASS OF 1958)

DISCOVERY IN THE STACKS

I "heard" about St. John's while a student at the University of Illinois. At some point I read Mortimer Adler's *How to Read a Book*, where he says that SJC is the only place to obtain a liberal education. Some time later, while working as a page in the library, I was shelving books towards the end of the day when I realized that the last book in my hands was the SJC catalog. Since I had a little time before the end of my shift, I sat down on the floor of the stacks in front of where I was supposed to shelve the catalog, and I read it from beginning to end. When I finished reading, I noticed a tear-out card to send for more information. I sent in the card, I went to St. John's, and I graduated.

—MIKE ANTHONY (A69)

AN EDUCATED MAN

I was a nontraditional student, having begun my undergraduate studies at age 35 in a small college in Pittsburgh. I was fortunate to have an SJC

alumnus, Ben Moskowitz (class of 1950), as one of my first professors. He called us "Mr." and "Ms." He gave us three options for demonstrating what we learned in his World History class: take a test, write a paper, or have a conversation with him. He reminisced about a small liberal arts college in Annapolis where there were no desks, no majors, and no written exams. Everyone studied the "great books." His father had asked him what he intended to be with a "liberal arts" degree, and he answered, "An educated man." Decades later, I had the opportunity to visit the Graduate Institute in Annapolis, and I was hooked. Now, with my Master of Arts in Liberal Arts, I teach at a small college in Pittsburgh. Thanks, Ben.

—CAROL BRINJAK (SFG196)

A POSITIVE MODEL

Like many others, I received the famous 1962 *Saturday Review* article about St. John's College in the mail during my senior year in high school. I remember reading the article during English class and thinking immediately: this is where I want to go to school. Although getting excellent grades, I had been very angry at how most of our education was handled. But once I heard about St. John's, I knew that education could be better. That's not to say that St. John's was easy for me. In fact the adjustment was very difficult, and I almost left after the first semester. But I struggled through and, in retrospect, wouldn't trade it for anything.

—RICK WICKS (SF68)

A "WACKO" COLLEGE

I was registered at Rutgers University in my senior year of high school and had received my eight-digit student number.



CAROLINE SHARKEY

Something about those eight digits left a bad taste in my mouth. At the same time, I received a phone call from a good friend—also a senior—who was laughing hysterically. He had scored a perfect 1600 on his SATs, so he received mail from virtually every college and university, and that day he had received an application from St. John's. He was calling to tell me about "this wacko college where everyone takes the same courses and they have this Great Books program, and there are only a few hundred students, and you have to complete this ridiculous 10-page application!" I was too embarrassed to tell him it sounded pretty cool to me, so I called St. John's as soon as we hung up. When I worked up enough courage, I called my friend to tell him I was accepted at St. John's and was planning to attend. It took a while to convince him I wasn't joking.

—CAROLINE MANDY SHARKEY (A78)

ADLER, REDUX

I had joined the Marine Corps after a disappointing year at a liberal arts college in Los Angeles. One day while wandering through a post library at Camp Pendleton, I came across Mortimer Adler's *How to Read a Book*. Adler writes, "There is one college that I know of in this country which is trying to turn out

liberal artists in the true sense. That is St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland." I wrote to Adler asking, since the book was written in 1941, had not other colleges, maybe closer to California, seen the light and reintroduced the classics and the sciences in place of the elective system? Adler kindly wrote back that, no, there was still only St. John's. So I wrote to the college for a catalog and after discharge from active duty was admitted.

—JOSEPH P. BARATTA (A69)

A CLASSICAL EDUCATION

I was in my first year at a prep school and hating pretty much everything about it. Every so often, a representative of some college would stop by, trolling for recruits. Such worries were years ahead of me, so I didn't pay much attention to them. Until a man from a small college in Maryland spun tales of a classical education, in an atmosphere that seemed much more cordial to me than the one I was enduring. I even remember, more than 50 years later, that the recruiter was Admissions director Jim Tolbert (HA86), a wonderful man.

When it came to applying for college, I remembered St. John's and Mr. Tolbert. But I didn't have the courage to apply. So I stumbled around. They call Tulane "the Harvard of the South," but I never hear Harvard advertised as "the Tulane of the North." In any case, the humidity got to me. I regrouped at a junior college. Finally, deciding that I had nothing to lose, I applied to St. John's and was accepted. I jumped at the chance [to participate] in the founding Santa Fe class. Though I only lasted two years—I failed enabling, but the Army wanted me—I don't regret a minute of the time spent. I learned a lot and grew enough to know that I'd spend the rest of my life growing.

—TODD EVERETT (SF68)

PRESIDENTIAL ADVICE

Being a paper advisor is a treat for a busy president

When Josiah Stephens (A10) settled on a question for his senior essay (“What is the benefit of a liberal education to a free-market system?”), his choice for a paper advisor seemed a natural one. Annapolis President Christopher Nelson (SF70) has been writing and speaking about the liberal arts for more than two decades.

Stephens first came to know the president away from the campus because he docked his 28-foot sloop *Doris* at Nelson’s house on the Severn River for more than a year while he slowly worked to make the boat seaworthy. The two would talk while Stephens worked. While *Doris* still isn’t ready for a long voyage, both Stephens and Nelson—along with the all-important essay committee—thought the paper turned out well.

Stephens read Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations* and *Theory of Moral Sentiments* for his essay. He first became interested in his topic at the start of the greatest economic downturn in the United States since the Great Depression. He closely followed news about proposed legislation to curb abuses on Wall Street and decided to explore how a liberal education creates natural safe-

guards in citizens who can ask questions and make choices for the good of society. Educated citizens, he posited, were less likely to “lose touch with the

foundations upon which their society was founded.” Ultimately, less government is needed in a society with people equipped to ask questions about virtue, morality, and justice, he wrote.

Though Nelson has served on several committees for senior orals, this was only the second essay he has advised in his 19 years as president. (The first was by Arthur Allen, A06, who wrote on the film *Andrei Rublev*). Advising Stephens gave him the opportunity to revisit the two Smith works. He found in *The Wealth of*

pate in the life of the mind.”

Nelson’s busy schedule meant arranging paper conferences weeks in advance, so the two started meeting early in the fall. Yet Mr. Stephens doesn’t consider himself shorted in any way. “Anyone who has spent more than five or ten minutes with Mr. Nelson knows that he’s someone who is genuinely



JENNIFER BEHRENS

ADVISING JOSIAH STEPHENS (A10) ON HIS SENIOR ESSAY GAVE ANNAPOLIS PRESIDENT CHRISTOPHER NELSON A CHANCE TO RECONNECT WITH THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE OF THE COLLEGE.

CHANGES FOR THE *ST. JOHN’S REVIEW*

Annapolis tutor William Pastille is the new editor of the *St. John’s Review*, the college’s scholarly journal. Pastille takes on the role from Pamela Kraus, who has edited the publication for more than 10 years. Kraus begins her term as Annapolis dean July 1.

In addition, the publication is increasing its online presence and expects to make back issues available online. Find out more by visiting the college website: www.stjohn-college.edu; click on Publications and St. John’s Review.

Nations, as Stephens did, a parallel between Smith’s division of labor and a modern higher education system that funnels graduates into narrow specializations.

Though early in his presidency Nelson was able to co-lead undergraduate seminars, the demands of the job have limited him to leading Executive Seminars and occasional parents’ or community seminars. Being a paper advisor helped him reconnect with the Program: “Spending a sustained amount of time with a student, thinking through an interesting problem and reading Adam Smith—it was a great opportunity to partici-

interested in the students and their experiences here. It was great to talk about issues that exist outside the books and to gain insight from his experiences. It made writing this essay so much more enriching.”

Nelson, too, will count the experience among the highlights of his year. “For one thing, it reinforces for me how much the tutors do here to help guide the students in their work,” he says. “And secondly, it was fun.” ❖

— ROSEMARY HARTY

THE WORLD AND ST. JOHN'S

Santa Fe President Mike Peters offers students a global picture

Combine a president whose career took him all over the globe with a group of students keenly interested in the most critical issues affecting the world today, and you have the Foreign Policy Study Group on the Santa Fe campus. One late winter's afternoon, the students came to the seminar table with their text (a *Foreign Affairs* article on how to finance and manage a more secure global energy system), ready for President Michael Peters' opening question: "What is the problem the authors are talking about?"

For the next hour or so, the discussion embraces global politics and historic precedent while hovering close to the text: "The New Energy Order," by David G. Victor and Linda Yueh. One student teases out the economic theory underpinning the article's argument, while another focuses on

ethical concerns. A third student questions the feasibility of the mechanism the authors propose to solve the challenge of global, environmentally responsible investment in energy resources. As they flip through the article, the students advance their way through the authors' arguments and point out perceived gaps in the reasoning. While the discussion stays close to the text, Peters also encourages a slightly broader exploration of global political reality.

The issue, Peters offers, is the shift in global power, which, as one student suggests, has historically led to conflict. Thus, the discussion, which took off from the point of energy insecurity, returns the idea that political instability in resource-rich parts of the world remains a serious international threat.

"The study group was some-

thing I had in mind when I came to the college, but actually some students came to me and asked if I'd be willing to do something like this, and of course, I said 'yes,'" Peters recalls. Before he joined the college in 2005, Peters served as executive vice president of the Council on Foreign Relations, where during his 10-year tenure he helped develop CFR's National Program, which sponsors seminars across the country to encourage a broader debate on international affairs and U.S. foreign policy. Peters' prior military career—he is a graduate of the United States Military Academy and retired as a colonel—took him to Vietnam, Panama, Saudi Arabia, and Russia. Peters also taught economics to cadets at West Point, where he later was chief of staff.

In addition to the study group, about 10 to 15 students join Peters in his office every couple of weeks to gather around his speakerphone for the CFR's Academic Conference Call series. Students at colleges across the country

have the opportunity to ask questions of a CFR Fellow or *Foreign Affairs* author.

While Peters solicits ideas for discussion topics and invites students to suggest specific readings, he usually selects the articles, as Johnnies are typically pressed for time. Many who attend regularly are interested in careers in international relations; some simply want to understand issues that affect citizens of the world. The group has several regulars, and others join in when time allows or when they find the topic particularly appealing. Some students are notably tenacious about the enterprise, says Peters: "This year we have several juniors who joined the group as freshmen."

In addition, some students have drawn a direct line between their study-group participation and their post-St. John's endeavors. One student who graduated a couple of years ago is now a Foreign Service Officer, Peters says. Several other participants have gone on to pursue law degrees with a focus in international relations. All benefit from the perspectives of the two dozen or so international students on the Santa Fe campus, some of whom take part in the study group.

"One of the things that is different this year and reflects what's happening in the college is that we have a growing number of international students in the group," says Peters. "That adds a completely different perspective."

—DEBORAH SPIEGELMAN



CHRIS QUINN

SANTA FE PRESIDENT MICHAEL PETERS SHARES HIS INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE WITH STUDENTS THROUGH HIS FOREIGN POLICY STUDY GROUP.

A NEW DEAN IN ANNAPOLIS

Tutor Pamela Kraus will face some tough challenges when she becomes Annapolis dean July 1, among them, new admissions initiatives, tight budgets, and the pressing need to make sound choices for the long-term future of the college.

Since her appointment was approved earlier this year, Kraus has been on a crash course to learn everything about one of the most complex and important roles at the college. As dean she will chair the Instruction Committee, which oversees the college's academic program. Hiring tutors, dismissing students, ensuring new tutors are supported, inviting lecturers, and dealing with parents are just a few of her roles. As dean she will also oversee Admis-

sions, the Registrar, Career Services, and Greenfield Library—all central to the academic life of the college. She'll serve as a member of the college's Board of Visitors and Governors. In the long run, she has a bigger challenge: making sure the college and its academic program continue to thrive.

"We need to bring the importance of liberal arts education to public attention," says Kraus. "It's hard to make people see the intangibles, hard to convey the living, working and learning that takes place in the classroom. The active learning here at St. John's is distinctive. It's not the books themselves so much as the way we read them. It can be life changing."

Kraus' deep dedication to the college has its roots in her early career and was partly due to the influence of her late husband, Richard Kennington. While teaching philosophy at Catholic University in the 1980s (where Kennington was a professor) she occasionally attended Friday night lectures at St. John's. Her husband's support helped her decide to join the St. John's faculty in 1985. "Giving up a traditional academic career is a big decision," she says. "I could have continued on a certain path to research and publish, but I was attracted to the breadth and depth at St. John's. You can easily get into a narrow world in traditional academia and talk with colleagues only in the field that they are in. Here at

St. John's we talk about ideas across the spectrum. There is a serious interest in all kinds of books and ideas."

Her own wide-ranging interests have been nurtured at St. John's. "I have a deep, long interest in poetry. Marianne Moore, Elizabeth Bishop, and Robert Lowell are a few of the poets whose work I admire. I love literature, including Henry James and of course, Shakespeare. And there is history, philosophy, theater, and fine art. I always come home with a painting by a student from the community art show at St. John's."

When she was looking at colleges, Kraus didn't know about St. John's, and as the daughter of a

coppersmith, she wonders if she could have afforded the tuition. Now, as dean, her job will be to promote the college and ensure accessibility through financial aid. "I want young people to know the college exists, that St. John's is a seedbed for your thinking," she says. "There is a cumulative effect from this education. This is an education that will carry you through the rest of your life and serve you well in facing many challenges."

As she prepares for her new position, Kraus is meeting with as many members of the community as she can, including staff, board members, and alumni. Learning to be dean isn't unlike the learning that happens in the classroom at St. John's. "My door is always open and I hope my mind is too," she says. "At St. John's you learn to try not to love your own opinions so much that you are stuck in them. The student and tutor have to expose themselves to other ways of learning. Would you normally say, 'I want to take a course on electricity and magnetism?' No. But here you are exposed to it—and to so many other perspectives."

Tutor Nick Maistrellis, who served on the dean selection committee, says colleagues recognize Kraus' commitment to the Program as well as her administrative know-how (she was editor of the *St. John's Review* for more than 15 years). "She has intelligence, good judgment, graciousness, and style," says Maistrellis. These qualities will make her a good leader of the college, and an effective advocate for its program of study. She will always have the good of the community in mind." ❖

—PATRICIA DEMPSEY



PATRICIA DEMPSEY

TUTOR PAMELA KRAUS IS ONLY THE SECOND WOMAN TO SERVE AS DEAN ON THE ANNAPOLIS CAMPUS; EVA BRANN (HA89) WAS THE FIRST.

ON BEING DEAN

The role of dean at St. John's is unlike that at any other higher education institution: chief academic officer and guardian of the Program, but also the overseer of important functions such as admissions, athletics, the registrar, library, and financial aid. *The College* asked two questions of several former deans: What was most the most difficult part of the job? And what most surprised them during their term as dean?

**CURTIS WILSON (HA83),
ANNAPOLIS, 1958-1962 AND
1973-1979**

"The most difficult thing about being dean? I think it is the responsibility that you have (and are frequently reminded that you have!) to every member of the community, for their welfare, for their having a worthwhile experience of learning at the college, and generally just for getting things to go well. I would hope the curtain of charity might fall on those incidents in which I didn't manage very well. The most surprising thing about being dean: Certainly the most gratifying thing that happens at the college is a student waking up to the possibility of thinking freshly and insightfully about one of the questions arising in our studies."

**EVA BRANN (HA89),
ANNAPOLIS, 1990-1997**
"What was most difficult? Keeping the balance between the college as an efficient institution and as a humane place of learning. What was most surprising? That when people asked me whether I was happy being dean, I found myself saying: 'I wouldn't know, I'm too deep in.'"

**HARVEY FLAUMENHAFT,
ANNAPOLIS, 1997-2005**
"The most difficult thing was having so little time for study. The most surprising thing was

how very many good things must be foregone or neglected in order to be able to minister to at least some matters of long-term importance—not because money is lacking but because urgencies are multitudinous while resources of time, effort, and attention are limited."

**DAVID LEVINE (A67),
SANTA FE, 2001-2006**

"While there's a lot of work to do in the dean's office—20 different things at the same time—that is not the difficult thing. The most difficult thing is, in and amidst all the various demands, to keep a clear sense of who we are as a college. At the end of my term a colleague, Phil Le Cuyer, asked me what I had learned as dean. My response was even surprising to me: 'How much work it takes to keep us who we are.'"

We went through a number of crises—presidential, student life, admissions, etc.—and what was wonderfully surprising was that the unique structure of the college proved strong: the Program provided stability through change, and with the support of the faculty, we were able to make significant headway in addressing the pressing issues standing in the way of the college being a genuine community of learning."

**VICTORIA MORA, SANTA FE,
2006-PRESENT**

"I'd rather talk in terms of challenges rather than difficulties, as I've experienced the former more than the latter. One significant challenge has to do with the nature of the dean's position itself. It is quite intentionally configured so that the dean is involved at every level of the college; the dean works with the board, the management committee, the campus officers, the faculty, the staff, the students, the



BEING DEAN INVOLVES MAKING SURE THE PROGRAM IS AT THE HEART OF EVERY DECISION MADE AT THE COLLEGE, SAYS SANTA FE DEAN VICTORIA MORA.

parents, and the alumni. This configuration ensures that the Program remains at the center of every decision we make at the college, which is to the good. But it does mean that the dean is challenged to work at every level, often in the same day, making recommendations and decisions that affect the college as a whole, constituencies within the college, and of course individuals. The challenge is to be fully present at each of these levels, bearing in mind how the decisions at each level affect the others. It is, as Husserl would say, an 'infinite task.'

I've been surprised at how satisfying it is to be able to serve the college in this way. This doesn't mean that I'm not looking forward to being back in the classroom, but it does mean that I have not experienced my service primarily as a

burden! Maybe my greatest surprise is how indebted I have become to my husband and children for making my work possible!"

**MICHAEL DINK (A75),
ANNAPOLIS, 2005-2010**

"It's easy to say what the hardest thing is: making the decision that it is time for someone to leave the college: student, tutor, or staff member, and communicating that decision. I was surprised by the amount of supervisory work involved and by the variety of crises that are possible. I most enjoyed the opportunity to get to know and to work with the whole range of the college community, and I was most disappointed that I didn't find ways to spend more time with students." ❀

EVOLUTIONARY GENETICS AND EMERGENCY MEDICINE

Internships give Johnnies a glimpse of potential careers

Esme Gaisford: Fruitflies and DNA

Last summer, Esme Gaisford (SFro) worked in the University of Chicago Evolutionary Ecology Laboratories' Krietman Lab, thanks to Santa Fe's ARIEL (Award for Relating Intense Education to Life) internship program.

Gaisford had previously won an ARIEL in 2008 to work at the City of Hope cancer center in Los Angeles in laboratories headed by Dr. Stephen J. Forman (A70). Her work in Chicago took her into the realm of evolutionary genetics. "It was a huge thing to be in this kind of research lab as an undergraduate," said Gaisford.

An inspiring high school science teacher piqued Gaisford's interest in cellular biology. Gaisford remembers him telling students, "I want you to know what you are doing and to understand why." Surrounded by brilliant researchers and dedicated college interns in the university laboratory, Gaisford found her St. John's background to be an asset. She soon picked up the specialized terminology and was even helping her peers

with the lab work.

The work that occupied Gaisford and her fellow interns involved repeated procedures to unzip and copy DNA, a technique called PCR. "You have to be clean, you have to be careful, you have to know what you're doing at the right temperature," she explains. The ultimate goal of all the experiments is a greater understanding of the evolution of the fruit fly. For instance, one researcher was manipulating the size of flies' eggs to understand how specialization occurs and discovered interesting results about the signaling differentiation in embryo development, Gaisford explained. "[The researchers] want to understand evolutionarily how the on-off gene-switching mechanism works," she says.

"These guys were very into what they were doing," Gaisford said of the researchers in the University of Chicago labs. "I think that when you get that far into academia, that's what you do." However, she suggests, at the top labs there are people like her mentor who can make connections and take the research to the next step.

In addition, she observed that the researchers were constantly talking and helping each other. "It's all about conversation," she says.

—DEBORAH SPIEGELMAN

Scott Weber: Up Close in the ER

As a medical scribe in the Emergency Department at Anne

Arundel Medical Center, Scott Weber (A09) has been by the side of physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants as they set broken legs, stitched up wounds, resuscitated some patients, and lost others.

Weber's internship, which he began with the support of a Hodson Internship in February of his senior year, involved creating the medical and legal record of a patient's treatment. He observed and documented procedures, test results, information provided by patients and their families, and other important aspects of patient treatment.

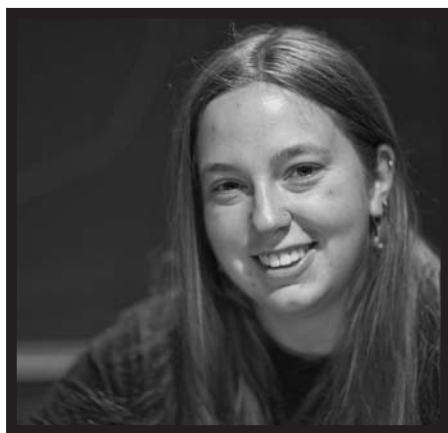
"It is the best experience I can imagine for any student considering a career in clinical medicine," says Weber, an aspiring doctor. "And I'm grateful to The Hodson Trust for making it possible."

Weber completed the internship last year, but he continues to work as a scribe, one day a week in the emergency room and four days a week for an oncologist. Weber's job is to accompany the physician to the patient's bedside, where he records the exact nature of an illness or injury and documents the physical exam. He uses a handheld tablet computer that allows him to record notes efficiently.

A scribe also keeps an eye on all the doctor's patients and is often the first to alert the physician to important and sometimes life-threatening results of



SCOTT WEBER'S EXPERIENCE AS A MEDICAL SCRIBE DEEPENED HIS DESIRE TO BE A DOCTOR.



ESME GAISFORD SPENT HER SUMMER WITH FRUITFLIES LAST YEAR.

laboratory or imaging studies. Scribes soon learn what studies are necessary to evaluate a condition based on a patient's history, symptoms and complaints. "I find that learning to take a good history is much like making a good argument in seminar," says Weber.

Seeing patients die, Weber says, is perhaps the more trying part of the job: "I can still remember the name of the first patient I saw die. I was more than a little shocked to see the strangely ashen color of his skin and the limp way his body moved as the nurses prepared him for his family to see. Since then I have seen more people die than I care to remember; it is a sad but ordinary occurrence. As a scribe you will also confront some of the nastier aspects of humanity. You will also see some patients filled with grateful relief and moments I can best describe as quiet dignity."

More than ever, Weber knows a medical career is right for him. "There is an infectious excitement to working on a good case—it's an intellectual challenge with the supreme reward of being able to help someone truly in need." ❖

KANT ON A KINDLE?

The college considers the impact of digital readers

Kindles have been sighted at the home of the great books: in the coffee shop, in the dorms and—gasp!—even in the library in Annapolis. Their owners love them, but the devices have their detractors as well, and the guardians of the college’s academic program are wondering what will happen if students start toting them to seminar.

For those who haven’t investigated, electronic readers such as the Kindle are usually about a quarter-of-an-inch thick and come in a variety of sizes. The screen is called “electronic paper,” and because it uses no backlight, it isn’t hard on the eyes in the way a computer screen is. They can come with nice leather cases that make them appear more book-like. But of course, there are no pages to turn, no corners to fold over, no smell of paper, no margins to write in, no dust jacket—all those things that charm book lovers.

Charles Cargal and Sarah Pearlman (both A12) received their Kindles as gifts. Since getting his Kindle last summer, Cargal says he’s reading more than ever. Having an entire stack of books with him everywhere he goes means that he can read a page or two whenever he has a free minute.

The best thing about their devices, say Cargal and Pearlman, is that even though the readers can cost up to \$500, e-books are much cheaper (about \$10 for a bestseller), and texts including Shakespeare plays can be acquired for free. “The Kindle is not for people who don’t love books,” says Pearlman. “It is for people who love books more than anyone else.”

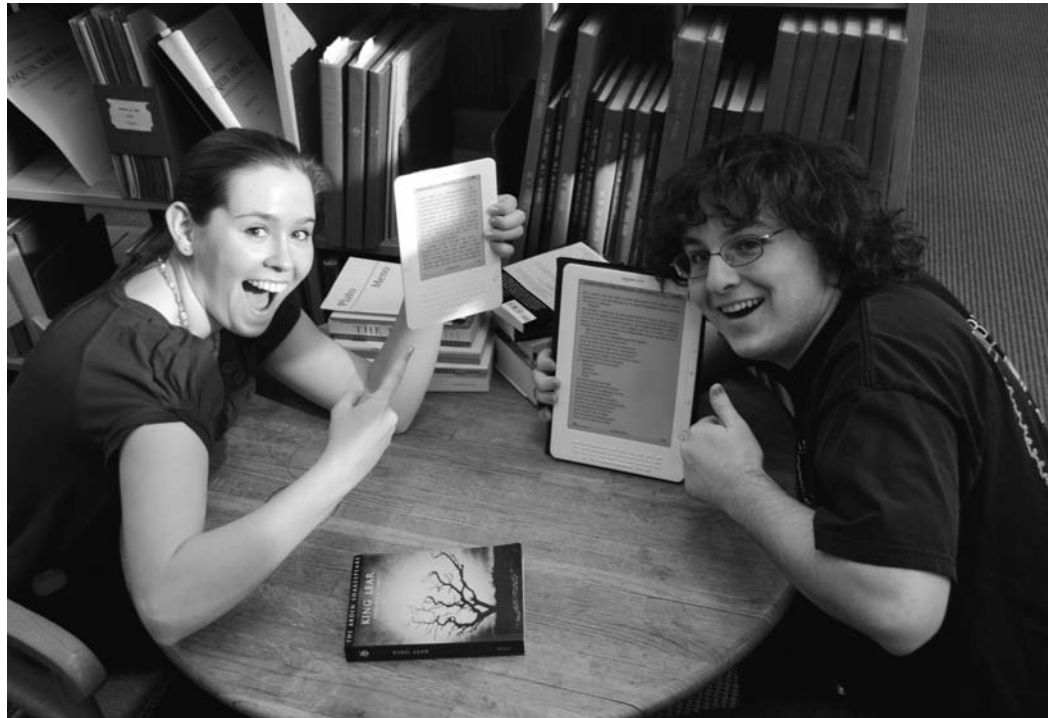
Naturally, some book-loving Johnnies are horrified by the idea of e-books. “A book can be shared,” notes Galen

certainly less fragile,” he notes. “A book doesn’t lose all the words if I drop it.”

For Pearlman, however, the physical aspect of reading is not as important as having access to more books. “A lot of people object to owning one in general, or specifically object to Johnnies owning them because

(A75). The committee agreed that the college can’t discourage students from using them. “To my mind, the only concern is the availability of texts and the availability of ways of locating where in a text you are (page or line numbers).”

Santa Fe Dean Victoria Mora has yet to spot a Kindle on her



SARAH PEARLMAN AND CHARLES KARGAL (BOTH A12) ARE DELIGHTED WITH THEIR DIGITAL READERS, BUT THEY DON’T USE THEM IN SEMINAR.

Cook-Thomas (A12). “If I have a book, once I’ve read it, I can give it to someone else to read. With an e-book, the other person has to have one too in order to read the book.” Cook-Thomas prefers to hold a real book in his hands, not something that turns on and off. “Books are prettier and

they worship the form of the book. I don’t think that’s fair because the good part of reading is the way the book transports you somewhere else.”

The collegewide Management Committee has considered the issue of e-books, notes Annapolis Dean Michael Dink

campus. “I think we certainly prefer that students take books to class, but we have no policy against [e-books] and probably shouldn’t,” she says. “I think we would not allow computers where faces would be blocked if a student were reading a text in that way. The faculty has not, however, talked this through.”

Pearlman can’t envision e-books fully replacing paper books. Cargal disagrees and points to the example of the phonograph and the iPod. It won’t happen soon, says Cargal, “but give it a hundred years and books will be gone.”

—KEILEIGH RHODES

“I think we certainly prefer that students take books to class.”

SANTA FE DEAN VICTORIA MORA

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SANTA FE STUDENTS HEADED TO NEPAL

A group of Santa Fe students has received \$10,000 in funding from the Davis Foundation to help combat water-borne diseases in Nepal. The project is one of 100 selected from submissions by college students across the country. St. John's students have submitted winning proposals four years in a row.

David McGee and **Chris Pataki** (both SF10); **Shishav Parajuli**, **Prakash Pathak**, and **Brain Woodbury** (all SF11); and **Manish Thapa** (SF12) will spend this summer in Nepal working to raise the public health standard in rural areas of a country recently ravaged by civil war and highly vulnerable to annual monsoons that damage rudimentary sanitation facilities. Nearly a third of

the population lacks access to sanitation and potable water.

The students will build a temporary clinic to provide basic medical care and also to provide education about hygiene and prevention of water and sanitation-related illnesses. In addition, the team plans to construct low-impact, efficient sanitation and water-treatment facilities that are both inexpensive and sustainable.

For more information about the project, "Founding Peace - Building Peace and Health Through Sanitation and Education," visit the students website, <http://foundations4peace.wordpress.com>.

HARVARD FELLOWSHIP

Jamaal Barnes (A10) has received a Reynolds Fellowship to study in the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The Catherine B. Reynolds

Foundation Fellowships in Social Entrepreneurship are designed to equip individuals for national leadership positions that bring the real-world insights of management and entrepreneurship to bear on social problems.

LANGUAGE SCHOLARSHIP

AnnMarie Saunders (A12) has been selected for a U.S. Department of State Critical Language Scholarship to study Korean in South

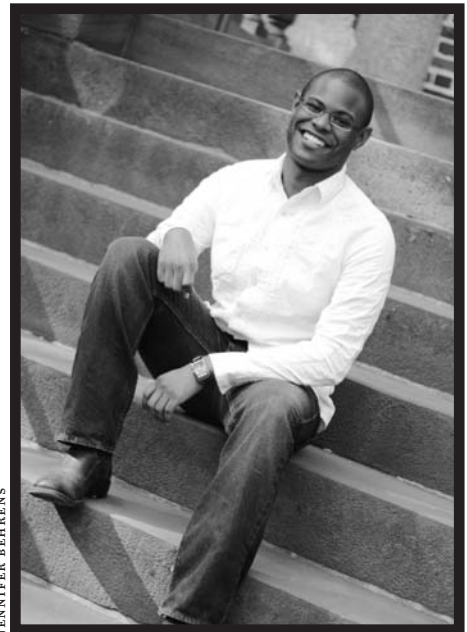
Korea this summer. She will spend 10 weeks in an intensive language institute and take part in immersion activities. The scholarship program is part of a wider effort to dramatically expand the number of Americans studying and mastering critical-need languages. Saunders hopes to pursue a career as a professor of Korean Studies or Korean Literature.

TUTOR HONORED

In recognition of "outstanding professional accomplishments," Annapolis tutor Peter Kalkavage has been named an Alumni Fellow of Penn State University. Kalkavage earned his bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from the university. Among other accomplishments, the citation noted Kalkavage's most recent book: *The Logic of Desire: An Introduction to Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*.

MIND-BODY CHALLENGE

Fans of Iglehart Hall have contributed \$64,000 to date toward a \$500,000 endowment to support the treasured gymnasium in Annapolis, as well as



JENNIFER BEHRENS

JAMAAL BARNES (A10) IS HEADED TO HARVARD.

athletic programs on the Annapolis campus.

In addition to supporting the effort, alumni continue to share Iglehart memories:

Mike Van Beuren (A75): "I remember the fitness test that Bryce Jacobsen used to administer annually. One element was a quarter-mile run that was timed for individual runners on the suspended wooden track high in the rafters. There were five laps to a quarter mile. Two things were daunting: the optical illusion that the overhead girders would hit you and the banked curves. Newtonian physics were out in full force. It felt as though I'd fly off the curve as I leaned away from the banked floor. Bryce stood there impassively with the stop watch. Time froze."

Matt Carter (A95): "My senior year, we put together a club volleyball team and played a few other Maryland teams, including Hopkins, Washington College and UMBC. It was the game against UMBC I remember. They were big and seemed much more talented. We were the basketball school, not the volleyball school. In fact, the reason we had this team was



PATRICIA DEMPSEY

JOHNNIE-MID SEMINAR

More than 60 midshipmen and four Naval Academy professors strolled across the street to join about 30 St. John's students and five tutors for the annual Johnnie-Mid seminar, held this year on March 23 in McDowell Hall. Ethan Brooks (A10) organized the seminar and reception afterward, and chose the reading, "Gooseberries," a short story by Anton Chekov. At the reception held in the Great Hall after the seminar, Johnnies, tutors, professors, and midshipmen mingled, discussing everything from weekend plans and waltz parties to life at the two schools, and questions raised in their seminars—until curfew at the Naval Academy. ❖

a lack of interest in volleyball at the time.

It was a best-of-5 match. We held a 2-1 lead before taking a thumping in game 4. They had the momentum. We seemed headed for defeat. During game 5, the Temple really came into play. We were used to the low-hanging beams and could serve over, under and through them with relative ease (an advantage we finally exploited). The UMBC team was frustrated by multiple balls hitting those beams and bouncing back to them. We prevailed in what I still consider one of the greatest upsets in the history of American sports.”

Ray Cave (class of 1948): “As was obvious to Eva Brann and anybody else who bothered to review my academic course



THE BANKED TRACK AT IGLEHART HALL INTIMIDATED SOME RUNNERS.

through St. John’s, the classroom that received the bulk of my attention was Temple Iglehart. I learned how to turn on the lights late at night and studied jump shots by the hour. The bleakest day in my St. John’s career came when the nurse had me banned from the gym for three months out of

concern for the considerable damage I was doing to my knees. (It was during this bleak period of my junior year that I discovered some of the books were actually interesting.)

In the end I earned eight blazers and have the octagon-edged college seal to prove it. Alas, you could only be awarded

two actual blazers. I had no other coats. Two years after graduation, I was still wearing the blazer, now covering three Baltimore police districts for the *Evening Sun*. Not a trench coat, but you go with what you got.” ❀

{ LETTERS }

POIGNANT POSE

Thanks for the fine job you and your staff do with our excellent magazine. Someone deserves extra credit for the “word” photos! (Winter 2010).

I believe I recognize myself in mid-back row of the aspiring dancers in the archival photo. I’m surer that my classmate Augusta Goldstein (SF68) is right in front of the teacher, displaying her beautiful

posture! And the good-looking guy to her right was . . . it will come to me—another classmate.

No way could I even approximate such a pose now, so I found it poignant to be reminded of a time when I could take a stab at it! Mind you, I do a version of railroad ballet everyday in work boots, without a pointed toe. But my knees rebel loudly at getting down, and then up again, from any floor.



DANCERS ON THE SANTA FE CAMPUS STRIKE A POSE.

I’m guessing we were sophomores, so that would have been 1965-66.

ELSA BLUM (SF68)

Editor’s note: The photos were the work of Jen Behrens, art director for *The College*.

ONE COLLEGE, TWO CAMPUSES

I must confess at the outset that I am not a regular reader of *The College*; being a current student, I have picked it up only in passing once or twice. Anyway, I am writing to point out that the atmosphere of the Winter 2010 issue indicates an immense tilt towards the Annapolis campus of the college. I realize that Annapolis is the original campus, that it has far more alumni, and that most contributors to the magazine are also based there. Nevertheless, it is discouraging to see the disproportionate efforts in this regard.

Specifically, I was very pleased to read about the Storytellers group in Annapolis (p. 6). We happen to have one here too, and they also meet Wednesday evenings. Wouldn’t it have been a wonderful, more comprehensive article to include both? It would have attested to the “one college, two campuses” slogan of St. John’s, apart from reaffirming the like-mindedness of the students on both locations.

In general, there seem to be too many articles about the Annapolis campus and too little from Santa Fe. I understand that there may be budgeting or space issues involved. And, again, I am not a terribly regular reader of the magazine, so my perceptions might be off. Whatever the case may be, I would simply like to draw your attention to this fact.

Thank you very much. Keep up the good work,

—NAREG SEFERIAN (SF11)

WHAT MAKES A GREAT NOVEL?

*And which ones deserve a place
on the Program?*

BY ROSEMARY HARTY (AG109)

For Santa Fe tutor Susan Stickney, there's a scene in *Pride and Prejudice* that provides a fitting analogy for the deeper value of reading fiction. It's the morning after Elizabeth Bennet has just rejected Darcy's offer of marriage, and she receives a long letter from him. His words initially confirm Elizabeth's great dislike for Darcy—until she has a chance to read the letter carefully and think about it for a while.

"The first time she reads it, she's infuriated," says Stickney, a member of the college's Instruction Committee. "She's so insulted that she can't bear it. Then, when she reads it again later and gains distance and perspective, she uses the letter as a chance to reflect on herself and her family. She's able to re-envision things and reorient herself."

To some, Austen's novel may not have the weight of a work by Plato or Aristotle, Kant or Hegel. Yet fiction cannot be seen as mere entertainment, Stickney says, and the Program would be far poorer without it. "What I get from reading literature, particularly novels, is the chance to look at the whole human being in all its complexity. When I read a novel, I have a chance to ask: can I see myself in this? And what does that reflection look like?"

In a college devoted to cultivating skills in language,

novels turn our attention to the power of expression, she says. "We work so hard to follow Kant's argument, or Aristotle's, that we barely have time to look at the words the argument uses. The hope is that in literature, this aspect comes more to the foreground and can increase our sensitivity to the expressive possibilities of language."

Because of the roughly chronological design of the Program, novels turn up on the reading list in junior year, and—with some small deviations—a handful of novels have pretty much been the mainstay for many years: *Don Quixote*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Middlemarch*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Heart of Darkness*, *War and Peace*, and various works by Faulkner and Woolf in senior year.

Talking about fiction in seminar can be uncomfortable for some students who would rather confront a political treatise, a mathematical formula, or a scientific concept. According to Annapolis tutor Judy Seeger, an Instruction Committee member, that's not a rare sentiment. "For one thing, the novel is not laying out an argument for you. And an author such as Austen may be particularly difficult because she is so very subtle."

That's not to say that novels fail to offer truths for serious

H. CHRISTIAN BLOOD (SF02) BROUGHT AN "INTENSE AND FIERY CONNECTION" TO LITERATURE WITH HIM TO ST. JOHN'S.



*"I have no desire to reform St. John's.
But if I started a great books college,
it would have a lot more fiction on the reading list."*

H. CHRISTIAN BLOOD (SFO2)

consideration and discussion, Seeger explains, “but clearly we can’t read a novel the way we read a philosophical argument.” Instead, we examine human nature in the context of situations—from the ravages of war in Russia to the drawing-room life of an Austen heroine.

Students are sometimes quiet in seminar because it isn’t easy to engage the novel on a level deeper than plot. (Elizabeth hates Darcy. Elizabeth loves Darcy. All ends well.) “If it doesn’t speak to you in a way that’s genuine, it’s difficult to get beyond a surface level of understanding,” says Seeger. In those cases, the tutors can be helpful in guiding the discussion. In her Austen seminar, co-led by tutor Amanda Printz, the opening question—“what is the difference between pride and vanity?”—led students into conversations about Jane’s virtue, the importance of social standing, and the unthinkable concept of a loveless marriage.

Ruth Ann Brown (A11) loves reading novels, but she finds philosophy and politics much easier to talk about in seminar. She had already read *Pride and Prejudice* 11 times by the night her junior seminar met this year to discuss the work. To her, the topics in the George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* seemed deeper, more universal than the conflicts in the Austen novel. “Austen’s style of writing is such a pleasure to read. There’s a way in which you feel like you’re sitting in the room with her. But *Pride and Prejudice* just doesn’t have the depth of *Middlemarch*.”

Several St. John’s alumni who came to the college loving literature and who now read novels with their own students suggest that, just as the laboratory must accommodate modern science, the college may want to consider adding to the seminar reading list works by modern American writers, more contemporary international fiction, works that reflect ethnic and racial diversity, and a few more works by women.

H. Christian Blood (SF02), just completing his doctorate in comparative literature at the University of California, Santa Cruz, offers this suggestion: “I have no desire to reform St. John’s. But if I started a great books college, it would have a lot more fiction on the reading list.”

DEFINING GREATNESS

Since 1937, the criteria for whether a book makes the seminar list have centered on the work’s power to raise persisting questions, be open to rich and varied interpretation, be timeless, yet timely. For Jana Giles (A88), when it comes to fiction, there has to be more. Giles, assistant professor at the University of Louisiana-Monroe, believes a truly great novel will have a puzzle of some kind: “There are interpretations that are stable that you can go through and prove that this is how you come to a certain conclusion. But at



JENNY ELLERBE

JANA GILES (A88) WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE WORKS ON THE PROGRAM THAT REFLECT ETHNIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY.

“A good novel is a masterpiece of language.”

TUTOR JUDY SEEGER

the center is a fundamental uncertainty. That’s probably true of a lot of great novels.”

To illustrate her point, Giles points to *Heart of Darkness* and a passage that she read many times before seeing its importance: “It’s the passage where Marlow and his crew have almost reached Kurtz. They’re on the river with the so-called cannibal crew, though we don’t know if they are actually cannibals. And Marlow has this realization: why have they not eaten me? He sees that they’re hungry. He realizes that these men are exercising, at least in his mind, some kind of ethical restraint, but he doesn’t understand what it is. They have restraint and Kurtz doesn’t, and that’s the pivotal issue in the whole novel. Marlow is always talking about how everything in Africa is indescribable; the truth is he doesn’t need to actually understand the truth in a discursive way for meaning to come home to him.”

Great novels have the power to move us through the thoughts and actions of unforgettable characters, but they also move us in relationship to themes and historical events, says Giles. “Great novels mark their time,” she adds. “They are commentaries emblematic of historical processes.” For example, Giles included a lesser-known novel by Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, in one of her courses because she wanted her students to read about the lives of mill workers during the Industrial Revolution and understand the precedents for labor laws. “Everyone knows that people don’t like being preached at,” she notes, but a novel can help illuminate buried and unexamined opinions just as effectively as a work of philosophy.

Carol Colatrella (A79), professor of literature and cultural studies at Georgia Tech University, finds plot secondary to character and setting. In a novel, she’s seeking “a lot of intimate detail about character and setting” and the opportunity to gain a glimpse of another time and another place. Reading *The Brothers Karamazov* and *Emma* at St. John’s were life-changing experiences for her and helped set her on her path to academe.

Similarly, Stickney most values a novel that creates a world with complicated people. Take the rich universe of a novel such as *The Brothers Karamazov*. In books of this scale, “people do surprising things, or they’re pained, or they’re angered. It’s a place where I get to watch human beings respond, and I have to make sense of it.”

For Christian Blood, a great novel is something that you

never leave behind no matter how many times you move, because no matter how many times you read it, there is something else to uncover. “You can spend your life reading, studying, ruminating, turning it over in your soul and your mind over and over, and then one day you reread a passage and all of a sudden you catch a small detail that’s never stood out before, and it’s as if you’ve never seen that narrative before in your life even though you could recite lengthy passages of it from memory.”

THE READING LIST

It’s always the same dilemma at St. John’s: Time marches on. New works are written. But adding a novel to the reading list means taking something off. And there’s also the problem of epic proportions: seminars on long novels have to be scheduled at the beginning of a semester or after spring break. Preceptorials allow a tutor to offer any interesting novel students are willing to read. Although it’s not on the reading list, *Moby-Dick* is frequently read in preceptorial. Joyce’s *Ulysses* and Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s *A Hundred Years of Solitude* have been recent choices.

Adding contemporary fiction to the seminar reading list would be trickier, because of the question: what goes? Santa Fe’s Stickney can’t imagine not reading Dostoevsky (“he’s so good at the human soul”), though the choice could be *Demons*, or *The Idiot*. As the juniors read Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, they must be reading Jane Austen, but *Emma* and *Persuasion* are good choices, too. “We’re reading philosophers who are talking about human society and how to organize a government, and there’s Jane Austen portraying society in the drawing room.”

A great lover of fiction before he entered St. John’s, Christian Blood left a little frustrated when it came to the novel. “I knew I wasn’t getting the whole story,” he says. “So I went to graduate school in comparative literature to work on the question of the history of the novel.”

In many ways, Blood was more widely read than his peers in grad school; no one else had read Ptolemy, for example. But he was amazed at how much he didn’t know. “What was immediately amazing to me upon arriving in grad school is how much prose fiction there is from antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance,” Blood says. “At St. John’s, students sometimes get the impression that Greco-Roman literature is history, epic and tragedy; that the Middle Ages

is Chaucer; the early-modern period is Cervantes; and that novels are something autochthonous to modernity. I was in for such a shock when I realized what a small slice of literary history the canon [at St. John's] really is." Intending to write on Rabelais for his dissertation, he instead honed in on Greco-Roman literature.

Blood knows that the Program can't be all things to all people, yet he thinks the college should take a look at Apuleius, Chariton, Longus, Petronius, and others "whose narratives explicitly engage with Homer, Plato and Virgil and uncannily anticipate the novel as we know it."

In addition to *what* novels are read, Blood often thinks about *how* novels are read. "I think that in some ways, St. John's presents literature as didactic; you read about a character and you learn how to be like him and not to be like him. Those are the kinds of questions we asked about *Billy Budd* at St. John's."

It was hard for Blood to adapt to classes in graduate school with colleagues who brought Marxist and post-feminist interpretations to the works they read, and the very idea of research took some getting used to. "Any time I looked up something about a work, I felt like I was cheating," he says.

But sometimes he thinks knowing a little bit more about Virginia Woolf might add to an undergraduate's grasp of a novel like *The Waves*, whose author stretched well beyond the boundaries of the conventional narrative. "I understood nothing of that book," says Blood. "Maybe I was a distracted senior, but maybe I would have grasped more if someone had given me some inkling of what she was up to."

If Blood would add works from antiquity, Jana Giles would like to see modern works that explore gender issues and ethnic and cultural diversity. She focused on *Heart of Darkness*, Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and Forster's *Passage to India* for her dissertation, and considers the novels worthy of St. John's. In fiction, there's room for the college to address the oft-heard criticism that that there are



READING MORE AMERICAN NOVELS WOULD GIVE JOHNNIES A BETTER SENSE OF THEIR OWN CULTURE AND HISTORY, SAYS GEORGIA TECH PROFESSOR CAROL COLATRELLA (A79).

too many "dead white men" on the Program. Having grown up in New Mexico and studied in Santa Fe, Giles suggests Native American novelist Leslie Marmon-Silko's *Ceremony*, if not for seminar, then at least for precepts and tutorials. "It's an emotionally and powerfully engaging novel."

Unless they read them in preceptorials or on their own, St. John's students can miss out on some great American novels, Colatrella says. "When I'm teaching my own classes, I think about what kinds of experiences I want students to be exposed to: novels where there are different values and where there's an immersive world with lots of details where students are learning about a different culture, even if it's America," says Colatrella.

Huckleberry Finn addresses this in some respect, but there are also powerful novels about and by American women. For example, Colatrella's students read Edith Wharton's *House of Mirth*. While they initially saw the

protagonist, Lily, as selfish and shallow, they viewed her differently as they thought more about the narrow choices for a woman with limited means during the Gilded Age. *Iola Leroy*, by African-American writer Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, explores slavery and racial identity, and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* portrays the continuing struggles of African-Americans in the Deep South.

St. John's should consider more modern novels for the Program, but at the same time, Colatrella laments that *Moby-Dick* remains off the seminar list. "People who get to read *Moby-Dick* with others are so lucky, because it really is a book that needs to be talked about," she says.

Although she has some suggestions for the reading list, Colatrella appreciates the Program for what it is and should always be. She wouldn't have traded her laboratory classes, math, music, philosophy—the full breadth of the Program—for

for a different beginning to her career. "I came to college with the feeling I shouldn't cut off any pathways. I kept all of my books from St. John's, and I open them now for different reasons."

In future years, novels may come and go from the Program, says tutor Judy Seeger, but whatever is read will enrich the lives of students. "A good novel is a masterpiece of language," she says. "When we read a novel we really have to take into account what is said as well as how it is said. That isn't always easy to do in seminar. But if you can really learn that, then you really understand what it is to read."

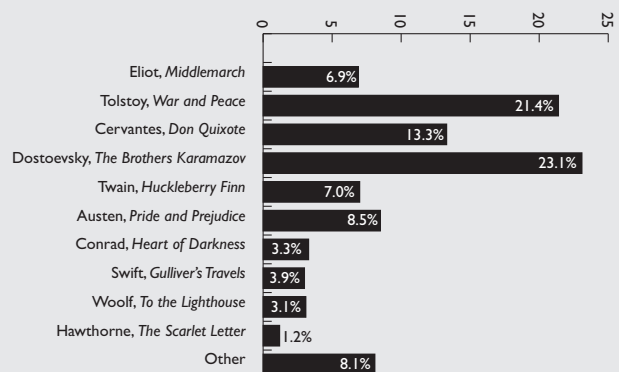
"For the most part," adds Susan Stickney, "I think the novels we read at St. John's teach us *how* to read novels. Then, Johnnies can go out and eat up the whole rest of the world of literature." ❀

THE RUSSIANS WIN

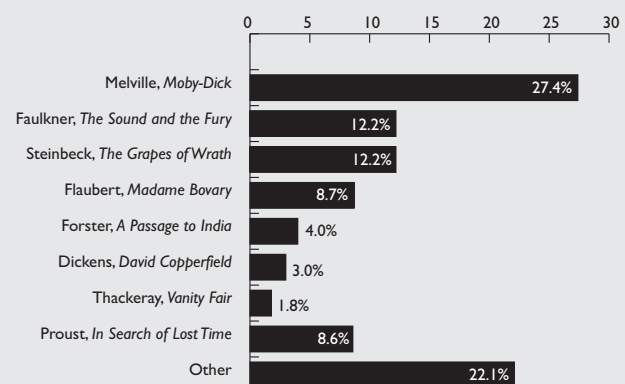
Thanks to the alumni who responded to our short poll through Survey Monkey last winter, we have a slice of Johnnie opinions about the novels read in the undergraduate program. We received 671 responses. As far as the most popular novels read, *The Brothers Karamazov* edged Tolstoy's *War and Peace* by a slim margin, but overall the Russians emerged far ahead of third-place *Don Quixote*. One Johnnie chided us: "Don't you dare make me choose between Dostoevsky and Austen." Other write-in responses include *Mrs. Dalloway*, *The Tale of Genji*, and *The Magic Mountain*.

What novels should be read in seminar that are not on the list now? (Several on our list have been read in precepts, language tutorial, and in the GL. "Most on the list are dreadful or high school," one Johnnie commented.) Melville's *Moby-Dick* came out ahead. We included Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* because it was among one of the first novels read on the New Program, but apparently Johnnies are not keen to see it back. Write-ins for this question included Wharton's *Age of Innocence*, Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Ford's *The Good Soldier*, and Iris Murdoch's *The Black Prince*. We like to think the alumni who suggested *Skinny Legs and All* by Tom Robbins, *The Little Engine that Could*, and *Kujo* were joking. ❀

What was your favorite novel read in Seminar?



What novel should be added to the reading list?



The Virtual Table

JOHNNIES SIGN ON TO FACEBOOK

BY ANNA PERLEBERG (SF02)

“[T]hose who are . . . locally separated are not performing, but are disposed to perform, the activities of friendship; distance does not break off the friendship absolutely, but only the activity of it.”

(Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*)

This morning, Aristotle signed into Facebook: he updated his status to “Lazy day—think my rational soul is still asleep”; wished Alexander the Great a happy 33rd birthday (“Many happy returns!”); tagged himself hoisting an amphora in Theophrastus’ photo album “Wine-Dark Shindig”; added the Prime Mover application (he can move you, but you can’t move him); and for the nth time, ignored a friend request from Thomas Aquinas. Activities of friendship, indeed.

The social networking site Facebook, created in 2004 by a group of Harvard students, takes its name from the once-common (now, one suspects, obsolete) practice by college administrators of distributing Xeroxed, stapled sheaves of student ID pictures as a handy means of linking names with faces. The social utility quickly expanded from Harvard to other universities; in late 2005 it launched a high school version, and since September 2006, it’s been available to anyone over the age of 13 with a valid e-mail address. This is, of course, a good chunk of the world, and indeed, were Facebook a sovereign nation, its population of 350 million unique users would make it the third largest in the world. Seventy percent of these users live outside the United States. And while media continues to regard social networking in general, and Facebook in particular, with a wry, “these kids today” attitude, as of October 2009 one-fifth of folks on FB were over 45.

So what *is* Facebook? Is it a means or an end? Is it an inane waste of time or a revolution in communication? Does it destroy or facilitate discussion, bolster or ruin relationships? Is it a real solution, in a world where our friends are ever more far-flung, to Aristotle’s requirement of proximity for perfect friendship?

PROFILES, FRIENDING, AND THE WALL

The first thing one does after signing up for Facebook is create a profile: an online identity, consisting mostly of lists and affirmations. (*My Neighbor Totoro* is my favorite movie. I was born October 1. I graduated from St. John's College, Santa Fe, in 2002. Here's a picture of my cats!) But as Facebook's interface has evolved, argues Anne Page McClard (SF83), this static, self-promoting element has faded from prominence, in favor of many different forms of interaction. In an article she co-authored for *Anthropology News* in March 2008, she attributes the popularity of Facebook to its ability to "[shift] identity-making on the Web away from the individual to the collective in a new way, enabling low-maintenance, automatically generated, interaction-based content creation." For Johnnies in particular, she says, who "gain satisfaction through conversation, a collective activity," the constant stream of connection is intuitive and comfortable.

These connections take a wide variety of forms. Through Facebook one can invite people to a party or a concert, join groups with common interests, declare fandom for TV shows and philosophers, even play games ranging from old standbys such as Scrabble to complex role-playing games where one pretends to be a vampire or a farmer. The most basic tie, of course, has led to the neologism "to friend" (and its opposite, "to unfriend," the *Oxford English Dictionary's* 2009 Word of the Year). Here, with a single mouse click, one Facebook user gains access to another's entire profile: personal information (the aforementioned lists and affirmations), register of other friends, and the all-important Wall.

The Wall is where most one-on-one Facebook contact takes place; it's a way to promulgate photos, videos, links, and status updates (musings quotidian or epic, posted by a user; e.g., "Anna Perleberg is not on Facebook right now, because this article is due tomorrow"). Depending on privacy settings, whatever gets posted on a person's wall, whether by that person or one of their friends, can be read by any friend of the user. Wondering what I've been up to lately? Head for my Wall and peruse reams of fascinating trivialities, from what I had for dinner one Tuesday (black currant vodka and duck pelmeni in Cointreau sauce) to what people you've perhaps never met and perhaps never will meet think of the meal.



But the genius (and arguably, the danger) of Facebook isn't its ability to link one friend to another; e-mail, telephone, letter-writing, and actually speaking to one another get the job done just as well. Facebook's innovation over previous means of communication lies in its distillation of Wall content from potentially hundreds of friends (the average is around 130, but a profile can have up to 5,000) into one flow of content called the News Feed, a kind of online agora where Wall activities galore appear on one page. Whereas keeping up with dozens of acquaintances of various ages on various continents via face-to-face interaction, or even a phone call, would require vast funds and an exhausting travel schedule—not to mention the social awkwardness of showing up on the doorstep of someone not seen since high school—the Facebook News Feed does it all automatically. Interaction and friendship become effortless, much to Aristotle's delight.

Or maybe they don't.

COMMUNITY AND COUNTERARGUMENT

The genesis of this article was, naturally, a Facebook group I created. "Johnnies on Facebook" currently stands at 265 members; in comparison, the Johnnie Chair, which has its own profile page, has close to 2,200 friends. (The official St. John's College page has about 2,400 and gets about 800 visits a week.) Most members who commented see no contradiction between the examined life and the jovial cacophony of the Wall and the News Feed. Many feel that Facebook facilitates connection: Lauren Yannerella (SF03) thinks that part of the reason she uses Facebook is because she went to St. John's. "Our alumni tend to cover the globe, and it can be

very difficult to keep in touch and stay in the loop. I don't want to lose touch with the general student population, and Facebook means I really don't have to."

For Ruth Johnston (A85), who is an invalid and "pretty severely isolated," Facebook has proved a boon. "I post lots of history trivia. I always read with one eye open for what I can use to amuse the Johnnies. Book illustrators mixed ear wax into egg white to make book paint! The Black Death started as an illness native to Asian groundhogs, known as tarabagans!" She's also enjoyed forming online friendships with Johnnies previously unfamiliar: "I've picked up a range of Johnnies I don't know, as a reward for being interesting. When I went to Homecoming last fall, a few people I wasn't sure I recognized told me, 'Oh, I follow you on FB!'" And while Santa Fe tutor Jacques Duvoisin doesn't usually accept friend requests from current students, he uses the site to "hear from the few alums who really matter to me, as well as all the others who may turn out to be interesting as time passes." Facebook's not a threat to conversation, he says, "since it primarily connects people who otherwise would not be likely to converse at all because of time or space (how Kantian!)."

Not all correspondents painted such a rosy picture. Alexis Brown (SFoo, ECo3) uses Facebook primarily to chat with non-Johnnie friends. "A few folks from SJC who graduated around the same time as I did utilize a chat room to keep in touch with one another on a regular basis (daily). It is very intimate. Facebook is a networking site, and makes it easier to stay in touch with people on a fairly impersonal level. But Facebook is way too impersonal for real conversation." Where Anne Page McClard casts Facebook's communal nature as well-suited to seminar-trained thinkers, Brown feels that "the individual, for me, was a key element in what made a good or bad seminar. The individual is very much a part of a discussion."

Another alumna, Leila Khaleghi (SF05), highlights the peculiar knots of etiquette a Facebooker can find herself in. "People try to contact me on Facebook, we become friends, yada yada. I assume that it's just the 'we went to the same college' thing and think nothing of it. Then they write me messages like we know/knew each other and I literally have no recollection of ever speaking a word to them. What do you do in a situation such as this? Do I play along? I feel like Facebook is always getting me into strange and uncomfortable scenarios."

Brown's assertion that "even if a discussion starts to happen on FB, it falls apart quickly due to limited space, time, format of the site, etc." is indeed borne out by the "Johnnies on Facebook" group itself. An attempt by this intrepid reporter to start a seminar-style discussion on the Aristotle quote above garnered a whopping two responses (although several people had helpful suggestions as to other Program texts that deal with the concept of friendship). And while a cursory search reveals a plethora of Johnnie-related groups—Johnnies Abroad, Johnnies in Medicine, Johnnies in Chicago, Johnnies in Public Policy, Johnnies Do It With Arete—average membership is about 35. Compared with the 400,000 members of the group "I Will Go Slightly Out of My Way To Step On That Crunchy-Looking Leaf," that's negligible, to say the least.

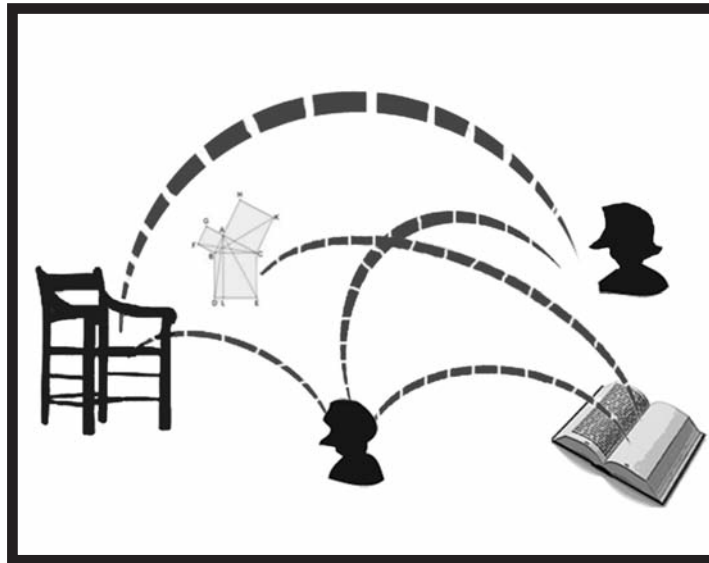
Some Johnnies avoid the site altogether. Jamie Bowman (SF99) confesses he has no logically rigorous reason for his opposition, "besides a gut reaction to anything that many people are so excited about." He's not anti-Internet. "Since 2002, I've run a message board for Santa Fe Johnnies from the mid-to-late '90s. . . . It's a really cool board. It's very active. I think Facebook is slowly killing it. The board (sfjohn-



nies3.yuku.com) is the local Mom & Pop coffee shop and Facebook is Starbucks.” Besides its ubiquity, he dislikes how Facebook can dredge up tenuous associations. “I don’t need to reconnect with the kid who sat next to me in 10th-grade English. I’ve heard many stories of annoying people wanting to be your Facebook friend and you have to make up some excuse why you don’t want to meet them for lunch and ‘catch up.’”

Michael Sullivan (A02) takes a moderate approach. He absented himself from the site for more than six months because he thought it “debases relationships by reducing them all to the lowest common denominator.”

“All of the interactions, with friends I’d been in constant contact with for 10 years or more and those I’d had no knowledge of since finding them on Facebook, seemed equally intimate and superficial,” he said. Recently, though, he resumed posting, admitting that while Facebook is “no substitute for conversation, it’s definitely a substitute for nothing. The fact is that we no longer live in a polis, and if the technology which has broken all familial and social ties by driving us to the four winds doesn’t also bring us back together, then nothing will. If the shallowness of the relationship-preservation that FB offers bothers me, so does the oblivion which is the alternative.”



Utopia or dystopia, Facebook is inhabited by millions. And while a Google search of the phrase “Facebook is destroying” generates 54,000 hits—crediting the social network with damaging the sanctity of marriage, academic performance, the economy, memory, America—it seems prudent to reserve judgment about something that entered the public consciousness less than four years ago. Perhaps Facebook is the new Gutenberg press, part of a paradigm shift in

the way human beings communicate. Perhaps it’s just a diversion. Would that be so bad? Even Aristotle, a thinker not given to frivolity, recognizes that friendship comes in many forms, that “[o]ne cannot be a friend to many people in the sense of having friendship of the perfect type with them. . . . But with a view to utility or pleasure it is possible that many people should please one; for many people are useful or pleasant, and these services take little time.” ❀

Anna Perleberg (SF02) is a Brooklyn bookseller who checks her Facebook two dozen times a day, but remains skeptical of Twitter. Illustrator Caitlin Cass (SF09) recently paid tribute to St. John’s in her collection of illustrations, Great Moments in Western Civilization. Read more about Caitlin on her website: www.greatmomentsinwesternciv.com

Facebook isn’t the only way Johnnies are reaching out in cyberspace. Many alumni are finding a voice in the blogosphere. Here are just a few we’ve heard about:

Lisa Simeone (A79), a writer for Baltimore’s *Style* magazine as well as a National Public Radio host, writes a lively blog called “Glamour Girl.” Want to gain some tips on Jackie O’s simple, but elegant style? Check out Glamour Girl at: www.baltimorestyle.com/index.php/style/glamour_girl.

Alana Chernila (SF02) blogs about food and life and raising kids. Every post includes a new recipe, as well as some spectacular photos of raspberries, rhubarb, and her campaign signs (read the blog for more on that). The blog has a friendly,

personable approach. Check out her recipe for herb dumplings at www.eatingfromthegroundup.com.

Nate Downey (SF91), author of *Harvest the Rain*, writes a blog on sustainability at www.backyarddigest.com. Downey is an advocate for “gradual greening,” which starts with devoting 10 minutes a day to sustainable living. Read about his visits to the farmer’s market, composting, and just getting outside.

Baltimore bloggers Lou Kovacs (A02) and Talley Scroggs Kovacs (A01) borrowed the name of a famous book about the Chesapeake Bay (*Beautiful Swimmers*) for a blog about “kitchen exploits, urban adventures, country forays, and little one’s milestones.” (<http://thebeautifulswimmers.blogspot.com>)

SAM AND CURTIS

LOOK BACK ON A LIFE SPENT AT ST. JOHN'S

BY ROSEMARY HARTY (AG109)

Few people know the college as well as Curtis Wilson (HA83), tutor emeritus and former dean, and Samuel Kutler (class of 1954), tutor emeritus and former dean. Wilson came to the college in 1948 as a young tutor, just after Barr and Buchanan departed. Kutler was headed to the University of Chicago until he learned of a college with about 200 students where he could study math and read philosophy. What's most remarkable about these two individuals is the way they live the life of the mind. Both remain active and involved in the college, and intensely, intellectually curious. Until recently, Kutler was still leading seminars in the Graduate Institute, delivering lectures, and working on a book about poetry and mathematics. Wilson was awaiting the publication of his new book, *The Hill-Brown Theory of the Moon's Motion: Its Coming-to-be and Short-lived Ascendancy* (1877-1984).

They sat down together in Annapolis this winter to share their memories from six decades at St. John's.

ON CHOOSING ST. JOHN'S

Curtis: I was in the history department at Columbia and was having trouble with my dissertation. I was assigned to study a 15th-century Italian and do something like a previous student of my advisor had done with another 15th-century Italian. This was all on the premise that Galileo was only following things that were already proposed and done in the Middle Ages—the thesis of continuity. My gut feeling was that there had been a revolution sometime around there, and it was *not* continuity. A friend suggested I attend lectures by Leo Strauss at the New School for Social Research, so I went and listened to his lectures on Plato's *Republic*. These were wonderful to me because you studied the text very carefully and then thought out possible interpretations. You didn't try to fit the text into some historical theme proposed by scholars. Then my friend suggested I should go down to St. John's and talk with Jacob Klein, and he added, "by the way, when you're there, ask for a job." I'd had disappointing interviews; people willing to hire me, but it meant imposing some context on me. St. John's was just—fresh air! We would actually read the books you need to read in order to have opinions about history or to know that your opinions were not worthwhile.

Sam: I had wanted to go to the University of Chicago, but when I read the St. John's catalog, I said, "that's what I want to do." That we studied the ancients was unbelievably important to me. That we studied ancient mathematics before ending up in the senior year with the calculus—that was priceless. You could see the change Descartes and company brought about. Most people think mathematics is one thing, but it isn't one river like that.

ON LABORATORY AND LANGUAGE

Curtis: I was asked by [then dean] Raymond Wilburn to teach a class in organic chemistry when I got here—to the whole senior class, about 40 students. Scott Buchanan and Stringfellow Barr's departure was a towering fact, and the seniors effected a pervasive melancholy. These were the after days; the glory days



JENNIFER BEHRENS

were gone. A second fact of some import to me was that these students knew no chemistry whatsoever. Teaching them organic chemistry was a problem because of that, and it was made sort of a crisis because the textbook was a cookbook, nothing more. We started out by making cleaning solution that was potentially lethal, and not used in college laboratories nowadays.

The students were totally skeptical of this enterprise and with good reason. Somehow, in mid-course, I took them through an elementary history of chemistry, to seek why and how the atomic theory got established. I asked them to write papers about that, and they did a good job. What had happened was that the lab program had proved a difficulty for the college, and at some point before I arrived, a decision was made to use ordinary textbooks. This was not at all in accordance with anything related to the Program, and with others I spent the next 10 years working primarily in the laboratory to try to find ways of doing things that might be more helpful to students.

Sam: Curtis was on sabbatical when I got here in 1950. We were still making scary things in the laboratory. We called one the universal solution, and the theory we had was that it would eat through anything there is on earth if it got through glass. We thought it could eat through us and right down to the center of the earth!

There were also some really good discussions in the laboratory, so I found it a good experience. But then, and over the

SAM KUTLER (LEFT, CLASS OF 1954) KNEW CURTIS WILSON (HA83) AS ONE OF HIS TUTOR; LATER THEY SERVED TOGETHER AS TUTOR. BOTH MEN HAVE SERVED AS DEAN, AND BOTH HAVE STAYED VERY INVOLVED IN THE LIFE OF THE COLLEGE EVEN AFTER RETIRING.

years, it was tough for the poor students to fit laboratory into the schedule. All the other classes were five days a week, and laboratories were only twice. You were preparing crazily to get your language, mathematics, and laboratory done. I studied calculus with Curtis, and it was really rigorous. We sure went through the theory of everything. There were a group of young tutors here, Robert Bart, Hugh McGrath, Curtis—they were a splendid group.

Curtis: Hugh and Bob were especially concerned with language. Latin had been taken out of the program and we got two years of Greek. Then there was a thought that we could have some time for English poetry, something a little different at the end of the second year.

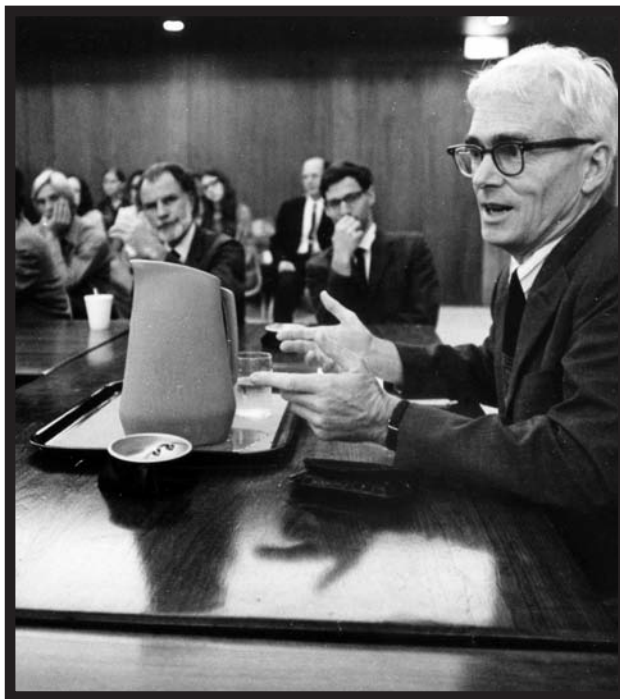
Sam: I didn't benefit from that. We had two solid years of Greek, and we translated every word of the *Hippolytus* of Euripides. When I came back as a tutor, then we worked English poetry in the second terms of tutorials. But it still seems a shame to have just a year and a half with the Greek language.

The community was very small. Not everything about that was good, but you knew everybody and when there was a play performed, you expected every single faculty member to be there and say that you were very good, whether you were or not. I was in *The Winter's Tale*, and that's where I met my wife (Emily, class of 1955).

ON DEAN JACOB KLEIN

Curtis: I visited the college initially in April 1948, in the spring, to talk with Jacob Klein about my dissertation. I met him first in what was then the Senior Common Room. He was seated on a red leather sofa, which I think is still possessed somewhere at the college. He smoked cigarettes and his cigarette ash fell on his vest so he would be perpetually wiping away ash. I told him about the subject I was assigned and he said, "nonsense, all nonsense." I was at a stage where that seemed a very gratifying statement. He really felt the responsibility of being dean, and he took it very seriously. He talked to the whole college and said, "The Golden Age of Athens is succeeded by the Alexandrian period. We (St. John's) are in the Alexandrian period." He was trying to address this pervasive melancholy [post Barr and Buchanan], and what he was saying was, "we have to get down to work." I admired him tremendously.

Sam: He would appear in the Coffee Shop at lunchtime and everybody would gather around him and he would start a discussion, even though he had work to do as dean. I remember once when students tried to grab him and ask about Picasso. And he said, "I'll tell you about Picasso; he was always thinking." And whish! He was gone. As a student, I thought that he always had been dean and he always would be dean. The main thing about St. John's was that we read old books, and we took them with complete seriousness, and he helped enormously with that because they were so important in his life, Plato and Aristotle. And the college became settled around that.



TUTOR EMERITUS CURTIS WILSON SERVED TWO TERMS AS DEAN AND WAS ONE OF THE FIRST FACULTY MEMBERS IN SANTA FE.

ON PRESIDENT RICHARD WEIGLE

Curtis: He brought the necessary attempts to raise funds. But there was always a tension between him and Jacob Klein; Jasha watched him like a hawk, thinking something dreadful was likely to happen. For instance, Dick Weigle wanted to institute having Phi Beta Kappa here. It was derailed. Then there were a lot of discussions before the dedication of the new Mellon building; certain people were to be named honorary fellows of St. John's. Some people wanted strongly to have Barr and Buchanan so named—but not Adler!

Sam: As a student, I didn't appreciate Dick Weigle. It was only after he spent 32 years as president that I realized how lucky we were to have him. He really cared about the good of the college and he sure kept us alive. The college was concerned about growing too big, and we thought 300 students was the perfect number. One day, students burned Weigle in effigy because they thought he wanted to make the college bigger. He did so by creating the Santa Fe campus—it was very, very important to him. And he brought us the women: the women saved us!

ON MORTIMER ADLER

Curtis: He's not enormously interesting in my opinion. He influenced some people in his book *How to Read a Book*, and many people learned of St. John's because of it. He had the opinion that he'd come every year to lecture, but that wasn't true. It was a picture he built up and believed.

Sam: It was true to me! When I was dean he would call me up and tell me when he was free to come to lecture.

Curtis: On one of the Adler occasions, the prank was to release from the back of the auditorium some thousands of marbles, which then rolled downhill and gave a most unnatural sound. Mr. Weigle stood up at the time and apologized for it. A year or two later, Adler had dinner in our dining room, and I told him what that sound had been. He said, "If I'd only known, I could have said I think I've lost my marbles!"

ON BEING DEAN

Curtis: My first deanship was 1958-62. I found it difficult, and I was discouraged sometimes, but we did do a few things. We eliminated German, got two years of French, and instituted the preceptorials. You can't believe how much discouragement and depression was rampant in the upper levels of the student body at that time. They'd been doing the same thing in so many ways. We needed to stimulate intellectual excitement and interest. It seemed a good idea to some of us that tutors should choose topics that they themselves had some interest in pursuing and that allowed for variety.

The Program is not a complete education for anybody. The idea is—and always has been at St. John's—that you'd better go on learning after leaving the college, for 60 or so years, whatever is available to you.

I think the dean's opening lecture is enormously important. Somehow or other, by example or engagement, the dean should open up questions, inspire his or her audience with the ideal of a life of inquiry. It needs to be fresh and unexpected. No, I didn't and don't know how to do it! And I drove my family crazy in the summers when I was trying to concoct my efforts in that genre.

ON CHANGE AND THE COLLEGE

Curtis: It's natural for change to happen at St. John's, and it's not something to be bemoaned. I remember I spent a semester at the University of Toronto in the '90s and met one of the students I'd had the previous year. And he immediately spoke



SAM KUTLER LEFT A JOB AS A MATHEMATICIAN AT JOHNS HOPKINS' APPLIED PHYSICS LABORATORY TO JOIN THE COLLEGE FACULTY.

up, worried that the "special thing" that his class had would vanish from the earth since they'd left St. John's. Some like to talk about a "Golden Age." I don't know about the Golden Age because when I came it had just vanished. But I look back on my times with members of Sam's class as a very special time. We were having good conversations. The students were learning, and I was learning.

Sam: What can't change? Imagine if we read only modern books? Or even worse, only ancient books? That interplay

between the two is one of the most important things that we do.

WHAT ST. JOHN'S MEANT IN YOUR LIFE

Curtis: It's like asking a fish to explain how it is to be in the water. I think my habit of questioning is potentially very good. Not always! There are hostile circumstances in which questioning is not welcomed and as a consequence, not immediately helpful. Then one must work quietly towards improving the atmosphere. But we need potential whistleblowers in our society. We need people to say: "We don't get it—why are we here?" It's those people who are going to make the difference.

Sam: My student years at St. John's—they were magic years for me. I think I would have had greater tunnel vision had I not come here, and the factors were my fellow students. And the faculty. There are plenty of works I probably wouldn't have read if I hadn't come to St. John's: Platonic dialogues, Aristotle. And I've read a lot of Shakespeare since coming to St. John's. Could you imagine not reading Shakespeare? ❖

“WE ARE THE DANAANS TO YOUR TROY”

“ST. JOHN’S FIGHT SONG”

O Johnnie, as you play croquet,
Defend our honor on this day.
Your battle cry: Let Middies kneel
To the form of Good reveal.
O hear us when we boldly say,
Defeat the Middies at croquet.

O ye who books do seldom read,
Your unexamined lives concede.
Beware each Middy girl and boy,
We are the Danaans to your Troy!
O hear us when we boldly say,
Defeat the Middies at croquet!
Amen.



DOUG PLUMMER

BEN HUTCHINS (A10) GREETES MIDSHIPMAN AMANDA HOWARD BEFORE THE START OF THE ANNUAL MATCH.

In the fall of 2001, tutor Tom May noticed his students needed more practice singing in four-part harmony and that fewer students seemed to have experience in singing hymns. Casting about for something to sing, May came up with the Navy Hymn. “I couldn’t think of anything more appropriate, and I thought we should sing it at Croquet.”

The Navy Hymn sung at the Academy is adopted from Britain’s Royal Navy. The original words were written as a poem in 1860 by William Whiting, and the melody was by the Rev. John Bacchus Dykes, who originally composed the tune as a song called “Melita.” As the students practiced the hymn for the croquet match, May wondered what else they could perform in honor of St. John’s.

While the college has a fight song, May has never been a fan: “It’s very dated, it’s all about the ‘men of St. John’s,’ and it sounds like a Franz Liszt reject.” Instead, he suggested to his students that they develop new lyrics for a Johnnie version of the Navy Hymn.

“Ms. (Tanya) Hadlock-Piltz (A05) came to me with the words, and after a few changes, we printed them below the more familiar lyrics to sing at croquet,” May recalls. “The first year, there was no announcement. We sang ‘The Star-Spangled Banner,’ then the Navy Hymn, and then we just vamped right into singing the St. John’s song. It was interesting to watch the change of expression. By the time we got to the lyrics ‘beat the Middies at croquet,’ it was perfectly clear that we weren’t singing the Navy Hymn anymore.”

This year, May was surprised by the number of students and alumni singing along. He’d like to see even more Johnnies join in, so clip out the words and be ready to sing next April! ✱

NAVY HYMN

Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who bidd’st the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep;
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,
For those in peril on the sea!

Most Holy Spirit! Who didst brood
Upon the chaos dark and rude,
And bid its angry tumult cease,
And give, for wild confusion, peace;
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee,
For those in peril on the sea!



SARAH CULVER



JUDY MCBRIDE



JUDY MCBRIDE

The 28th annual croquet match against the Naval Academy took place Saturday, April 18. More than 2,000 spectators turned out for the match, with the Johnnies prevailing, 5-zip.

That makes 23 St. John's victories since the match began. Fully embracing the misnomer of St. John's as "that basketball school," Johnnies suited up in basketball uniforms and headbands for their sound defeat of the cardigan-clad Mids. ❁



DOUG PLUMMER



DOUG PLUMMER



JUDY MCBRIDE

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CITALI AND PATRICK McDOWELL (A01); LUKE RUSSELL (A09); FASHIONISTA AND FAMILY; SPECTACULAR HATS WERE ON DISPLAY; PICNICS; SWING DANCING.

J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER, THE COLD WAR, AND THE ATOMIC WEST

by Jon Hunner (SF74)
Oklahoma University Press, 2009

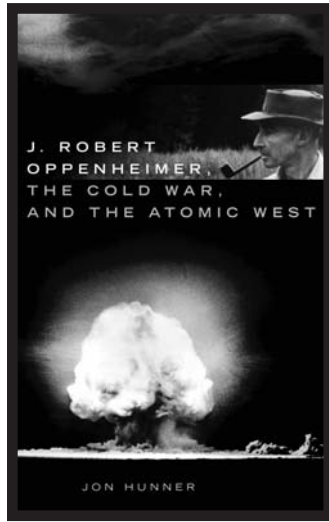
In November 1942, a professor of physics from Berkeley and an Army colonel on a secret government mission drove through New Mexico's Jemez Mountains to an isolated boys' boarding school. J. Robert Oppenheimer and Col. Leslie Groves were evaluating sites for a top-secret laboratory. As Jon Hunner (SF74) recounts in his book, *J. Robert Oppenheimer, The Cold War, and the Atomic West*, the Los Alamos Ranch School was not an ideal site to build an atomic bomb. But Oppenheimer, the improbable civilian director of the Manhattan Project, loved New Mexico:

"Even though Los Alamos did not fit the selection criteria for the lab's location, Oppie wanted the site. He had lamented in the 1930s that it was a pity he could not combine two of the loves of his life—physics and New Mexico. Los Alamos fulfilled his dream," Hunner writes.

Oppenheimer initially thought he would need about half a dozen scientists to help him develop the atomic bomb. "By the fall of 1945," Hunner writes, "approximately 5,000 men, women and children lived on the Hill." The work of these individuals, who raised families and lived "normal" lives while they worked to build a devastating weapon, contributed to a new era in human history. The West was transformed as a burgeoning atomic industry took root.

Hunner, professor of history at New Mexico State University, has long been fascinated with Los Alamos. His dissertation at the University of New Mexico, a social and cultural history of Los Alamos, developed into his first book, *Inventing Los Alamos: The Growth of an Atomic Community*. He spent 14 years researching and writing that book, yet still felt "I had really just scratched the surface" concerning Oppenheimer.

Hunner was eager to return to the subject. Oppenheimer was an enigmatic character whose life was filled with great triumphs and staggering personal tragedies. He grew up in a wealthy Jewish family in New York City; his brilliance was



the impact of New Mexico on Los Alamos," Hunner explains. "A lot of people came from Ivy League colleges, and they started wearing cowboy boots. Oppenheimer was right there with them."

Oppenheimer earned his bachelor's in chemistry in Harvard in three years. He spent a disastrous year in experimental physics at Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge before moving to theoretical physics at the University of Göttingen. After he finished his doctorate, he had many positions to choose from, and in part because of his attraction to the West, headed to Berkeley.

As a professor, Oppenheimer was a great theoretical physicist, but most of his students couldn't understand his lectures. When word came that two German scientists had split the atom, Oppenheimer joined others in seeking to unlock the secrets to developing atomic weapons. His scientific acumen—but perhaps more so his naked ambition—helped him stand out among other candidates for the job as civilian director of the Manhattan Project. Although he had never even managed a physics department, Oppenheimer turned out to be a successful manager of the project. Hunner describes the city that grew from the

laboratory, as workers and scientists brought their families, built schools and hospitals and went about their lives, mostly in ignorance of the laboratory's work. He describes the Trinity test, on July 16, 1945, as well as Oppenheimer's reaction: "Around 6:30 a.m., he commented: 'My faith in the human mind has been somewhat restored.'"

recognized at a young age. When he became ill as a young man, he was sent west to recover and fell in love with New Mexico. He later bought a cabin in the mountains that would become a lifelong refuge for him and his family. "I definitely try to understand the impact of Los Alamos on New Mexico, but also

laboratory, as workers and scientists brought their families, built schools and hospitals and went about their lives, mostly in ignorance of the laboratory's work. He describes the Trinity test, on July 16, 1945, as well as Oppenheimer's reaction: "Around 6:30 a.m., he commented: 'My faith in the human mind has been somewhat restored.'"

Hunner admires Oppenheimer in part for his intelligence and charisma, but also for "his attempt, after he opened up the Pandora's box of atomic weapons, to try to figure out ethically what he could do" to prevent the world from destroying itself. The scientist joined others in a movement called One World or None, which advocated the creation of an international agency to control atomic weapons.

While Oppenheimer's downfall occurred during the McCarthy era, he was more a victim of J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI, of former colleagues who were eager to discredit him, and of his own bad decisions. The hearing on Oppenheimer's security clearance (which allowed him to play a key role as an advisor on U.S. atomic policy) was supposed to be secret. "But as soon as the hearing was over, the head of the atomic energy commission released a 1,000-page transcript to newspapers," Hunner points out. "It was a well-orchestrated campaign to discredit Oppenheimer because he was starting to publicly question the official policy. It was partly political, partly personal vindictiveness, and it was also a fork in the road for our atomic policy."

Oppenheimer wanted a public, open dialogue about atomic weapons. Those like Teller, who would eventually prevail, advocated secrecy. Oppenheimer was also growing increasingly concerned about the potential consequences of the military-industrial complex in the United States.

After he joined Princeton's Institute for Advanced Studies, Oppenheimer continued to try to influence public policy. He was a sought-after lecturer and appeared on television programs. During the Kennedy years, his reputation "was kind of rehabilitated by the government," says Hunner. Oppen-



JON HUNNER

heimer died of cancer in 1967.

The interest in Los Alamos and Oppenheimer has roots in Hunner's personal history. He grew up in the 1950s and '60s in Albuquerque, and his father administered atomic weapons programs for the Air Force. "We had photographs of atomic bomb mushroom clouds hanging on our walls," Hunner recalls. "Then when I went to St. John's and started talking to my classmates, I realized that not everybody grew up with photographs of atomic bombs, and no one else's parents worked with atomic weapons. It was kind of a shock."

His family history is one reason Hunner considers Los Alamos and Oppenheimer from a viewpoint other historians may not share. His book details the devastation in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but he also tallies the millions of lives lost in conventional warfare in World War II. "I think when we look at the morality of this weapon of mass destruction, it's easy to be pro or con, but because my own father was involved with administering nuclear weapons, it's not so black and white for me," he explains. "I don't want to think of my father as someone who was ready to blow up the world. I like to argue that this is a horrendous weapon, and it has horrendous implications for humanity. But it also helped end the most horrendous war in history."

—ROSEMARY HARTY

STATESIDE

by Jehanne Dubrow (A97)
Northwest University Press, 2010

Jehanne Dubrow's latest volume of poetry, *Stateside*, explores a timely theme: the everyday lives of partners, spouses, and families left behind when a loved one in military service ships out to a war zone. Dubrow wrote the poems before her husband, Navy Lt. Jeremy Schaub (A97), left last winter for an eight-month tour of duty. Yet the poems are written from an authentic viewpoint of uncertainty, fear, loneliness—and at times, anger.

Inspired by the *Odyssey*, the volume is divided into three sections: before, during, and after a deployment. Military terminology is mingled with domestic images, a civilian life contrasted with a life of military service. In "O' Dark Hundred" the writer imagines her husband's pre-dawn shift: "My words are just reflections from the shore, / and the page, imperfect mirror of



JENNIFER BEHRENS

JEHANNE DUBROW

his ship, / where white lights blink above each metal door."

"Love in the Time of Coalition" combines images of a lover's attention to a woman with sinister words such as "toxin," "sarin," and "plutonium." "At the Mall with Telemachus" portrays a harried military wife dealing with a child's temper tantrum in the food court. And "Whiskey Tango Foxtrot," coyly profane, describes the moment when a wife first hears the news that her husband is headed to a war zone.

When Dubrow and Schaub dated as students in Annapolis, she couldn't have imagined she would one day be a Navy wife, separated for months at a time without definitive word on her husband's whereabouts. After graduating, Dubrow stayed in Annapolis, managed a coffee shop, read Proust, and became serious about poetry. The couple broke up, and Dubrow went on to earn an MFA at the University of Maryland and a PhD at the University of Nebraska.

Although they had a "tragic, dramatic breakup," Dubrow knew that Schaub had joined the Navy, and after 9/11, she got in touch. They started e-mailing, got back together, managed a long-distance relationship while she finished her doctorate, and were married in 2005. Schaub is about five months into an eight-month deployment "on a ship somewhere"; Dubrow is an assistant professor at Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland.

When her husband first raised the idea of

volunteering for deployment more than a year ago, "the danger of his work became very real to me," Dubrow explains. That's when she began writing poems about families and the military, and she conducted research on the military wife in literature. "What I quickly discovered was that she's almost an entirely silent figure," Dubrow says. "Basically, the only model we have is Penelope, who is a highly impractical model for a woman in the 21st century. She's patient, she's devout, she's chaste—basically, unimpeachable. The standards she sets are impossible."

While the book doesn't mirror her own experiences, Dubrow says the poems allowed her to express her views and frustrations: "I distrust this pressure from the military for women to be silent about their

misgivings and to not express when things are difficult because that looks like weakness or it looks unpatriotic." Her poems in *Stateside* seek to show that a woman's patriotic sacrifices are no less heroic because they take place on the home front.

Dubrow has always drawn from her own life and her sense of identity for her poems. Her first volume of poetry, *The Hardship Post* (2009), explores her Jewish identity through the experience of being a diplomat's daughter. Dubrow conducted research for her second collection, *From the Fever-World*, during a fellowship at the United States Holocaust Museum. The work is a collection of fragments written in the voice of a Yiddish poet, the product of Dubrow's imagination.

Not quite finished with the themes she explored in *Stateside*, Dubrow is now writing a book of lyrical essays on being married to the military. In addition, she's editing an anthology of modern Jewish poetry and finishing up a volume of poems exploring her adolescence in Eastern Europe before and after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The poems use "the oppressive tyrannical language of Communism to speak about the oppressiveness of the adolescent body. Adolescence is a morbid, embarrassing, naked time—it makes for great poems." ❖

—ROSEMARY HARTY

ARISTOTLE IN NEW ORLEANS, *MEDITATIONS* IN MAINE

Like evangelists, alumni bring St. John's ways to the world

BY ROSEMARY HARTY

Before they even had children, Aaron Lewis (A95) and his wife, Elizabeth, worked to get their small parish school to adopt a classical/traditional curriculum. Kirsten Jacobson (SF96) started a series of philosophy seminars at a local high school, with her undergraduate students serving as seminar leaders. At Tulane University, Ryan McBride (SFG196) created a program that seeks to make debate champions of middle-schoolers, and Lee Perlman (A73) is part of a new freshman program at MIT that brings together humanities and the sciences.

Much like Scott Buchanan, who brought great books to working adults in New York City before he helped bring them to St. John's, these Johnnies believe classics are for everyone.

RYAN MCBRIDE, ARISTOTLE IN NEW ORLEANS

What is virtue? The students in Ryan McBride's undergraduate philosophy classes at Tulane University are reading about the concept in Aristotle and Plato, but they're also trying to be more virtuous by working as volunteer debate coaches for middle-school students in New Orleans public schools. McBride, a postdoctoral fellow at Tulane, created "Aristotle in New Orleans" as a Tulane project that combines academics with service learning. In St. John's terms, McBride explains, his class is like a preceptorial on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, "with a lab mixed in where we go out and take part in our community."

His idea was simple: "Rather than just talking about what virtue is, why don't we go out into the world and practice generosity and courage and see how they are components of the good life?"

McBride himself was never a debater. But his interest in Aristotle led him to Book VIII of the *Topics*, where Aristotle describes gymnastic dialect, a type of competitive exercise. He decided to create a course based around these dialectical battles. McBride's students revived this style of debate and used their experiences as a basis for thinking about method in Aristotle's *Ethics* and Platonic dialogues.



INSPIRED BY ARISTOTLE AND QUINTILIAN, RYAN MCBRIDE (SFG196), FIFTH FROM LEFT, BACK ROW, CREATED A COURSE THAT PAIRS PHILOSOPHY WITH TEACHING MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS HOW TO DEBATE.

Before moving to New Orleans, McBride was a visiting assistant professor at St. Norbert University. After graduating from the GI, he taught English at the University of Oregon, then earned his doctorate at Marquette University. As a grad student, McBride spent summers in New Orleans, and he applied for the post-doc fellowship because he loves the city.

None of the three middle schools had a debate team before McBride launched his project last fall. With his department's approval, he required a mandatory 40 hours of service from every student who signed up for his course. His undergraduates adjusted quickly to the younger students, "although some of my students are a little overwhelmed to be in a middle school," especially where students are from economically disadvantaged families.

Studying the way words work for Aristotle and Plato gives the Tulane students an interesting way to understand a debate. Quintilian helps by giving classical, yet practical, advice. "Quintilian makes the pursuit of becoming the ideal orator into a game, something that should be fun," he says.

In their first three debates, the middle-schoolers have done quite well. "You can't believe how these kids—who were terrified to speak in front of five or six kids—develop

the composure to be articulate and on the ball in front of hundreds of people. They're fearless," he says.

McBride plans to try to expand Aristotle in New Orleans to reach more schools. He can count on his undergraduates: of his 40 coaches who took his class last semester, 12 came back to continue as volunteers.

LEE PERLMAN, CONCOURSE

Lee Perlman has been teaching in MIT's freshman alternative program, the Experimental Studies Program, for many years. Now he's pleased to be a part of a renewed emphasis on integrating the sciences and the humanities through a freshman program called Concourse. The project's roots go back four years, when Perlman began teaching a class with MIT Professor Bernhard Trout on "The Philosophical History of Energy," which began with Aristotle and ended up with modern science.

"We got the idea of trying to start another one of these freshman alternative programs, a great-books-oriented program. We went to the dean in charge and talked to him, and it turned out a program already existed, called Concourse."

Several decades ago, the university created the program to address concerns raised over the division of the sciences and

humanities, as articulated by C.P. Snow in his famous essay, "The Two Cultures." Over the years, says Perlman, "that mission faded, and it became a teaching community, with classes, a lounge, a kitchen, but no real distinct character."

This year, Trout and Perlman began working to revive the original mission of Concourse. Trout will be the new director, and Perlman will teach yearlong courses in the humanities. The program is starting out slowly, with 60 freshman enrolled in year-long courses each year, but he hopes to see it grow to look more like a core texts curriculum, open to more students.

Perlman earned a PhD at MIT and taught at Swarthmore and Brown before returning to MIT's Experimental Study Group in 1994. Over the years, he's taught courses including a seminar on ancient Greek mathematics and a class on the Philosophy of Love. What is missing in this program, however, is giving students the opportunity to make connections across the disciplines. "What I found after I started teaching ancient Greek philosophy was that in the end, it was really an ethics course. But put that together with a course on how the Greeks thought about mathematics and our place in the universe and that gives you surprising conclusions."

Perlman is excited about the possibilities for Concourse. "My goal is to re-create St. John's to the extent that it's possible and appropriate in a place like MIT," explains Perlman.

KIRSTEN JACOBSON, PHILOSOPHY ACROSS THE AGES

For Kirsten Jacobson, teaching philosophy is just one part of her job—getting students to really talk about philosophical ideas and their real-world applications is more important. With that in mind, Jacobson recently launched a program called "Philosophy across the Ages," connecting University of Maine undergraduates with Orono High School students through seminar-style discussions of key texts of philosophy. The undergraduates lead sessions by asking a well-crafted opening question. This semester, the students started by reading Plato's

Apology and *Crito*. Later in the year, they took on readings Descartes' *Meditations* and de Beauvoir's *Ethics of Ambiguity*.

Jacobson thrived in the seminar setting at St. John's, having transferred from Middlebury. She earned her PhD at Penn State, and specializes in 19th- and 20th-century continental philosophy. Her teaching style is very much influenced by St. John's. "A lot of my students say, 'your courses are so different because you're so committed to getting us to talk,'" Jacobson says.

Currently about 10 high school students are signed up; about three or four University of Maine students take part in each seminar. Jacobson and her students meet in advance to discuss the major themes of a text and choose an opening question. "I really emphasize that I want them to think about not instructing the students, but trying to engage the text, lead the conversation, and encourage discussion."

Jacobson finds it amazing and significant that teenagers want to read Plato and Descartes, and she's consistently surprised by the depth of their thinking. For example, in a seminar on the *Apology*, the students talked about how important it is to question authority, that there is a danger to society if everyone blindly follows the rules. On the other hand, another student pointed out that anarchy would result if no one followed the laws.

With the belief that "philosophy really is for everyone," Jacobson titled her program "Philosophy across the Ages" with a double-entendre in mind: "I hope we'll be having seminars with folks in local retirement communities soon. These conversations should be happening at all stages of our lives."



KIRSTEN JACOBSON (SF96, RIGHT) HOPES HER HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT "PHILOSOPHY ACROSS THE AGES" IS THE BEGINNING OF A SERIES OF PHILOSOPHY SEMINARS IN ORONO.

AARON LEWIS: IMMANUEL LUTHERAN SCHOOL

For many years, Aaron Lewis worked on Capitol Hill; now he's a marketing executive in D.C. But for the last decade, he's had a side pursuit: working with his parish, Immanuel Lutheran, to bring the trivium and quadrivium to the parish's school in Alexandria, Virginia. Now that it's firmly in place, he's been "gobsmacked" at how successful the model has been.

Lewis and his wife, Elizabeth, worked to get the curriculum accepted by the parish before they started their own family. (They now have three daughters.) Yet Lewis was so convinced that a classical education was right for the school that he worked to overcome the initial skepticism that some parishioners felt about the enterprise. Lewis served on the search committee for the new principal, and his wife was on the school board. "About six years ago, we hired a principal who was strictly classical," says Lewis. "He slowly converted the curriculum from progressive to classical, hiring teachers that had experience teaching a classical curriculum and training Immanuel's rostered teachers in the ways of classical education."

Lewis has enough political and marketing experience to know how to gain support for the idea. In an area where private schools are sought after, and property values closely monitored, the Lewises promoted the idea that school's academic program would be equally attractive to parents and parishioners without children. And finally, "since it's a Lutheran school, we sold it to the parish with the idea that Martin Luther would have studied under a similar curriculum."

The Lewises couldn't be more pleased with the way the school is thriving. Their oldest daughter will start pre-school there in the fall. "Once a liberal education is in your bones, you really have to pass it on," Lewis says. ✿

1946

In March, **PETER WEISS** spoke on “The Goldstone Report: Does International Law Really Matter?” at the Church Center for the United Nations. His answer: “Yes, and the vicious attacks on Justice Goldstone prove it.”

1956

JOHN CHASE is a maverick who doesn’t believe in “careers,” but in following his heart. Following his military service, he attended acting school in England and was a professional actor, teacher, playwright and director for several years. He later lived on a farm in Maine and had a house-painting business in North Carolina. He returned to Maine and ran a charter sailing business out of Friendship, a small lobstering community. Now back in N.C., he devotes his time to reciting poetry, writing, and observing nature. He is currently employed by the U.S. Census Bureau.

1958

JOHN BREMER has retired from his endowed chair at Cambridge College and is living peaceably in Ludlow, Vt., with his marmalade cat, Molly. Last year he gave the commencement address at the College of St. Joseph in Rutland, Vt., and was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Humanities. He has just finished a new version of the *Iliad* and continues to write on Plato. He is on the board of Black River Academy Museum in Ludlow and is writing a history of early Ludlow for the museum; he has also devised a celebration for Shakespeare’s birthday for the museum. His book *Plato’s Ion* was nominated for the Steven Runciman Award.

“’TIS TO ANOTHER SEA”

RICHARD MOREHOUSE (A83) “was sailing along fine as an art dealer in 20th-century photographs (morehousegallery.com) when the recession came along and decimated my clients.” Morehouse is grateful to the college for preparing him for inevitable change. “I am now working in sales for a company that makes the world’s most scalable software for time series data and events (osisoft.com). It used to be easier to describe my work! But the new job is fascinating. I am lucky to be a re-trainable member of the workforce at a time when jobs are disappearing, never to return. I credit St. John’s for distinguishing tethered knowledge from untethered true opinion. We never got any of the latter kind (none at least from the 21st century). Therefore, by rejection of the absurd, we must have gotten the former kind—the kind that gets one through recessions and other turbulent times.” ❀

locate Tin City Hotel construction site on Jalan Sultan Idris Shah.”

News from **BART LEE**: “My son Christoffer Lee (and two partners) just won the world championship Negotiation Prize in Leipzig. He is a second-year law student at Hastings College of the Law, San Francisco, and interning for his second federal judge. There does come a time when one is more forthcoming about the accomplishments of progeny than one’s own! Nonetheless, I am pleased to have hornswoggled the *AWA Review* into publishing yet another radio intelligence-at-work article, this one about the CIA operations on Swan Island. The fall included a week or so in Greece (fortunately between riots), with visits to the Mycenae of Agamemnon, the Corinth of St. Paul, and then off to Delphi for an Oracle. As good as the Oracle’s intelligence service was, and that is very good indeed, it got the Persian War wrong. Last spring, Australia beckoned—my, what a big country! I came to appreciate the powers of mind required of Aborigines to survive and thrive in the Outback. The practice of law continues to pay the rent, barely.”

1962

DAVID W. BENFIELD reports that Jim Forrester (class of 1962) and his wife stopped by on their way to and from Florida. “It is always such a pleasure to reminisce about our good old days with **DEAN WILSON** (HA83) and **MR. OSSORGIN** (HSF86) and **MR. SPARROW** (HA93), among other favorites! Remember folks, 2012 will bring an important election in November and our 50th reunion in September! Soon it will be time to book rooms and make a seminar book choice.”

“It looks like my film of Anthony Burgess’ novel *A Dead Man in Deptford*, about Christopher Marlowe, is finally going ahead,” reports Michael Elias. “Shooting is planned to begin in September in England. I also adapted Robert Silverberg’s classic sci-fi novel *The Man in the Maze*. It is based on Sophocles’ *Philoctetes*. In Silverberg’s version the hero is abandoned on a deserted planet (Lemnos) in a city that is filled with killing mazes and traps. When Earth needs him, he refuses to come out. Also finishing a novel about the Incas and working to get my play *The Catskill Sonata to New York*.

Paul Mazursky directed it in Los Angeles, where it ran for four months.

1963

Since retiring from teaching philosophy and literature, **DAN SHERMAN** spends roughly half the year at his house on Brittany’s north coast, along with Sophie the goat, the chickens, LuLu and Chick, the two cats, Coca and Cola, the miniature goat, Moumoute, and the three Haflinger ponies (with strange Breton names). The rest of the year he lives in Toronto.

DAVID MICHAEL TRUSTY, nicely recovered from smashed ribs and exploded collarbone, is ready to saddle up and start riding again.

1968

DONALD BOOTH will be spending a year and a half working on a new, small hotel in Ipoh, Malaysia, about two hours northeast of Kuala Lumpur, on the road to Penang. “It’s near the mountains,” he reports. “Any Johnnies who stop by Ipoh will be welcome. Call me at (6) 017-569-9588 or e-mail or

1969

LEE MCKUSICK (SF) is employed as a para-educator, where she works with severely disabled youth. “Every day I get to work with the fascinating puzzle of what is learning, how does it work, and how do I facilitate learning with my kids.”

1970

“All is well in Paris,” writes **JOHN DEAN** (A). “Never thought this was where SJC would lead me, but as Fats Waller used to say, ‘One never knows, do one?’ Otherwise I’m professor of Cultural History at the University of Versailles, do

a fair amount of public diplomacy work across Europe; write (on a rich variety of topics, most recently articles on: 'The Businessman as Artist'; 'The Power of Cool in U.S. Youth Culture'; 'Adapting U.S. History to U.S. Movies'; edit; teach; run conferences—most recently this last fall 2009 in a joint-venture with American University in Paris on the subject of 'European Readings of Abraham Lincoln.' Can't complain. Keepin' busy."

YEHUDITH "HUDI" PODOLSKY (SF) lost her beloved husband, Joe, of cancer in July 2007. "But life is full of miracles, and I've married a wonderful man who had also lost a beloved partner. We're creating a wonderful new family together, full of children and grandchildren. My work is with high schools and high school districts in low-income communities, mostly in California. These schools are trying to restructure in a way that will support richer relationships between students and teachers and within teacher teams. The state of education in these schools is pretty shocking, but they're all on paths that should make some improvements."

TELL JOKES, BE SMARTER

JOHN CAPPS (Agr) has a serious day job as associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts at the Rochester Institute of Technology. Yet his new book, *You've Got to Be Kidding: How Jokes Can Help You Think* (Wiley 2009), explores the lighter side of his discipline. Capps wrote the book with his father, Donald Capps, a psychologist of religion and professor emeritus at Princeton Theological Seminary. "The basic idea behind the book is that there's a connection between jokes and thinking critically," John Capps explains. "Jokes make us laugh because jokes are about people saying or doing something irrational. Figuring out why we laugh is figuring out why something is irrational—and that helps us avoid the same mistakes. We came to write this book, first, because we like to share jokes and, second, because it really did seem to us that jokes are especially good at revealing what is rational and what is not (an idea going back to Freud)." More on the book can be found on the publisher's website: wiley.com. ❀

1971

In November 2009, **JOHN STARK BELLAMY II** (A) published his eighth book, *Cleveland's Greatest Disasters: 16 Tragic True Tales of Death and Destruction*, with Gray & Co. Meanwhile, sporadic excerpts from his lurid memoir-in-progress entitled "Wasted on the Young" have been recently posted at the CoolCleveland.com website.

1972

HAROLD ANDERSON (A) is working on ethnographic research projects as an independent contractor and teaching cultural and urban anthropology at Bowie State University. "Most interestingly, I am teaching Cultural Documentation as a member of the core faculty for the new Master of Arts in Cultural Sustainability Program at Goucher College in Towson, Md. Have a look at our program www.goucher.edu/x33261.xml. It's really quite wonderful! Also you can comment on our cultural sustainability blog at: <http://blogs.goucher.edu/culturalsustainability>."

1974

SALLY BELL (SF) "finally decided to write, first with some wonderful/joyful news, in that our daughter graduated this year with her DVM from Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, after graduating from Boston University with a degree in biology summa cum laude in 2005, then getting married! She has worked toward [being a veterinarian] since she was six years old, unlike her mom and dad who never figured out what they wanted to do. Helping Kath learn to care for her sheep, rabbits, and chickens along the way was the most like being at St. John's of anything I did. I never thought I'd be raising sheep, but after St. John's, I wasn't afraid to try anything. "Second, some unhappy news, in that I have been diagnosed with pulmonary arterial hypertension plus auto-immune hepatitis. I have been disabled and not working since 2005, and this brings my chronic illnesses up to 10. Life is terminal anyhow, so I hope to be in touch with old friends if I can, and I am grateful for this warning and the time I still have. Although Kath didn't go to St. John's, I hope I passed on to her the self-examination and the precision of thought that I learned to reach for. Maybe someday she will go to SGI. I am an indifferent correspondent—not much energy—but anyone can write at srbell@localnet.com."

ELLEN CHAVEZ DE LEITNER (SF) and her husband, Hans, are no longer empty-nesters: their two daughters, with families, have returned to live with them: "So we have a 2-year-old grandson and a 4-month-old granddaughter to cheer our days. I now teach violin at Northern New Mexico Community College in Espanola and play in the San Juan Symphony in Durango, Colo., and Farmington, N.M. With daughter Cecilia (MM Vocal Performance, Yale), I opened Santa Cecilia Music Studio for

teaching and rehearsing in Santa Fe. Also, I'm still painting *retablos*, participating in the SJC Alumni Art Show in Santa Fe, as well as the February Auction and Spanish Art Market. Any SJC alumni are welcome to visit me at my home studio, SF music studio, or the traditional Spanish Market this summer. Violin and voice students would be welcome, too, as we still have openings. Please contact me through my website: www.chavezdeleitner.com."

1975

"Still relaxing in relaxing Ohio," writes **TINA BELL** (A). "I have started training to become a volunteer for a local hospice organization. I have always been drawn to that kind of work. A lot of it involves just listening to people, being there for them, and you can help the whole family with respite care, counseling, bereavement counseling. I am looking forward to it. Since my own parents died I feel I have enough experience to start to help others down the same road. Emily Bell is a struggling young writer in NYC, Tim going to counseling school, ditto Joe, and Julia has really begun to run marathons a lot. A lot. But she also has a new cat, Toby."

1976

ISABEL CZECH (NEE WERTHEIMER, A) is now the executive director of ALPSP North America. ALPSP is the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers. She can be reached at: isabel.czech@alpsp.org. She continues to live in Philadelphia, where she roots for the home team: "Go Phillies!"

A MISSION TO MARS

GEOFF MARSLETT (SF96) has been directing movies since he graduated. To date, he has made 14 short films of his own, plus collaborative work. In March, his first feature-length film premiered at the SXSW Film Festival in Austin, Texas. “Mars,” done in an animation style invented by Marslett specifically for the film, tells the story of three astronauts on the first manned mission to the red planet. An upbeat romantic comedy, “Mars” moves focus off of slapstick humor and cataclysmic events. Says Marslett, “Hopefully, the laughs come from [the characters’] very human responses to remarkable events.” ❀

1979

RICK KEMPA (SF) lives in Rock Springs, Wyo., where he directs the honors program at Western Wyoming College. A book of his poems, *Keeping the Quiet*, was recently published by Bellowing Ark Press (www.bellowingark.org/). This August, he will be the artist-in-residence at the South Rim, while he works on a collection of essays about the Grand Canyon from a backpacker’s perspective.

1982

It’s been a busy year for **DON DENNIS** (SF): “Was married in March 2009 to a lovely dairy farmer here in the Inner Hebrides. We run an old baronial mansion as a 12-bedroom B&B, and I also give boat tours around the region in a small commercial RIB I skipper. But my main business involves both selling and making our own flower essences (in the tradition of the Bach Remedies). Ours are made with tropical orchids I grow in our greenhouse here on the Isle of Gigha. Have just sent a book off to the printers about them: “Orchid Essence Healing” should be in my hands by the end of April. Johnnies are very welcome here; we have, as you may guess, a pretty good library, beautiful walks, and a snooker room. Oh,

and a 52-acre garden surrounds the house as well. www.achamore-house.com and www.healingorchids.com.”

1983

News from **JIM BAILEY** (A): “Sharon and I are still in Memphis,” he writes. “My focus is health system research and teaching internal medicine resident physicians. We are organizing our fifth Search for the Healthy City seminar and study tour in Italy. Johnnies are more than welcome!”

PETER MCCLARD (SF) writes: “Very much enjoying raising a couple of pre-teens (such a sweet age), making art (tracymac.biz) and music, selling our software business (gluon.com) and staying in touch with folks on Facebook. Best to all!”

1984

FATHER BRUCE WREN (SF) continues his life as a priest in a small seminary about one hour east of Paris. He would like to know the whereabouts of **THEODORE BENSON III** and **JEFFREY POPE**, to keep in touch.

1985

“I wasn’t at St. John’s long, but my time there was memorable,” writes **MARY ANN FLYNN CUSHMAN** (A). “I moved on to science, where I worked as a laboratory researcher and manager for many years. Being involved in research piqued an interest in intellectual property, so I studied to become a paralegal, then worked primarily in commercial transactional law. I am pleased to say that I am again working with scientists as an editor for researchers residing in Japan.”

MAGGIE HOHLE (A) is busy. “After a tough year following my mom’s sudden diagnosis and death (stage IV lung cancer, last parent, so sad), I’m swamped with work again, notably translations of a book about the Japanese ‘no-brand’ brand MUJI for Rizzoli, and of a monograph of the work of designer Chie Morimoto. In addition, a project begun years ago has been published by University of Texas Press (a surprise to me!). It’s called *Spiritual Passports: The Unseen Images of an Artist Who Never Lived to See Them*. Let it be known that I wasn’t consulted on the subtitle. We are looking forward to the high school graduation of the first of the four Hohle kids and her departure to post-secondary education at some small liberal arts school, unfortunately not SJC. Anyone out in the SF Bay Area, please look us up! maggietext@comcast.net. See you at the 25th reunion!”

In 2008 **MARGO HOBBS THOMPSON** (A) relocated to Allentown to take a job teaching art history at Muhlenberg College, a small liberal arts institution. “It’s a wonderful place, and Allentown is delightfully urban and diverse compared to the wilds of Vermont, my former home,” she writes. “My husband, Court, is starting a clock repair business; he’ll fix mechanical toys and instruments as well, and you can reach him through me: mht712@yahoo.com. And I am

pleased to announce that my book on graffiti art, *American Graffiti*, was published by Parkstone Press late last year.”

1986

KRISTEN CAVEN (SF86) writes of her career: “At last the truth can be told: after St. John’s it was either the funny farm or the funny papers. (Thank ye ol’ gods for the mightiness of a pencil.) In this unusual memoir I discuss my dedication to the ‘liberal’ arts and the upside of ‘hysteria,’ of which there was a lot at the women’s college where I landed. Jack Lincoln, wherever you are, I owe you a free copy. *Perfectly Revolting: My ‘Glamorous’ Cartooning Career* is available on Amazon and www.kristencaven.com this spring.”

1988

KIM PAFFENROTH’s (A) version of Dante’s *Inferno*, *Valley of the Dead*, is now available as a regular trade paperback from Permuted Press. His first novel, *Dying to Live*, is now available in German from Festa Verlag, with the title *Vom Überleben unter Zombies*.

1989

RAYMOND GIFFORD (A) has switched law firms, becoming the managing partner of the new Denver office of Wilkinson Barker Knauer LLP, a Washington DC-based regulatory firm. “Still in the scintillating world of the law and economics of network industry regulation—broadband, electricity and smart grid,” he writes. “That and going to a lot of kids’ hockey games for Thomas, 14; William, 10; and Michael, 4.”

DOCTOR IN THE DESERT

Mat Strickland (SF96) pursues an alternative path

BY ANNA PERLEBERG (SF02)

Mat Strickland (SF96) doesn't think of himself as interesting. He's wrong, of course, but the feeling's understandable: there's nothing flashy or dramatic about his life as a pediatrician with the Indian Health Service in Chinle, Arizona, the heart of the Navajo Nation. It's the very lack of spectacle, though, that's extraordinary.

During Strickland's freshman year at St. John's, his mother, who was a licensed vocational nurse, died of hepatitis C. Struggling to understand his loss, and, along with his classmates, searching for the good and just life, he was led to the path of medicine as a possible answer. Thanks to a scholarship, he was able to take science classes at the University of California at Berkeley during the summers, and while working as a paralegal after St. John's, he volunteered at Oakland Children's Hospital, working with HIV/AIDS patients.

In 2006 he earned his M.D. and an Master of Public Health degree from New Orleans's Tulane University. "You make a decision," he says, "and you have no idea what medical school is going to be like, how consuming." He completed his residency at Emory University in Atlanta.

Throughout his medical studies and training, however, Strickland missed the sense of "discovery, adventure, and newness" he had found at St. John's. "There's lot of rigor in medical training," he says. "You study the sciences, memorize the body parts, memorize the drugs—it's very structured. I rebelled against that." Strickland wanted to recapture the feeling of being part of a close-knit, supportive community such as St. John's. He also missed the big skies and open space of the high desert. "That sense of vastness is inspiring," he says.

Luckily, just as the codified reading lists of the Program provide different students with different questions, the



PEDIATRICIAN MAT STRICKLAND (SF96) PRACTICES MEDICINE OFF THE BEATEN PATH, IN THE HEART OF THE NAVAJO NATION.

seemingly inflexible field of medicine is wide enough to provide for the unconventional. Strickland found an outlet for his resistance to structure near Canyon de Chelly, in the most remote of the health centers on the 26,000-square-mile Navajo reservation. The hospital and clinic where he works serves 13,000 children, the majority of whom live in extreme poverty. Though the area does have one traffic light and a grocery store, many inhabitants don't have running water or electricity, making access to health care that much more vital. Paradoxically, Strickland found fellowship in the middle of nowhere, living on the hospital compound with the other physicians, similarly unorthodox souls who may have worked with Doctors Without Borders or the Pediatric AIDS Corps in Africa. Like him, they wanted to take medicine off the beaten path to where it was most needed.

Strickland's patients, as well, form a valuable community. Their interdependence makes him a better doctor, he says. "The thing I like most about medicine is the relationships. Talking to your patients and their families, trying to help them in the truest way—I think I'm really good at that, talking to people and empathizing. So much of medicine is not about, 'Oh here's a prescription.' That's easy. It's spending time with the family, unraveling the real truth to the matter.

So why does Strickland think he's not interesting? Perhaps because he doesn't think of himself much at all. "One of the things you learn at St. John's is that the best part of life is relating to others, to live outside yourself," he says. "We're trapped in our own little world."

In the blankness of the desert, instead of isolation, Strickland has found a world in others. ❀

1990

Beyond Redistribution: White Supremacy and Racial Justice, by **KEVIN GRAHAM** (A), was published by Lexington Books in January 2010. It is the first book published by Kevin, who teaches philosophy at Creighton University in Omaha, Neb.

KEN TURNBULL (A) has changed law firms and is now a partner in the Washington, D.C. office of King & Spalding LLP.

SHAPING FOREIGN POLICY

After taking a break from teaching overseas and then several years working on research, design, and management of conservation and development programs in both the United States and West Africa, Shelley Saxen (SFG102, SFEC) and her husband, Doug Saxen (SFG103, EC) are now happily living in Mexico. Shelley shapes and implements U.S. foreign policy as a diplomat with the U.S. Department of State, and Doug splits his time between teaching, writing, and multimedia art projects. When not at work, they are swiftly becoming tequila connoisseurs who enjoy *cumbia* and lively discussions of whatever recent Johnnie-ish text they have recently read. ✨

1997

KIRA MOCK (A) started a new position on December 7, 2009, at the American Association for the Advancement of Science. She is a senior program manager for the Energy, Environment and Agriculture S&T fellowship in the Executive Branch.

HOWARD R. SAUERTIEG (A) recently became Litigation Support Specialist with the law firm of McCarthy Weisberg Cummings, P.C., Harrisburg, Pa.

1991

NATE DOWNEY (SF) is pleased to report that his philosophical-treatise-cum-ecological-how-to, *Harvest the Rain*, will be published in 2010 by Sunstone Press. Please visit www.harvesttherain.com for book info or comment on his sustainability-blog at www.backyarddigest.com.

1992

ANNE ASPEN (SF) is working for the Fort Collins Downtown Development Authority. She's doing many of the same things that she handled as a city planner, but has a lot more room for creativity. "I'm focused entirely on the downtown now and use a lot more of my architecture degree and art background. It was a good move! On the home front, life is good, too. Jane and I celebrate 15 years together this year, and we've convinced Jane's daughter Michelle and the three grandkids (16, 14, and 8 years old) to move here, so we have a lots of great family time now and use a lot more of my architecture degree and art background. It was a good move! Hello to everyone who's not on Facebook."

1993

OMAR MANEJWALA (A) writes: "After a wonderful four years as associate medical director of The Farley Center in Williamsburg, Va., I have accepted a position as the Medical Director of Hazelden Foundation in Center City, which is the nation's oldest and largest addiction treatment center. I'm also finishing up (in May) an MBA from the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business. My wife, Cecily, and I have moved to the Twin Cities and welcome the opportunity to connect with Johnnies in the area."

1994

PEGGY JONES (SF) and her husband, Bill 'Bones' Jones, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary in July, opting for a gala family reunion of four children, their spouses, and 10 lively grandchildren, and a long weekend of family activities in New Mexico. "Our children grew up in Santa Fe, and Bill and I still occupy the house where they grew up, but alas, they all live in other states now," she writes. "Since the 10 grandkids will range in age from 12 years to 1 month, we're all expecting to have a wild and wonderful time together! And we hope there'll be some future Johnnies among those grandchildren of ours!"

JAMES PASSIN (A) is pleased to announce the birth of his daughter, Anya. He lives in New York City with his wife, Sydney; his four-year-old son, Oscar; and little Anya. He has just successfully launched Firebird Mongolia Fund, a fund focused on Mongolian securities. He also founded and manages two global hedge funds and serves on the boards of a number of public and private Canadian and Mongolian companies.

MARILYN ROPER (AGI) writes that her daughter Allison, a 2005 graduate of Kenyon College, finished work on her Master of Arts in Liberal Arts from St. John's in Santa Fe in December and received her diploma in May. Marilyn and her husband, Dan, moved to Hilton Head, S.C., in 2004.

1995

DARIEN LARGE (SF) is living in Austin and happily married the man of his dreams, Justin Nevill, on March 27, 2010. Drop Darien a line at dlarge@daliverse.com.

COREY A. CHRISTY (SEBASTIAN, A) writes: "My husband, Jesse, and I are delighted to announce the birth of our first child, our beautiful daughter Iona Jean on August 4, 2009."

1999

"My husband, Jesse, and I are delighted to announce the birth of our first child, our beautiful daughter Iona Jean, on August 4, 2009," writes **COREY A. CHRISTY** (A99).

2000

ZACH and **ERIKA (FORMERLY CARLSON) WARZEL** (both SF) celebrated the birth of their daughter Corrina Lu on February 15, 2010, in Denver, Colo. Like her mom, Corrina has a very full head of hair!

2001

GEOFF (SF), **CARISA** (SF99) and Renee Galilea Petrie (big sister, age 4) welcomed Francesca Calliope Petrie on February 4, 2010. She weighed 7 pounds, 3 ounces. "Her first name is a play on Frances, her great-grandfather and father's name. We chose Calliope because she was Homer's muse and what Johnnie doesn't have the first few lines of the *Iliad* embedded in her brain? Francesca is a calm, communicative baby and we are enjoying her every day."

KATY (CHRISTOPHER) DAVIS (SF) has news: "On October 31, 2009, Lucy Katharine Davis was born at the Andaluz Birth Center in Portland, Ore. She's a sweet, happy, and mellow baby who loves everyone, and we are all delighted to have a little girl in the family. Three-year-old Sam is getting used to being a big brother and grows smarter and more fun every day; among his many interests are singing the Greek alphabet and playing with his stuffed tigers Hegel and Heidegger. On the farm, we're looking forward to lots of baby goats and an expanded garden and orchard this summer."

2002

JONATHAN COOPER (A) is in Vermont: "After receiving our MAs in sustainable landscape planning and design from the Conway School of Landscape Design, my girlfriend Katharine and I moved to Waterbury, Vt., to begin our careers. The town is lovely, the people are friendly, and the spring thaw has brought our kittens out to the backyard. It all seems like a Graham Nash song, but I can't think of which one. Maybe I'm just having déjà vu..."

JUSTIN (A) and DILLON (WRIGHT-FITZGERALD, Ao5) NAYLOR celebrated the birth of their second boy, James Matthew, on November 12, 2009. Big brother Peter will be 3 in July.

2003

ANN (CARRUTHERS) ORSINGER (SF) and **STEPHEN ORSINGER** (SF) welcomed Odysseus Remington Orsinger into the world on January 1. Weighing 10 lbs. 8 oz., he would be able to live up to the name, they decided. The family is currently living in Dallas, Texas, where Stephen is practicing civil appellate and family law. Ann is staying home with Ody and working on her dissertation in political philosophy (on the role of art in civic education), freelance writing, and training to be a life coach.

2004

STUART BANNAN (A) and **DEBORAH (MANGUM) BANNAN** (Ao6) were joined in Holy Matrimony on January 2, 2010, at Hill Country Bible Church in Pflugerville, Texas. In attendance were several Johnnies including groomsmen **MARTIN ANDERSON**

(Ao4) and **MICHAEL MALONE** (Ao4), and bridesmaids **LAURA (MANGUM) MOORE** (Ao4) and **EMILY DEBUSK** (Ao6). **KERRY MORSE** (Ao6), **SARAJEAN WRIGHT** (Ao8) and **DWIGHT KNOLL** (Ao5) also offered their support and lent a hand with the festivities. The couple now resides in Anchorage, Alaska, where Stuart is an associate in a law firm and Deborah a graduate student in counseling psychology.

ERIKA GINSBERG-KLEMMT (SFCI) lives in Sarasota Florida and aside from being mother of two and doing marketing for an immigration law firm is acting as advocate and activist for investors who have been burned in the Florida foreclosure market... www.pangaea.to/realforeclose.

ERIC SCHAEFER (SF) and **TIFFANY SIMONS** (SFo6) are excited to share that they will be celebrating a relationship that began at St. John's College seven years ago, with a marriage ceremony and reception on May 22, 2010, in San Francisco. Since leaving St. John's College, Eric has become interested in studying food systems with the desire to create an urban agricultural system that may one day revolutionize the way America gets its food. Tiffany has been pursuing a BA in psychology at Mills College in Oakland, with a focus on cognitive research, and will graduate this spring. They are both excited about what the coming years will bring and hope to see everyone at the next West Coast Croquet!

MALCOLM SMITH-CARLILE and **LAURA PERLEBERG** (both SF) were happily married in front of family and friends in the beautiful Loretto Chapel in Santa Fe on March 19. The Smiths continue to reside in Santa Fe, where Laura is a librarian at the College of Santa Fe and Malcolm works with disadvantaged and challenged youth.

NEAL HATFIELD TURNQUIST (SF) proposed to **BROOKE ANN NUTINI** (SFo5) on June 17 of

2009, and they will be married on July 31st of 2010 in New Hampshire.

2005

ISAAC (A) and KATHRYN (Ao6) Weiner welcomed Caroline Esther into their family early in the morning last November 23. Caroline was born at home weighing 10 lbs. 6 oz. She continues to be healthy and thriving, though she's not enjoying teething very much. Isaac and Kathryn are pleased as punch with their beautiful baby girl.

JARED (AGI) and **RHONDA (FRANKLIN) ORTIZ** (Ao4) have been busy in recent months: "Jared recently passed his PhD comprehensive exams in Historical Theology at the Catholic University of America; he's planning to write his dissertation on Augustine. We are both assisting our parish's school, St. Jerome's in Hyattsville, Md., in implementing a classical/great books curriculum (dropping hints about the Graduate Institute among the faculty all the while). But the best news of all is the expectation of a Baby Ortiz at the end of August or early September. We'll be sure to keep everyone posted."

2006

GEOFFREY (AGI) and **JENNY (KAWA) BAGWELL** (AGIo5) recently celebrated the first birthday of their daughter Lucia Marie, who spent much of the day studying her new books and toys. Geoffrey is presently a visiting professor of ancient philosophy at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio, and looks forward to the end of graduate school with his dissertation defense on Plato's *Cratylus* April 6. Jenny spends her days with Lucy, exploring new recipes, and reading Agatha Christie. They hope to start an alumni reading group in Cincinnati. Any takers?

A NOVEL IN THREE DAYS

ERICA NAONE (Ao5) won an honorable mention for her novel draft "Needle and Fang" in the 32nd Annual International 3-Day Novel contest. "This takes place every year over Labor Day weekend, and the goal is to produce the best novel you can in three days," she explains. "Producing any novel at all in that period of time is quite a feat. This year, 650 people entered the contest and 460 submitted drafts." Just 15 honorable mentions were named. This was Naone's second year in the competition. "Needle and Fang" is a dark urban fantasy about a vampire hunter who befriends a vampire because they're both struggling with intravenous drug addiction. Naone penned her novel immediately after a two-week stint on jury duty for a first-degree murder case, "and the nightmarish details of the trial definitely made their way into the book." She's busy revising the novel to get it in publishable form. Check it out on the web at: www.3daynovel.com. ❀

AN ACCIDENTAL BANKER

Steve Werlin (A85) lends hope to Haitian women

BY ROSEMARY HARTY

Shimer College Professor Steve Werlin (A85) first went to Haiti as volunteer in 1997, spending months in the country teaching in literacy programs, introducing St. John's-inspired seminars to other educators in the country, and eventually working full-time as a teacher and community organizer.

Now, as the people of Haiti struggle to recover from January's devastating earthquake, he finds himself in an entirely new and unexpected role: managing a branch of Haiti's largest microfinance bank. "It is the last thing I ever, ever would have imagined could happen," Werlin says.

He can trace this new path back to the lasting influence of the late Brother Robert Smith (HA90), St. John's tutor and his long-time friend. In his role as an educational consultant for the bank, Werlin worked with bank staff on educational outreach. "One of the things Brother Robert taught me is that you'll find whenever you get people to talk about what matters to them, it really is interesting," Werlin says. "I started to hear about the serious issues involved in operating a bank, and saw that the good operation of a branch has a real chance of making a difference in the lives of the people who depend on it." When he learned that the bank needed a new branch manager, "the opportunity was too good to pass up."

Werlin lives in the tiny harbor town of Marigot; he walks just a few blocks from his two-room home to his job at the local branch of Fonkoze. The microfinance bank's name is an abbreviation of *Fundacion Kole Zepole*, Creole for "Shoulder to Shoulder Foundation." The operation is housed in a one-story building, half of which is now uninhabitable. "We have some pretty good-sized cracks," says Werlin.

Werlin's commitment to Haiti had its genesis at St. John's. After St. John's, he earned master's and doctoral degrees in philosophy from Loyola University in Chicago. As a visiting tutor in the GI, Werlin met a student, David Diggs (AGI91), who had been a literacy volunteer in Haiti. Werlin had been working with Touchstones, a program created by St. John's tutors to bring adapted great books conversations into different educational environments, from middle



AFTER THE DEVASTATING EARTHQUAKE THAT STRUCK HAITI IN JANUARY, STEVE WERLIN (A85) SHIFTED HIS EFFORTS FROM EDUCATION TO BANKING, MAKING LOANS TO MARKET WOMEN THROUGH HAITI'S LARGEST MICROFINANCE BANK.

schools to prisons. He went to Haiti with the original goal of adapting Touchstones for Haiti.

From the beginning Werlin has been awed by the hunger for education among the Haitian people. One day, he accompanied Diggs to a literacy center in an elementary school. "I saw these fully grown women cramming themselves uncomfortably into benches created for nine-year-olds, for two hours a day, four days a week, just so they could learn to read and write a little," Werlin recalls. "It seemed extraordinary to me what people will go through for the chance at an education," Werlin says.

Werlin worked on literacy education projects with volunteer organizations, first with a network of community activists in La Ganub, then with a group of Baptist ministers who had developed academic programs for older children. In 1999, Werlin began

working with the social sciences section of the National Public University, a project that gave him the opportunity to get Touchstones texts printed in Creole and distributed to educational centers throughout the country.

His work has extended beyond education to community organizing. For two years, Werlin met each week with a network of rape victims who organized themselves to provide counseling and other services for victims of rape. Initially, it seemed impossible to get the women—hardened by experience and divided by conflicting approaches—to work together. "Today, they're a real model of what collaboration can be when people are offered the give-and-take of the dialogue to guide them."

His work in microfinance naturally involves financial responsibilities—such as counting the bank's money in the morning and at closing time—but education remains a

MICHAEL BALES (SF) is representing St. John's as the only Johnnie in this year's Fannie Mae analyst training program in D.C.

ELEANOR CLARK (A) says: "I am happily working on completing my final year of a graduate degree in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) at Brigham Young University-Provo. I love teaching and exploring new cultures (which are part of where I am at right now). The plans so far are to live and work in London and at some point go to India."

TONOPAH GREENLEE (SF) is currently living in Waltham, Mass., attending school at Brandeis University. "I am hoping to become a mama around May of next year, or rather a M.A./M.A. in Sustainable International Development and Coexistence and Conflict Management. This coming fall I hope to be working on sustainable agriculture/water rights in Latin America (hopefuly Brazil)."

ALLISON HENNIGAN (A) and Dylan Martin met while teaching English in Prague. "We were married Jan 4, 2010, in a small family-only ceremony in Decatur,

Ala. We are now living on Jeju Island, South Korea, and teaching English in the Korean public school system. The kids (elementary and middle school) are adorable little demons. We'll be here until March 2011, maybe longer. If there are other Johnnies in the area or passing through, it'd be nice to meet up. My e-mail is still allisonhennigan@gmail.com."

JACQUELINE KENNEDY (AGI) is in Naples, Fla., trudging through her second year at Ave Maria School of Law. It's going quickly, she says. "Not sure if I will stay in Naples after law school, but I'm definitely considering Florida as a permanent (at least for the next five years) home. I'm also a member of the South Florida St. John's Alumni Chapter, which has provided me with a much-needed Johnnie connection. I would enjoy hearing from other Johnnies, especially any 2004-2006 Annapolis GI alums, especially if you're in the Florida-Georgia region, and can be reached via e-mail at kennedy.jacqueline@gmail.com."

HOLLIS THOMS (AGI) recently had the world premiere of his third opera, "The Rime of the

Ancient Mariner," based on Samuel Taylor Coleridge's famous poem, at St. Johns College in Annapolis on February 14, 2010. Two hundred people attended the premiere. The 60-minute work is scored for three singers, 12 winds and two percussion, and includes the projection of 40 prints by Gustave Dore.

JERICHA PHILLIPS (SF) and **PAUL FRANZ** (SF) were married on March 21, 2010, in Kaneohe, Hawaii. After Paul receives his Master's in Education from Stanford University in August, he and Jericha plan to move to Hawaii, where Paul will work with Nalu Studies, a marine education program for high-risk teens. Jericha will find a job when she finds one.

2007

HOLLY TORGERSON (SF) is currently working on an MS in Herbal Medicine at Tai Sophia Institute in Laurel, Md. In May she begins the clinical portion of her studies, where she will begin to see clients in the faculty-supervised clinic. "I am very excited, and I invite anyone who wants to know more to visit my website: longeviteawellness.com."

2008

JOHN HOFFMANN (SF) will be cheerfully attending the University of Chicago Masters of Arts Program in the Humanities.

WHAT'S UP?

The College wants to hear from you. Call us, write us, e-mail us. Let your classmates know what you're doing. The next issue will be published in October; deadline for the alumni notes section is September 1.

Alumni will also be sent a call via e-mail.

The College Magazine
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major part of his work. Fonkoze lends to "credit centers," networks of 30-40 women who borrow together as a community. These hard-working, determined women represent the backbone of the Haitian economy. For example, Werlin's clients buy fresh fish in Marigot and sell it in Port-au-Prince. They use those profits to buy something else, say, shampoo or clothing—and return to sell these products in the rural areas. "All of them make money the same way," he explains. "Buy something here, sell it there."

One difference between a microfinance bank and a conventional bank is the support the bank provides to credit centers and the support women provide to each other. Fonkoze reaches out to women in very rural communities and helps them develop as "independent centers of mutual solidarity and support," Werlin explains.

Even before the earthquake, Werlin observes, Haitians struggled just for subsistence: 53 percent of the nation's citizens live below \$1 a day; 75 percent below \$2 a day.

Loans from Fonkoze are a lifeline for these market women—and Werlin is quick to point out that the bank lends only to women. "The social reality in Haiti is that the woman is the person who takes personal responsibility for the family," explains Werlin. "A lot of the worst poverty in Haiti results from women not having that independent source of income. We make loans to women to support the family as a whole."

Overcoming adversity is a way of life in Haiti; when Werlin began working with the bank as an educational consultant, the women were just recovering their businesses after four tropical storms in 2008. The earthquake was felt in Marigot; a lot of buildings cracked, but none collapsed. At least 20 percent of the bank's borrowers lost their homes, and 70 percent of the homes are damaged. Those who sell their goods in Port-au-Prince have been hit hard. "I know of one woman who had 250 pounds of fresh fish in Thermos trunks the day of the earthquake and it sat for a week—you can imagine what

that fish was good for," Werlin says.

Living in Haiti has forever changed how Werlin views everyday life. "People (outside Haiti) use words like intolerable, unendurable" to describe what they see in television images and what they read in newspapers, Werlin says. "Those words seem strange to me now because I've seen what people can endure when they have to. They have no choice. They find ways. They're smart, and they're very, very tough."

The international outpouring of support for the devastating country is helping, says Werlin. "Right now, Haiti needs an infusion of resources," he says. In the long run, Haiti needs a committed neighbor in America and supporters willing to help Haiti recover, thrive, and educate its people.

Werlin is grateful that Shimer supports his work in Haiti, allowing him to continue to educate, to finance, to serve the people who have so inspired him: "I work with remarkable, remarkable people who teach me a lot. I think that about covers it." ❀

CLUES BEHIND THE CLUTTER

Leah Fisch (SF98) brings order to hoarders

BY ROSEMARY HARTY

A beat-up copy of the Beatle's *Yellow Submarine*. A basket full of stuffed animals, including a Snoopy acquired in first grade. A closet brimming with keepsakes, ill-fitting clothes, misfit shoes, and exercise equipment that will never emerge from under a heap of mismatched socks.

Attached to things you think you really should pitch? Leah Fisch (SF98) can help.

After St. John's, Fisch worked and traveled, learned new languages, and cast about for the best way to apply her skills and education. Just back from travels in Costa Rica, she was crashing at her sister's house in 2002 when her mother called to announce that she'd discovered Leah's true path in life.

"She was listening to a radio interview with someone from the National Association of Professional Organizers, and she heard her say, 'clutter is a decision delayed.' My mother said, 'that is so Leah!' and she called me right away. Two weeks later, she had gotten me my first job."

It turned out Mrs. Fisch knew her daughter well: organizing (she prefers the term "reorganizing") is a perfect fit for Fisch, who was featured earlier this spring on The Learning Channel (TLC) show *Hoarders: Buried Alive*. As a "recovering clutterer," she understands the problem firsthand. "I grew up in a house of sentimental Jewish packrats," says Fisch. "People found a way to make do with what they had, and that's still in us. We've become very confused as a society because we're always pressured to buy, buy, buy. And people hate to throw things away."

As she built her business, Fisch grew more interested in the social patterns she noticed among her clients. She observed that many people devote themselves to acquiring material possessions because they lack satisfying social relationships. She enrolled in the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, where she earned a master's degree in demography, and gained certification as a narrative therapist at the Evanston Family Therapy Center in Illinois. "People are overwhelmed," Fisch explains. "It's my job to help them identify and honor their values. All of it is about helping people clarify what they want."

Being attached to stuff is usually not about the stuff, says Fisch. "We hold onto things that make us feel bad about ourselves, we rent a dumpster, put these things in a dumpster, and it's more traumatizing than ever to throw these things away."

When a TLC producer first called, Fisch declined to be involved because similar cable shows seemed mean-spirited. "It's all

about people crying as someone throws their things away." If she could take a more compassionate approach, Fisch said, she might do it. That led to her TV debut in May. Just 22 minutes long, the show took up hours of her time, but it was a good experience, "a chance to show people that there is another way."

Listening carefully and looking for what lies beneath the clutter have been the keys to Fisch's success. "A lot of what I do is just sit with people. When I do the initial tour, I count the number of times they say 'should.' They should get rid of something but they don't want to. They should sort through their books and get them organized, but they can't. That's when they cry."

One client, an insurance executive, consulted her about reorganizing her office. In her initial session with "Jean," Fisch observed that the office seemed fairly neat, but as the two talked, Fisch uncovered a basket wedged between a filing cabinet and some boxes. It was a craft project the woman hoped to make, but was now determined to throw away.

As Fisch talked with her client, she discovered the woman was frustrated and unhappy about being unable to pursue hobbies because of her demanding job. They worked together to organize not just the physical layout of Jean's office, but also her work routines and her communication style. "The first thing I had her do was make that Halloween basket," she says. "Then we put together a training manual for her assistant, so she could assign her more tasks and trust them to be done efficiently. She has more time for herself, and I think she's happier now." ❖



LEAH FISCH (SF98) GUIDES CLIENTS IN REORGANIZING THEIR LIVES.

ROBERT A. GOLDWIN
CLASS OF 1950

Robert A. Goldwin, class of 1950, died on January 12, 2010, at the age of 88. A brilliant Constitutional scholar, Mr. Goldwin took Socratic dialogues from the classrooms of St. John's to the Ford White House, believing that only a thorough and balanced study of an issue could yield the understanding needed for sound public policy. In the words of his friend Donald Rumsfeld, Mr. Goldwin "was a man of sweeping, ambitious ideas, but personal modesty and quiet competence. He had the rare talent of asking the right questions at the right time, and gently nudging discussions toward the 'eureka moment.'"

A native of New York City, Mr. Goldwin was among the wave of veterans who came to St. John's after serving in World War II. He attended the University of Arizona before enlisting in the U.S. Cavalry for four years, taking part in the liberation of the Philippines. While stationed at Fort Meade in Maryland, Mr. Goldwin and his wife, Daisy, visited the campus and chanced upon several references to the college. As Mr. Goldwin later recounted, one magazine "had an article by Mortimer Adler about liberal education [that was] full of praise for St John's. And the *New Yorker* that same week had a profile of a world-famous authority on the philosophy of Hegel who turned down appointment to the faculty of St. John's, saying that he wasn't qualified to teach at such a fine school, but he would like to be a student there. These led us to get the college catalog, and reading it led us to the decision that I



ROBERT A. GOLDWIN, ALUMNUS, FORMER DEAN, AND BVG MEMBER, WAS A DISTINGUISHED CONSTITUTIONAL SCHOLAR AT THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE.

should go to St. John's when I left the army."

After graduating from St. John's, Mr. Goldwin continued his studies at the University of Chicago, where he earned his master's and doctoral degrees in political science. He also taught political science at Chicago, was a Guggenheim Fellow in 1966, and taught at Kenyon College. He helped create a summer program of study in Santa Fe, which would eventually develop into the Graduate Institute.

Mr. Goldwin returned to St. John's as dean, serving from 1969-1973. He was lured away to a new career in public service when Rumsfeld, then serving as U.S. Ambassador to NATO in Brussels, asked Mr. Goldwin to become his adviser. Mr. Goldwin next served concurrently as a special consultant to President Gerald Ford and in the Pentagon as an advisor to Rumsfeld, who was then in his first tour as Secretary of Defense. In the Ford administration, Mr. Goldwin was considered a one-man think

tank, and described by the press, to his chagrin, as "Ford's intellectual-in-residence." He arranged a series of small seminars between the President, government officials, and academic experts on topics such as crime, welfare, higher education, ethnicity, and unemployment.

After leaving the White House, Mr. Goldwin joined the American Enterprise Institute as a resident scholar of Constitutional Studies, a post he held for more than 20 years. He led the institute's decade-long study of the Constitution, which produced a 10-volume collection of essays. He was the author of *From Parchment to Power: How James Madison Used the Bill of Rights to Save the Constitution*. In addition, he edited some 30 books on American politics.

Mr. Goldwin served as a member of the Board of Visitors and Governors from 1980 to 1988; he became a visitor emeritus in 1999. In 1977, the Alumni Association honored him with an Award of Merit.

He is survived by four children: Nancy Goldwin Harvey (A69), Jane Goldwin Bandler (A71), Elizabeth Goldwin (SF73), and Seth Goldwin.

WILLIAM M. GOLDSMITH
CLASS OF 1945

William Michael Goldsmith of Vineyard Haven, Mass., an author, presidential scholar, political activist and retired professor, died March 23, 2010, at the age of 90. Mr. Goldsmith had a long and varied career that included work in the labor movement, civil rights activism and teaching at Brandeis University.

Born in New York City, Mr. Goldsmith attended Catholic University, but left

*In the Ford administration,
Mr. Goldwin was considered
a one-man think tank.*

after his first year to support his family, which had suffered financial setbacks in the stock market crash. In the summer of 1940, after reading Mortimer Adler's *How to Read a Book*, Mr. Goldsmith hitchhiked to Chicago, determined to meet with University of Chicago President Robert Maynard Hutchins to convince him to admit him to the university's liberal arts program. Hutchins told Mr. Goldsmith that Chicago was not for him. Rather, he belonged at St. John's. Hutchins made a few calls and Mr. Goldsmith was in. The next few years, he would later recall, were some of the best of his life: reading and discussing ideas deep into the night while waiting tables and working odd jobs, sending extra cash home throughout.

Mr. Goldsmith's college career was interrupted again, this time by World War II. He enlisted in the Air Force and shipped out to Guam with a Signal Corps outfit. He returned to St. John's, graduated in 1948, and took a job with the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, doing educational work in the South. He later became the Southern Educational Director for the Textile Workers Union. In 1954, he returned to New York, where he worked for the Ford Foundation and later earned a doctorate at Columbia University.

At Brandeis, Mr. Goldsmith taught in the Politics Department and became a founding member of a new, interdisciplinary department, American Studies. His three-volume study, *The Growth of Presidential Power*, was published in 1974 and is still considered by many to be the definitive work in its field. He also created the

Brandeis Papers Commission at Brandeis University, a permanent repository for the papers of Justice Brandeis. He was instrumental in bringing to Brandeis the groundbreaking Upward Bound program, a summer program for talented high school students from underserved neighborhoods.

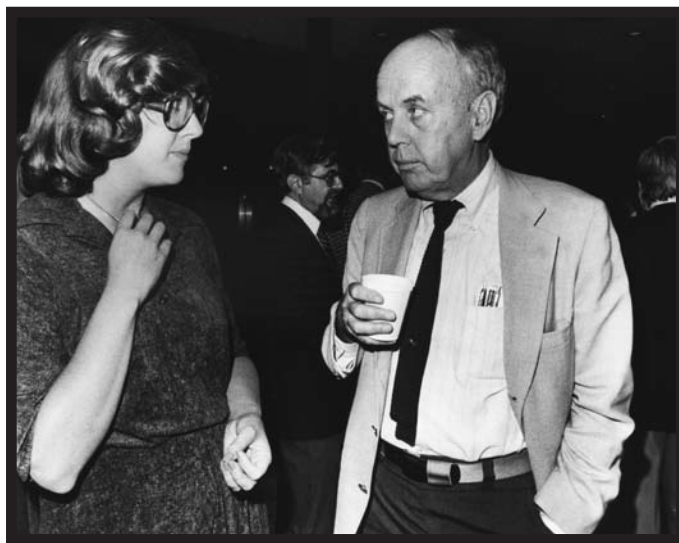
Mr. Goldsmith retired in 1984. He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Dr. Marianne Goldsmith; two daughters, Suzanne Goldsmith-Hirsch and Alexandra Forbes; a son, Michael; and five grandchildren.

**DAVID DOBREER
CLASS OF 1948**

David Dobreer, who united alumni in a strong and active Alumni Association, died in San Gabriel, Calif., on January 17, 2010, at the age of 90. He was a decorated veteran of World War II, a dedicated and accomplished physician, and an active and loyal alumnus of St. John's College. His leadership of the Alumni Association during a critical time contributed significantly to strengthened ties between the college and alumni. He served as a member of the college's Board of Visitors and Governors from 1974 to 1980, and from 1986 to 1992. He became an emeritus member in 2002.

A native of Washington, D.C., Dr. Dobreer started with the class of 1944, but World War II interrupted his studies. He served as a lieutenant in the Army, as a navigator on a B-24 bomber. He flew 34 missions over Europe and won the Air Medal with Oak Leaf Clusters for meritorious service.

After graduating from St. John's in 1948, he earned a Doctor of Osteopathic Medi-



JACK LADD CARR WAS INVOLVED IN THE MITCHELL GALLERY AND THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION.

cine degree from the College of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons of Los Angeles. He later earned an MD degree from the California College of Medicine. He led "great books" seminars at Hollywood High School, in his home, and various other locations in the Los Angeles area for more than 40 years, and later through the Plato Society at UCLA.

The long-time president of the Southern California alumni group, Dr. Dobreer was an active and involved alumnus with a genuine love for the Program. He served for six years as the first president of the Alumni Association after its reorganization as a national body. The association flourished and grew under his leadership. In recognition of his service to the college, and in acknowledgement of his distinguished medical career, the association selected him for its highest honor, the Award of Merit, in 1977.

Dr. Dobreer is survived by four daughters: Leslee Rigter, Peggy Dobreer, Sallie Raspa (A75), and Janice Yaruss.

**JACK LADD CARR
CLASS OF 1950**

Jack Ladd Carr, class of 1950, died January 10, 2010, at the age of 84. Mr. Carr was an avid supporter of his alma mater. He served as a board member of the college's Mitchell Gallery, where he was a docent. An active member of the Alumni Association, he was awarded the Alumni Association Award of Merit in 1990 in recognition of his service to the college.

Mr. Carr served in the U.S. Army during World War II and participated in the liberation of the Philippines. After graduating from St. John's, he earned a master's degree in urban planning at Temple University. He worked in planning in Charleston, S.C., then returned to Annapolis, where he served as the first planning director for the city. He later joined the Maryland State Department of Economic and Community Planning.

His long-time friend, tutor Curtis Wilson (HA83) remembered Mr. Carr as "public-spirited person" who enjoyed good-natured arguments, who

seriously explored cultural pursuits, and who cared about the quality of life in his community.” John Moore (HA01), who brought Mr. Carr into state planning, says, “Jack handled everything with diplomacy and patience. He reflected his St. John’s background very well.”

Mr. Carr is survived by his wife, Lois, and stepson, Andrew.

LHASA DE SELA (SF94)

Lhasa de Sela (SF94), a trilingual singer and songwriter, died on January 1, 2010, of breast cancer. Born in Big Indian, N.Y., in the Catskill Mountains, de Sela spent her childhood traveling through the U.S. and Mexico in a converted school bus that served as her family’s home. From the early 1990s onward, she lived in Montreal, where she sang in bars and learned, as she told a reporter in 2004, “how to reach people, even people who were only there

for beer and conversation.”

The British newspaper *The Guardian* noted in a tribute article that de Sela “created three extraordinary albums over the course of 12 years. She achieved fame more by word of mouth than through the media, but won various awards, including the Québecois Félix in 1997, a Canadian Juno in 1998, and a BBC award for world music in 2005.”

ELIZABETH BLETTNER TUTOR

Elizabeth Blettner, a tutor at St. John’s since 1982, died April 19, 2010, in Annapolis, after a short illness. Miss Blettner earned her bachelor’s degree from Stanford University, and master’s and doctoral degrees in philosophy from Penn State University. Originally drawn to literature, Miss Blettner fell in love with philosophy and Ancient Greek as a graduate student, and was particularly drawn to the work of Kant.

Miss Blettner was responsible for the current shape of the college’s sophomore music tutorial, said tutor Peter Kalkavage, her long-time friend. “Our current sophomore music program is due to the tremendous care and work Elizabeth put in,” he says “The college is very much in her debt.”

A gifted singer who loved music, Miss Blettner was also a faithful and supportive member of the audience whenever the freshman chorus performed. In recent years, she taught frequently in the Graduate Institute, where she led a preceptorial on Ancient Greek. “By all accounts, she was a superb tutor of Greek,” Mr. Kalkavage notes. “Her students were quite devoted to her.”

Miss Blettner was drawn to St. John’s by the serious pursuit of academics, he adds, and she enhanced the college through her dedication. “She

had a deep relation to whatever she would take up: the study of Plato, the study of music. Like many of us here, she was very much shaped by Jacob Klein. She was a very dear friend to me.”

In Miss Blettner’s honor, the St. John’s Chorus dedicated its spring performance of Faure’s *Requiem* to her. ✻

ALSO NOTED

RALPH BALTZEL (CLASS OF 1943), DEC. 8, 2009

REAR ADMIRAL ALLEN BERGER (CLASS OF 1939), MARCH 22, 2010

DAVID DICKEY (A67), NOV. 24, 2009

STEFANIE PRIGGE (A86), DEC. 31, 2009

JOHN RITNER (A84), JAN. 28, 2009

LOUIS SAULT (CLASS OF 1956), JAN. 10, 2010

KATHRYN STOLZENBACH (A95), JAN. 20, 2010

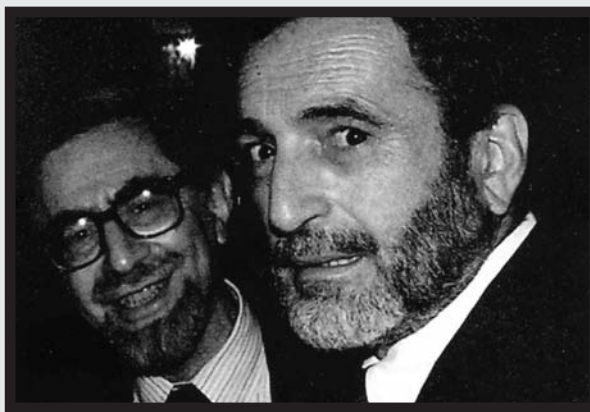
LAWRENCE SANDEK CLASS OF 1954

BY LYDIA SANDEK LEIZMAN (A84)

My father, Lawrence Sandek, class of 1954, died September 4, 2009, in Palo Alto, Calif. He was born December 23, 1923, in the Bronx, N.Y. A veteran of WW II, he attended St. John’s on the GI Bill. The two most frequent comments that he made in reference to St. John’s College were: 1: It was the only college worth attending; and 2: It was the first place that felt like his home.

At least two alumni are as much due to his influence: myself (1984), and my mother’s sister, Arlene Banks Andrew (class of 1964). Additionally, his first child, India Sandek, was born at Anne Arundel Hospital while he was a student.

He spoke often of [tutors] Jacob Klein and Simon Kaplan. My understanding is that my father was something of a force in seminar and the Coffee Shop, but not always as attendant in



LARRY SANDEK (CLASS OF 1954, RIGHT), SHOWN HERE WITH CLASSMATE SAM KUTLER, THOUGHT ST. JOHN’S COLLEGE “THE ONLY COLLEGE WORTH ATTENDING.”

Big Bear, Calif. He is survived by three daughters, India Sandek, Jessica Sandek, and Lydia Sandek Leizman; one son-in-law, Jon Leizman; and six grandchildren ✻

all his other tutorials.

He won the senior essay prize for his year, writing on *Don Quixote*. He worked in the bindery, where he developed his own flat-spine binding. Some of these books are still on his bookshelf today.

After St. John’s, my father settled into family life, making his living as a freelance writer in the New York City area. He later spent many years traveling first in Mexico, then India, finally again settling near family in

ENGAGING ALUMNI

Tapping a wellspring of Johnnie pride

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Can virtue be taught? Can Aristotle explain a butterfly's metamorphosis? What drove Ophelia mad? Does a steel marble really fall at the same rate as a feather?

Johnnies have considered these questions and many more, from their first seminar on the *Iliad* or their first days in the Graduate Institute. The habit of questioning stays with them long after they leave the college.

Over the past year, the college's Alumni Association, a task force of alumni leaders, and staff at the college have applied their Johnnie habit of questioning, considering, and discussing things to the state of alumni relations at St. John's College. Among the questions they posed to each other—and to you, alumni, are: How can the college better nurture the bond with alumni? How can the close relationship formed through a common academic program be maintained after alumni are scattered to every corner of the globe? How can the college better inform its alumni about what's happening on the campuses? And what's the best way for alumni to support a college they care about?

This special section of *The College* explains the work completed by a Presidents' Task Force, changes to the Alumni Association, and a new leadership forum that serves as the starting point for widening the circle of alumni involvement. Looking to get involved? Follow up on the contact info here, and look for periodic updates to this effort in the magazine, your alumni e-newsletter, and the online community.



THROUGH THE PROGRAM, ALUMNI SHARE A COMMON BOND THAT KEEPS THEM CLOSE TO THE COLLEGE—NO MATTER WHERE THEY GO.

BY PATRICIA DEMPSEY

How many institutions can boast an alumnus like Steve Thomas (SF74) who cares so deeply about the curriculum that he's closely following the development of a new math manual for junior lab?

More than three decades after graduating, Thomas, an attorney and president of the Alumni Association, remains passionate about the Program and stays involved to ensure that undergraduates today have the same or even a better educational experience than he did. "When I talk to alumni, this is one thing they deeply care about—the Program," says Thomas. "Is it still the Program? Will it survive? I hear this over and over again."

The Program has always been the super glue, that instant bond among Johnnie alumni. "We are defined in part by having

gone through the Program," says Patty Sollars (A80), a neuroscientist and vice president of the Alumni Association. "It is something we carry with us forever."

Yet if most Johnnies care deeply about the Program—as indicated by a recent (2008) survey—then why aren't they involved with local and national alumni programs in higher numbers? In 2008 the 12-member Presidents' Task Force on Alumni Relations wrestled with this question and embraced recommendations that Presidents Michael Peters and Christopher Nelson (SF70) accepted late last year.

One recommendation was to encourage the St. John's Alumni Association to serve as an umbrella organization for a greater variety of alumni activities. A new, streamlined 18-member Alumni Association Board will consist of 4 officers, the college-wide Alumni Director, the immediate

past-president of the association, and 12 at-large members. Shorter terms and term limits for board members will mean more alumni voices will be heard. And the annual Alumni Leadership Forum—the first was scheduled for Annapolis June 11-13, 2010—will bring alumni leaders together to create opportunities for alumni involvement in educational and social activities and work on assisting the college with fundraising, admissions, career and graduate school mentoring, and networking.

Ray Cave (class of 1948), who chaired the task force, says the changes arose from a need to actively recognize alumni as valuable members of the college community. "In the past not as much attention has been given to the alumni as to the Program and students," says Cave. "Yet it is the alumni who can help the Program continue."

The more alumni are involved with St. John's, the more they care about its future, says Cave, a former *Time* magazine editor and member of the college's Board of Visitors and Governors. "In the first 30 years after I graduated I gave no evidence that I was interested in St. John's," he says. "But more important, St. John's gave no evidence that it was interested in me. When St. John's got interested, so did I—which is what we hope to see happen with hundreds, or even

thousands, of our alumni today. The survival of St. John's may well depend on it."

Expanding the touch points of alumni involvement is the driving force behind this new era in alumni relations, explains Matt Calise (A00), a task force member who also chairs the Alumni Giving Council (formerly called Philanthropia) and who directs alumni relations at Georgetown Law. "We are steeped in and proud of our history, but we have a tendency to look back, to dissect," says Calise. "We are distinctive pedagogically, but in some ways we are not up with the times." The alumni survey showed that "our alumni are thirsting for more ways to be connected to the college. So let's ignite this passion."

College-alumni relations in the 21st century demand innovation, even a cultural shift says Sanjay Poovadan (SF83), a member of the Board of Visitors and Governors who chairs the board's Alumni Relations Committee. "The new changes mean a deeper, richer, widespread alumni engagement. There was a time, in the 1960s, when our way of education was under siege. We

had a circle of wagons around us, and we looked inward.

"But today we are no longer under siege culturally, financially or philosophically. We are strong enough to introduce the 'new,' to branch out our involvement of alumni to career services, Piraeus, communications, diversity, fundraising—there are many potential areas for alumni to get involved."

A major step forward is the Alumni Leadership Forum, an event already generating buzz. "It's very American, very Tocquevillesque, with new communities being created and a bubbling up of ideas," says Barbara Goyette (A73), vice president for advancement in Annapolis. The inaugural forum this June in Annapolis brought together chapter and reading group leaders, Reunion Class Leaders, the Alumni Giving Council, and young alumni leaders. Says Calise, "If there's a cracker-Jack alum out there who wants to get involved, we want to hear from him or her." The forum included an update with college presidents and officers followed by roundtables among volunteer leaders on issues affecting the college and alumni.

Expanding alumni involvement also opens the door to a new generation of volunteer leaders. Many are tech-savvy and adept at creating virtual and in-person communities. Like all Johnnies they are passionate about the Program and have fresh ideas, including networking events that go beyond the seminar to assist with job hunting, dating, housing and health. Poovadan is eager to learn from younger alumni, especially those from the 1980s on. "I want to help change the culture of the college so we involve all the alumni voices," he says.

Among the next generation of leaders is New York City chapter president Charlotte Lucy Latham (SF02). Latham is enthusiastic about the changes that include a smaller board and shorter term limits for board members. Juggling work, yoga teacher training, and graduate studies, Latham will trade four board meetings a year for the once-a-year Leadership Forum. "Now I'll have time to invest my energies in the activities that mean the most to me—those here at my chapter," says Latham.

Another young alumnus, Robert Morris (SF04), welcomes the changes. An active leader among D.C. alumni, Morris says alumni gain the chance to shape "a big-picture view." "I want to establish a common vision of what alumni should be and do. What is really needed is the answer to the question: 'Who are we?' This is a network of smart, successful people I really like and respect, a caring community with whom I share a common bond. But when I encounter alumni who say they attended a quirky, weird college I want to change how we view ourselves. I'd rather say, 'I received the best liberal arts undergraduate education there is.'"

Coalescing a common vision among the college's 9,500 living alumni poses a challenge, but at the heart of it all is the shared experience—unique and enduring—of being a Johnnie. As Cave puts it, "Alumni engagement is emotional and intellectual. Other schools have football games. We have the Program." ❀



DURING HOMECOMING 2009 IN SANTA FE, STEVE THOMAS (SF74) PRESENTED SANTA FE PRESIDENT MICHAEL PETERS WITH A SYMBOLIC CHECK FROM THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, REPRESENTING THE FINAL INSTALLMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COLLEGE'S CAPITAL CAMPAIGN.

WHAT'S NEXT?

BY LINDA STABLER-TALTY (SFGI76)

"YES, you are a member of the Alumni Association." Sound familiar? This appeared on the Alumni Association dues mailer for years, and now that our association no longer collects dues, the current board members would like to boldly confirm that "YES, you are a member of the Alumni Association"—if you have a degree from the college, have completed at least one semester of undergraduate study or one segment of Graduate Institute Study, or if you have been welcomed as an honorary member.

The college presidents wrote to alumni recently and declared their hope "to build a more vibrant and mutually sustaining relationship" with us, the alumni.

Likewise, the association board members have been hard at work to increase the opportunities to participate in the diverse activities of the association and college.

To this end, you can look forward to mailings and electronic postings that will explain the changes and help you explore the possibilities to become more involved.

Here is what will arrive soon:

- Draft of the new Alumni Association bylaws
- Narrative in plain language of these by-laws and changes from prior ones
- Explanation of all the structural changes within the Alumni Association
- Notification of the Annual Meeting date/time, including the Association Slate of Officers and Board Representatives



ALUMNI CAN HELP PLAN AND ORGANIZE INCREASED EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES SUCH AS PIRAEUS, SHOWN ABOVE.

- Notice that directors and officers may be elected by petition
- Transition resolution that will allow all of the above to move ahead

Also included will be an offer to let alumni "opt out" of electronic notifications, with hard copies mailed from the Alumni Office.

The highlight of these changes is the first annual Alumni Leadership Forum, June 11-13 in Annapolis. This inaugural event engages alumni on many different levels, with results continuing well into the future. And, you are encouraged to ask questions, discuss your ideas, and to get in

touch with the association as well as your fellow alumni.

Welcome to this energized era of alumni activity!

Contact: Jo Ann Mattson at joann.mattson@sjca.edu, phone 410-295-6926; or Nancie Wingo at nwingo@sjcsf.edu, phone 505-984-6121; or johnniealumni@gmail.com.

Responses to the St. John's College Alumni Survey (October 2008), conducted by an independent consultant, reveal that St. John's "has the basic DNA upon which strong, ongoing alumni relationships have been built. . . ." Alumni have strong feelings for their alma mater, yet alumni involvement is not correspondingly as high. Here are some highlights from undergraduate respondents:

- 73 percent of St. John's alumni are very satisfied with their student

experience (compared to 47 percent -83 percent at other institutions surveyed).

- 70 percent report that overall they have very positive feelings about the college today (compared to 34-73 percent at other institutions surveyed).
- 9 out of 10 alumni take pride in their St. John's affiliation and feel that St. John's is a part of who they are.
- 6 out of 10 feel they are part of the

St. John's community and have a stake in the college's achievements and success.

- 28 percent report that they only hear from the college when it's asking for financial support.
- 55 percent said the Program was the most meaningful aspect of their St. John's experience.

WHAT IS THE ALUMNI LEADERSHIP FORUM?

The Alumni Leadership Forum is a major step in the reorganization of alumni relations taking place at St. John's. This annual gathering of volunteer alumni leaders, held during the summer on alternating campuses, recognizes the contributions of dedicated alumni, trains them in their areas of volunteer interest, and offers an opportunity to engage with fellow alumni as well as college officers and staff.

What is the goal of the first forum in Annapolis?

The first Alumni Leadership Forum was held in Annapolis on June 11-13, 2010. Attendees, including alumni leaders, college staff and officers, gathered to learn from each other and plan for the college's future. Questions for the forum included: How can the college enhance communication and engagement with its alumni? How can alumni get involved to help the college? In this way, the college will be able to better serve the evolving needs of its alumni. Look for a report on the meeting in e-newsletters as well as the fall issue of *The College*.

Who was invited? How can I get involved?

The first Alumni Leadership Forum brought together a smaller group of leaders than will attend future forums. These include Chapter and Reading Group leadership, Reunion Class Leaders, the Alumni Giving Council, and Young Alumni leaders. However, all interested alumni are encouraged to contact the Alumni Office on either campus for more information: in Annapolis, 410-295-6926; in Santa Fe, 505-984-6121. For questions about the changes to the Alumni Association or how to get involved, please contact the Alumni Association at this email: johnniealumni@gmail.com.

How else is the Alumni Association changing?

The St. John's College Alumni Association remains a separate 501(c)3 organization, but it will work in partnership with the college to increase alumni involvement. The Alumni Association Board will manage the partnership of the association with the college and ensure that the alumni working groups are focused on key priorities. The volunteer group Philanthropia has been

renamed the Alumni Giving Council and will continue its work under the umbrella of the Alumni Association, as will all alumni volunteer groups, such as Reunion Class Leaders and Chapter Presidents. There will be more opportunities for alumni: service projects and career mentoring, for example.

What will this change mean for me?

It means more involvement and communication with alumni and college staff. The new, streamlined 18-member board consists of four officers, the college-wide Alumni Director, the immediate Past President of the Association, and 12 at-large members. Each at-large member of the board will be familiar with one or more of the working groups. These working groups will take the lead on many alumni activities –and offer opportunities for those who want to get involved. Ideas for working groups are welcome; how and when these groups form will vary with needs. This opportunity for increased connection and involvement will benefit of all members of the college community.

Join the 6,000 Johnnies already participating in the Alumni Online Community. Go to: stjohnscollege.edu and click on "Alumni."

CALL FOR ARTISTS: All-college Alumni and Santa Fe Faculty, Staff and Student Art Show

Artists from both campuses are invited to participate in the annual fall art show, which will be on display September 25 through October 17, 2010, on the second floor of the Peterson Student Center. The opening of the show will coincide with Homecoming on the Santa Fe campus. Plan to attend the opening reception Saturday, September 25, 5-7 p.m.

Alumni who wish to enter their artwork should contact the college by August 1 to declare their intent to participate. Entries need to be received no later than September 10.

For more details, contact Maggie Magalnick at 505-984-6199 or e-mail maggie@sjsf.edu.

ALUMNI CALENDAR

Make plans now to join your friends for Homecoming 2010! This year, the event takes place on the same weekend on both campuses: September 24-26.

SANTA FE

Friday

Registration, 4-8 p.m.
Alumni/students networking reception, 4-5:30 p.m.
Welcome Home reception, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Lecture, 8 p.m.
Question Period, 9 p.m.

Saturday

Registration, 8:30 a.m.-noon
Seminars, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Luncheon and State of the College address, 12:30-2 p.m.
Levan Hall dedication, 2 p.m.
Alumni Association meeting, 3 p.m.
Bocce and other lawn games, 3:30 p.m.
Art Show reception and Waltz Party, 5-7 p.m.
Dance, 9-12 p.m.

Sunday

Alumni Association Board meeting, 9 a.m.-10 a.m.
Brunch, complete with reunion-year toasts, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

ANNAPOLIS

Friday

Registration, 4-8 p.m.
Reunion Class/Graduate Institute receptions, 5:45-7 p.m.
Fiftieth Reunion Dinner for the Class of 1960, 5:45 p.m.
Lecture, 8:15 p.m.
Question Period, after Lecture
Rock Party, 10:30 p.m.

Saturday

Registration, 8:30 a.m. to noon
All-alumni Meeting/Awards Assembly, 9:30 a.m.
Seminars, 10:30 a.m.
Family Lunch; Classes of the 1940s and Friends Luncheon, noon

Children's Activities,

1:30-3:30 p.m.
Mitchell Gallery tour, 3 p.m.
Cocktail reception, 5-7 p.m.
Alumni Banquet, 7:30-9:30 p.m.
Homecoming Ball, Great Hall, 9:30 p.m.
Rock Party, Coffee Shop, 10 p.m.

Sunday

President's Brunch, 11 a.m.
Around the Chapters



FIELD OF DREAMS

Before St. John's gained fame for several lacrosse championships in the 1930s, there was just one sport at St. John's: baseball. These serious young men in their striped jerseys, posed in front of the Liberty Tree, were members of the team sometime between 1901 and 1905, according to Greenfield Library records. Football came along in the 1880s and St. John's fielded

powerhouse teams in football as well as lacrosse. (Johnnies once defeated Washington College on the gridiron by a score of 116-0.) Today, Johnnies are much more likely to be playing basketball or soccer, with Ultimate Frisbee fast becoming a favorite sport for both Santa Fe and Annapolis Johnnies. Santa Fe students are also playing hockey competitively; they recently captured a city championship. ❖

HISTORICALLY INACCURATE

Richard Saja (SF93)

Over the last 10 years, textile artist Richard Saja (SF93) has made quite a name for himself in the design community. He had his first solo show, “The Bright and Shining Light of Irreverence: Richard Saja and the Historically Inaccurate School,” last year at the Shelburne Museum in Vermont. *The New York Times* has brought attention to his work, which has also been praised in *Antiques* magazine, *ReadyMade*, and *O*. He also won a Searchlight Fellowship from the American Crafts Council and was an exhibitor at the council’s 2009 show.

Through his company, Historically Inaccurate Decorative Arts (historically-inaccurate.blogspot.com), Saja pursues a unique niche in the decorative arts. He takes classic toile prints and embellishes their designs with hand-embroidered additions drawn from his own imagination and sense of humor. Saja describes it as “a cheeky, irreverent take on a pattern of Western civilization.”

He began his studies at the Philadelphia College of Art, spending a year there before deciding he needed a fresh perspective. He headed to Santa Fe, where he crashed on a Johnnie’s floor, went to class on a lark, and was “blown away” by St. John’s. He joined the January Freshman class in 1990 and remains grateful for the challenging education he found at the college. “While I was terrible in math, junior math with John Cornell was pure magic.”

After graduating from St. John’s, Saja taught himself graphics programs such as Photoshop and Illustrator and landed a job in advertising. After a layoff in 2000, he teamed up with Johnnie Martha Alexander (SF95). The two discovered a mutual love for textiles, so they joined together to create a company, Marisaal, dedicated to creating hand-embroidered pillows that “made people think.”

After Alexander moved on, Saja has continued the work through Historically Inaccurate. While the pillows were popular,



ABOVE AND LEFT: PRINTS FROM RICHARD SAJA’S SERIES “THE LOST GIRLS.” EACH MEASURES 24” x 36” AND IS AN ARCHIVAL GICLÉE PRINT ON HEAVY-WEIGHT CANVAS, EMBROIDERED WITH RAYON FLOSS, STRETCHED AND MOUNTED. THE CUSTOM TOILE DESIGN OF “THE LOST GIRLS” WAS INSPIRED BY J.M. BARRIE’S CHARACTERS FROM *Peter Pan*. RIGHT: ONE OF SAJA’S “FAUXNASETTI” BAR TOWELS: ELECTRONIC CLIP ART MANIPULATING THE FACE OF A WOMAN USED IN HUNDREDS OF DIFFERENT ITERATIONS BY SAJA’S FAVORITE 20TH-CENTURY DESIGNER, PIERO FORNASETTI.

Saja began to wonder: “Why am I just doing cushions? I decided to concentrate on larger-scale pieces,” says Saja. The Shelburne show in 2009 was a great opportunity to showcase his talents. He created an original work of embroidery called *JUST THIS ONCE*, which was paired with the

Erastus Salisbury Field oil painting *The Garden of Eden*.

Saja hopes his work is provocative. “A lot of time, art is passive. I want to work around themes, to use humor, to force people to ask why. A lot of that, I got at St. John’s.” ❖

STJOHN’S COLLEGE

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