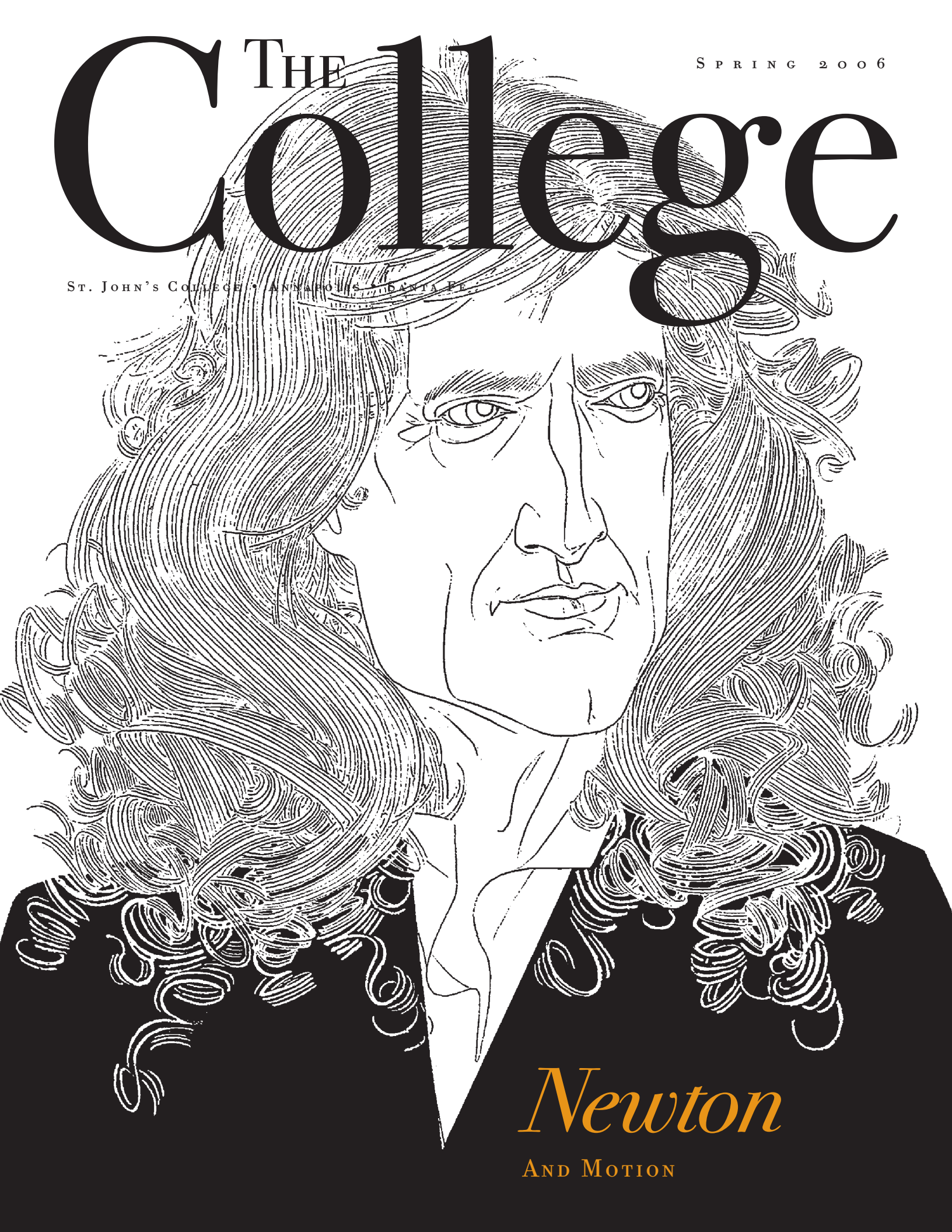


# THE College

SPRING 2006

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE • ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND



*Newton*

AND MOTION

## ON NEWTON

Earlier this spring, the BBC launched an international poll to find the world's favorite quotation. Lao Tzu's "A journey of a thousand miles . . ." came in first, but a contender was this famous line by Sir Isaac Newton: "If I have seen further, it is by standing upon the shoulders of Giants." The quote can be found in a 1675 letter by Newton to Robert Hooke, a talented physicist and one of the original fellows in the Royal Society. Interpreted by many as a modest acknowledgment of the contributions of others (Kepler and Galileo among them), Newton's comment might also have been a sarcastic barb aimed at Hooke—a short man—who took issue with many of Newton's findings. Several biographers suggest Hooke and Newton peppered their correspondence with subtle insults.

Hooke would later accuse Newton of plagiarizing his ideas when the latter published the first volume of *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* in 1686. Newton was so incensed by Hooke's charges that he threatened to withhold publication of the two remaining books. The astronomer Edmund Halley, a man of great means, eventually funded the printing and distribution of the *Principia*. The Royal Society claimed to be low on funds, though some say Hooke had something to do with that.

The father of modern science was the son of an illiterate farmer who died three months before Isaac was born in Woolsthorpe in Lincolnshire in 1643 (on Christmas Day according to the Julian calendar). Born premature and not expected to live, Isaac suffered a difficult childhood. He was taken from school and set to farming and, being unable to put his books away to watch the sheep, he failed miserably. He was released from farming to attend Cambridge, where he helped pay his way by cleaning the rooms of professors and fellow students. His brilliance noted, Newton later won a fellowship that provided financial support. But when the plague struck the city in 1665, the university was closed. Newton went back to the farm, where he immersed himself in mathematics and contemplation. Not long after his return to the university, he was named Lucasian Professor of Mathematics, a professorship currently held by Stephen Hawking.

Newton was said to get so caught up in his work that he would neglect practical matters such as grooming and eating. He never married and had few friends. His personal behavior was so odd that in recent years two British researchers proposed that Newton (along with Einstein) may have had Asperger's Syndrome, a form of autism characterized by obsessive dedication to a particular task.

Newton left Cambridge in 1696 to take up a position, first as Warden and later as Master, of the Royal Mint. Although these duties interfered with his scientific research, they made him a wealthy man. In 1704, Newton published the *Opticks*. He was knighted in 1705 by Queen Anne, becoming the first scientist so honored. He died in March 1727 in London.

Johnnies interested in revisiting Newton and his great discoveries in mathematics, optics, and motion in the solar system might enjoy *Let Newton Be! A New Perspective on His Life and Works*, published in 1988 by Oxford University Press.

—RH



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ANNAPOLIS • SANTA FE

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# THE College

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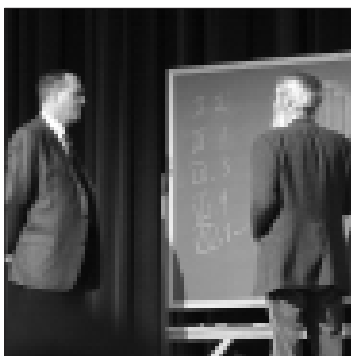
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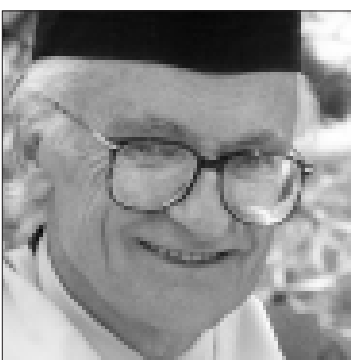
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Isaac Newton  
Illustration by David Johnson



## A LOVE OF THE PROGRAM

### *Victoria Mora is Santa Fe's Next Dean*

Tutor Victoria Mora has been selected by her fellow tutors to serve as the next dean of the Santa Fe campus, effective July 1, succeeding David Levine (A67) in the post. The first woman and the first native New Mexican to become dean in Santa Fe, Ms. Mora joined the St. John's College faculty in 1992. Her appointment as dean became official with approval by the Board of Visitors and Governors on April 24, 2006.

For any tutor, the decision to leave the classroom for five years is a difficult one to make. "I love teaching, and not teaching is going to be a huge sacrifice," she says. To keep in contact with students, books, and ideas, Ms. Mora is planning a Dean's Seminar Series to be offered periodically, and will set aside time each day for a Dean's walk to maintain daily contact with students.

Balancing the responsibilities of the dean's office with her priorities at home may also be a difficult adjustment. But Mora takes on the job with a great deal of support from her husband, Tomas Fernández, a retired educator. They have two young children, Marisol Fernández y Mora, 10, and Alejandro Fernández y Mora, 6. The family also includes Tomas' sons, Antonio, Miguel, and Luis Fernández, all "twenty-somethings finished with college and on to wonderful families and careers," Ms. Mora says.

"I know I will have to figure out how to balance the enormous demands of the college with what I take to be extremely important—family. If not for my husband, who will be holding down the fort at home, it would have been nearly impossible for me to consider" accepting the appointment, she says. "Administering our rich academic

program will be challenging enough, and we are facing tremendous opportunities with our new president, Michael Peters, in place."

President Peters says Ms. Mora brings, "great energy, intelligence, and charm to the position," he says. "I enthusiastically look forward to



A NUMBER OF FIRSTS MARK VICTORIA MORA'S APPOINTMENT AS DEAN OF THE SANTA FE CAMPUS: SHE'S THE FIRST WOMAN, FIRST MOTHER, AND FIRST NATIVE NEW MEXICAN TO HOLD THE POST ON THAT CAMPUS.

working with her to pursue the aims of the Santa Fe campus and the college."

Ms. Mora grew up just 70 miles from Santa Fe and was the first member of her family to attend college. She visited St. John's during her sophomore year at the University of New Mexico and was fascinated by the Program, but felt obligated to remain at the less expensive state college.

After completing her bachelor's degree in English and philosophy at UNM, she went to Yale University, where she earned her master's and doctoral degrees in philosophy. She taught for a year at a community college in Albuquerque while she

completed her dissertation, "Gender, Expression, and Analogy: A Reapproach to the Problem of the Other."

"It had its roots in phenomenology, with the primary focus on an original phenomenological analysis of gender as a feature of the expressive body," Ms. Mora says. "It was in response to an argument made by Ortega y Gasset against Husserl's claim that we know the Other through our experience of the Other's body

as analogous to our own—a semaphore signaling consciousness. I end up siding with Husserl."

When she was ready to look for an academic home, Ms. Mora recalled the small liberal arts college in Santa Fe that had captured her heart. "I remembered what a great experience I had visiting as an undergraduate and I thought, 'Wouldn't that be a wonderful place to be able to continue my education and have a job?'"

After more than a decade on the job, Ms. Mora is still shaping her education at the college, not to mention shaping the community around her. She has served on the faculty of the undergraduate program as well

as in the Graduate Institute. She has devoted a great deal of time to the college's outreach programs: leading the faculty component of the Opportunity Initiative, contributing to the Tecolote colloquia which provide continuing education to New Mexico teachers, and leading Summer Classics seminars. She has served on the Instruction Committee and on the presidential search committee that selected Mr. Peters.

"Victoria brings a solid background in the Program, experience working with administration, and an ability to work well with a wide range of people," says tutor Linda Weiner, who served on the dean's search committee. "Her thoughtfulness and energy will be an asset to our community, and we truly appreciate her willingness to serve the college as our dean for the next five years."

With such wide-ranging interests and qualifications, Ms. Mora's appointment promises a tenure that extends far beyond the bounds of Weigle Hall. But like her predecessor, Dean Levine, Ms. Mora's goals are firmly in the St. John's Program.

"If you think about all of the constituencies at the college, what is it that holds all of those people together?" Ms. Mora asks. "It's a love of the St. John's Program, and the dean is charged with both supervising the program of instruction and seeing to the well-being of the students so that they can pursue it in the best and deepest way possible. Given that the dean is right there working with the heart of the Program, it seems to me that it's a role through which these various constituencies can come together. I'm honored to assume this role." ❖

—KELLY WILSON (SFog)

## A FITTING TRIBUTE

### *Spector Hall Dedicated in Annapolis*

On January 28, students, faculty and members of the college's Board of Visitors and Governors gathered for the dedication of Spector Hall, the newest dormitory on the Annapolis campus. The ceremony held special meaning for Warren Spector (A81), whose gift to the college made the dorm's construction possible, and his family. They had come to St. John's to dedicate the new building in the memory of a husband and father, Philip Spector.

A successful contractor who had built many residential, commercial, and industrial buildings in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, Philip Spector died in 1990. The new dormitory is a fitting tribute to a man who was "a builder in trade and a builder in spirit," said Mr. Spector.

"I know that he would have tremendous pride seeing this hall erected in his memory," Mr. Spector said.

The President and Co-chief Operating Officer of the Wall Street firm Bear, Stearns & Co.,

and a member of the college's board, Mr. Spector has made several generous gifts to the college over the years in appreciation for the education he received at St. John's. Along with Gilliam Hall, which opened in fall 2005, Spector Hall extends community life to the lower campus. Opened at the start of the spring semester, the new dorm houses 40 students and features spacious common areas, suite-style rooms, and a faculty apartment.

Mr. Spector had attended Princeton, but the Ivy League college wasn't right for him, he said. After a brother suggested St. John's, Mr. Spector read the catalog and knew this was the college for him. "I had been at one of the richest campuses in the entire country, a [university] with tremendous resources," he said. "I have nothing negative to say about Princeton, but I found that those were not the things that mattered to me as a student. It was something special that was here in the community—the Program, the people, the

dedication, everything about it was what attracted me to St. John's, and I was quite right in my judgment that this was the place to be."

After joining the St. John's board, Mr. Spector saw that while the college didn't require "superficial" resources, the need for more campus housing was evident. "When I lived off campus you could walk to historic Annapolis and live in a reasonable apartment, but it has become impossible to do that. I'm really happy that we have 80 percent of the students living on campus now, because it keeps people close, and I think that's vitally important."

Mr. Spector's mother, Barbara, and other family members and friends came to campus for the ceremony, a tour of the dormitory, and a reception. "This means a lot to me and a lot to my family," Mr. Spector said. "It is the first thing we have dedicated in memory of my father."

Representing the student body, Mary Davenport (A06) spoke about how Spector Hall helped her make another home at the college. She thanked the Spector family for their gift. "This college—the things we learn, the

people we meet, and the experiences we share—this has become a place that I am comfortable calling my home," she said.

President Christopher Nelson (SF70) also expressed his thanks. "We are grateful to you, Warren, for choosing St. John's College as the home for your memorial dedication and the object of your philanthropy and extraordinary generosity," he said. Rather than just providing dorm space, Mr. Spector's gift helps foster a close-knit community of learners. "We know that Warren's participation in community life on campus was a transformative experience for him, as he has given us the means to erect this building with the conviction that a St. John's education is most completely achieved by having students fully engaged in the community of learning, where the classroom experience spills out into the quad throughout all the activities of student life and into the common spaces and quiet hours of the night in the college's dormitories," Mr. Nelson said. ❖

—ROSEMARY HARTY



ALEX LORMAN



ALAIN JONAMILLO

TOP: IN JANUARY, SPECTOR HALL WAS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF PHILIP SPECTOR, HUSBAND TO BARBARA AND FATHER TO WARREN SPECTOR (A81), WHOSE GIFT MADE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DORMITORY POSSIBLE. LEFT: SPECTOR HALL COMMON ROOMS ARE SPACIOUS AND INVITING.

## THE QUIET MAN

### *Mike Peters Enjoys Seminars*

When you walk into a St. John's seminar, it's rare to find anything unexpected: several different translations of a Platonic dialogue, a group of students in varying degrees of sleep deprivation, and of course, the omnipresent St. John's chair. But for students on the Santa Fe campus, there has been an exciting addition to the seminar: a college president.

For Michael Peters, who became president in Santa Fe in 2005, learning about the Program firsthand was a top priority, so he joined the January freshman class as a seminar auditor. By the time Mr. Peters was officially installed as president during his inauguration ceremony last October, many Johnnies were already accustomed to seeing him in the classroom, bent over a copy of the *Iliad*.

Mr. Peters believes that learning alongside students is an integral part of achieving the priorities that he outlined at his inauguration: support for learning, connection with the community, and heightened visibility. It soon became clear to Mr. Peters that he needed to be a part of the academic program. "Because I didn't graduate from St. John's, I knew that I really needed to try to find a way to get familiar with the college through its crux, the Program. I felt I needed to gain the experiences that the students have of how the classroom works," he says.

Balancing the hectic schedule of the president's office with 200 pages of weekly reading isn't easy; nevertheless, as his January freshman classmates began to tackle the concepts of Aristotle, Mr. Peters made time for the readings. After his long days in

Weigle Hall, he stayed late to listen to the conversation and the ideas spilling forth. The St. John's seminar was a different environment for the West Point graduate, former Army colonel, and long-time foreign policy specialist. "Sitting in on the first seminars reinforced what I'd seen during the interview process and is very much the reason that I thought St. John's College was the right place for me," he explains. "The level of engagement and the commitment of everyone in the classroom, the interaction between the students and the material, the students with one another, the students and the tutors, it's all something that's completely unique to St. John's."

By the end of their second semester, the JFs were used to the tall, quiet man sitting in the side chair. When they returned for their sophomore year, many were surprised and impressed to see him back in seminar. As he began visiting each of the seven sophomore seminars, students became curious and asked if he could join the conversation. "On several occasions students said to me, 'Gee, we wish you'd speak up and offer your views on this,'"

*"I had read  
Machiavelli's  
The Prince  
many times, but  
this time I think  
I saw it in a much  
different light."*

MIKE PETERS,  
ST. JOHN'S PRESIDENT, SANTA FE



TO BETTER UNDERSTAND JOHNNIES AND THE PROGRAM, SANTA FE PRESIDENT MIKE PETERS BEGAN SITTING IN ON JANUARY FRESHMAN SEMINARS SOON AFTER TAKING OFFICE IN JANUARY 2005.

he says. "But I feel that I'm really there just as a way to see the students, to get a sense of what's going on, to be able to observe the approaches of the different tutors."

Mr. Peters is enjoying the fresh perspectives the great books provide. Even though he has read many of the books on the Program, the seminar still offers new insights into texts, some of which he thought he knew very well. "I had read Machiavelli's *The Prince* many times, but this time I think I saw it in a much different light," he says. "Not the stereotypical Machiavelli, the ultimate politician who's always trying to figure out ways to maneuver, but the kind of moral underpinnings of the text which I hadn't really thought about or appreciated before."

The seminars have afforded him "an understanding of the language of St. John's, which revolves so much around the books." It's an insight that will

surely prove essential as he takes on a position that is vital to communicating the unique nature of St. John's to the greater world.

Mr. Peters said he's looking forward to continuing into junior year. Sometime in the future, he may consider enrolling in the Graduate Institute. "If I do the graduate program, I would probably do the Eastern Classics program," he says. "That would be a new area for me and something I would find fascinating."

In the meantime, his efforts have not gone unnoticed by Brandon Winston (Sfo8), who last year was a JF. "You know how Machiavelli says that the prince sometimes needs to come down from the mountain and get a different perspective of who he is from below, from the perspective of the citizens? That's what Mr. Peters was like, and that's the quality of the true prince." ❖

—KELLY WILSON (Sfo9)

## A COMMUNITY OF HOPE

### *Santa Fe Students Join Katrina Relief Efforts*

Before she boarded a van to New Orleans with 14 other St. John's students, Ilana Kirschbaum (SF07) visited Web sites that showed the widespread devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. "I sort of assumed that they were only showing the extreme cases," she says. "But as we first drove into the parish, there were piles and piles of debris everywhere, abandoned cars, trees in the middle of the road, everything was totally destroyed and completely abandoned. I wanted to cry."

On March 11, the Santa Fe students piled into two vans (provided by a local dealership) and set out to Louisiana's

St. Bernard Parish, hit hard by the storm. They set up camp in a volunteer tent city run by the Emergency Communities organization and went right to work. Half of the students stayed at the campsite, where they served free meals at the organization's Made with Love Café and provided local residents with needs ranging from toiletries to child care. The others, joining up with the nonprofit Common Ground Collective, took sledgehammers and buckets into devastated homes and businesses to strip away damaged sheetrock and insulation, haul away debris and ruined belongings, and clear homes of toxic mud.

*"Sure, we were providing food to people, but it was more about the community we helped to create, where people could just come in and talk."*

ILANA KIRSCHBAUM (SF07)



The volunteers also spent time with the homeowners they were helping. Jeff Stott (SF06) listened as one woman relived her ordeal with him. "She experienced absolutely traumatic things," he says. "During the storm, she was trapped on her roof and watched dead bodies floating past her house. Some of her neighbors were killed."

While a tragedy of such magnitude can "make you feel pretty helpless," Kirschbaum says, the experience went beyond providing food and manual labor for two short weeks. "Sure, we were providing food to people, but it was more about the community we helped to create, where people could just come in and

talk," she explains. "There was never really a distance between people. There was music, there was dancing. It was a glimpse of what is possible."

On April 26, the students gave a multimedia presentation of their trip for the college community. Members of the Santa Fe community were also invited as a thank-you for donations they made to support the effort. The presentation featured photographs of the devastation, video, and audio interviews. More encouraging images were of the community Kirschbaum described among volunteers in the tent city.

"This was something that just happened spontaneously," says Rachel Davison (SF08), the trip leader. Friendships developed quickly out of an atmosphere of goodwill. "We here at St. John's have our own sense of community that is built naturally out of the Program. This was different. We bonded with each other, but we also bonded with so many others."

—KELLY WILSON (SF09)

TOP: BEN GADDES (SF08) PREPARES TO FEED KATRINA VOLUNTEERS.

LEFT: EZRA JOHNSON (SF09, FAR RIGHT) AND NICOLA PODBOY (SF06) AT THE TENT CITY THAT HOUSED VOLUNTEERS IN ST. BERNARD PARISH.



PHOTOS BY CHRIS QUINN



## NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### TUTOR NEWS

In Annapolis two tutors are beginning study projects on interesting non-Program works and will later lead faculty groups on their topics.

**PATRICIA LOCKE** will hold the Adolph W. Schmidt tutorship, gaining partial release time from classes to pursue her project. The tutorship was established in 1985 through a fund endowed by Mr. Schmidt, a former St. John's board member and ambassador, and it alternates between the Annapolis and Santa Fe campuses. Ms. Locke will study Marcel Proust's novel *In Search of Lost Time*. "Issues of memory, both voluntary and involuntary, are most obvious, but Proust deals thematically with bodily processes such as perception, speech, and sleep as well. Proust considers stages of mental and moral development before 'teenage' began to separate childhood from adult life. He also is concerned with intersubjectivity, sexuality, and the boundaries of language. My own questions are primarily: what makes a coherent self? How does one's perception of one's body, on the one hand, and language that takes others into account, on the other, shape a self?"

Ms. Locke is also interested in how living in a city affects one's perception of self and world. "The familiar urban setting, the unpredictable joy in truly recognizing others through the masks age wears, the desire and futility in trying to stop time—Proust sees it all, and he gives the reader access to possible meanings of the most delicate events."

As holder of the National Endowment for the Humanities chair, **ROBERT DRUECKER** will be studying the Upanishads, a

project he became interested in after Annapolis faculty discussed a report on the Santa Fe Eastern Classics program. He thought it would benefit both campuses to become more acquainted with what has become a significant part of the intellectual life on the Western campus, he says.

The Upanishads "considered by many to be the supreme work of Indian wisdom," seemed the best starting point,

Mr. Druecker says. "They are at once records of spiritual experience, formulations of intellectual insight, and expressions of poetic imagination. They aim to bring about both an illumination of the mind and a transformation of the reader's experience so that it manifests the inner realization that the divine source of all is one with the self within each person," he says

As the holder of the chair, supported by endowment funds, a tutor gains two-thirds released time to study a topic for a year. In the second year, he or she leads a faculty study

group in the fall and gives a lecture. Annapolis tutor **GEORGE RUSSELL** is in his second year of a study project on the speeches of Abraham Lincoln.

### RETIREMENTS

A tutor since 1967, **GISELA BERN** (HAoo) has retired from the Annapolis faculty. Mrs. Berns grew up in the Black Forest of Germany and studied at Heidelberg University, where she earned a doctorate in classics and philosophy, and where she also met her husband, **LAURENCE BERN** (HAoo, tutor emeritus in Annapolis), in a class on Plato's *Phaedo*.

During a reception in the Great Hall near the end of the spring semester, tutor David Stephenson talked about Mrs. Bern's many fine qualities, including her passion for music. "Gisela has sustained a violin section of the orchestra all by herself on more than one occasion," said Mr. Stephenson. "Without her enthusiasm and hard work I doubt we could ever have attempted such ambitious orchestral works. Bach, Beethoven, Mozart are meat and drink to her. In her music tutorial she has discovered innumerable newness in the verbal and musical interplay of the operas and passions we study."

During the same Annapolis gathering, members of the community turned out to thank long-time Annapolis Registrar **REENIE CRAVEN** for her hard work and dedication to the community. Mrs. Craven worked for nearly 17 years for St. John's, and has been



PHOTOS BY ALEX LORMAN

**MR. DRUECKER DELVES INTO THE UPANISHADS; MS. LOCKE TAKES ON PROUST. BOTH BENEFIT FROM ENDOWMENTS SET ASIDE FOR FACULTY STUDY, AND BOTH WILL LEAD STUDY GROUPS AND GIVE LECTURES ON THEIR TOPICS.**



registrar since September 2000. In retirement, she plans to make time for “grandmothering, reading, gardening, walking, and volunteering.” She’ll stay involved with St. John’s through the Caritas Society, a volunteer group that supports the college.

#### APPOINTMENTS

**CATHY SMITH** is the new director of Information Technology Services, based in Santa Fe, but serving both campuses and overseeing improvements to IT infrastructure. Ms. Smith earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in history from the University of California-Irvine, and has spent her IT career in higher education with institutions including UC, Stanford University, Indiana University, and the University of Kansas. At Carleton College, Ms. Smith partnered with faculty to develop a model of faculty technology support widely adopted in higher education; she has also partnered with administration at several institutions to implement innovative approaches to automating business processes.

**BRONTÉ JONES** has been appointed treasurer for the Annapolis campus. Ms. Jones earned her doctorate in higher education from the University of Texas after obtaining a bachelor’s degree and an M.B.A. in finance from American University. In addition, she is a graduate of the Harvard Institute for Higher Education. Ms. Jones joins St. John’s from Huston-Tillotson University in Austin, Texas, where she has been vice president for administration and finance since 2004. Previously she held the posts of assistant dean of financial services, dean of enrollment management, and adjunct instructor in finance at the university. She has worked for



BRONTÉ JONES: NEW TREASURER  
IN ANNAPOLIS

the Texas State Auditor’s Office, auditing statewide financial aid programs at institutions of higher education.

#### SANTA FE STUDENT WINS FICTION AWARD

**KELLY MARIE WILSON** (SF09) won a \$10,000 Gold Award for fiction writing from The National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts, a Miami-based non-profit group founded in 1981 that fosters artistic talents of high school seniors. Miss Wilson titled her winning story “Driving in a Hail Storm on the First Night She’s Been Alone in Eleven Years, Wendy Recalls her Four Great Loves.” Besides the \$10,000 prize, Miss Wilson received a free trip to take part in the NFAA awards ceremony in the Baryshnikov Arts Center in New York City.

#### JOHNNIE DOCUMENTARY TO AIR ON PBS

A Johnnie’s documentary on high school baseball in Japan will debut at the Brooklyn International Film Festival, June 2-11. *Kokoyakyu* also airs July 4, 2006, on public broadcasting’s P.O.V., says **ALEX SHEAR** (SF00), senior producer. (Check local listings.)

The documentary captures baseball as a national obsession in Japan; it follows two high school teams and their coaches as they try to win the national championship. “It’s really unlike anything in the United States, and the way Japanese kids approach this rite is also quite a contrast to youth culture—especially sports culture—in America,” he says. For details, visit the production company’s Web site: [www.projectilearts.org/kokoyakyu](http://www.projectilearts.org/kokoyakyu).

#### JACKHAMMER TIME

Visitors to the Western campus this summer will see more than a few barriers and quite a few construction crews, as improvements in Santa Fe

continue. More than \$1.3 million in renovation projects are under way. Workers have already completed a project in the Weigle Hall lobby that renders the entrance friendlier to prospective students. A new gazebo and walkway are in place near “France,” the parking lot on lower campus. This summer, crews are breaking up concrete sidewalks throughout the central area of the campus. Students will return in the fall to brick pathways, teak tables, additional lighting, increased accessibility for people with disabilities, and a much-improved koi pond. ♣

## A FAREWELL TO FEBBIES



**SARA MCCLAYTON** (A09) signs the college register during January 2006 convocation in Annapolis. Eighteen students matriculated in January; they are expected to be the last of the Febbies, as the Annapolis campus has ended the practice of enrolling freshmen in January. The Santa Fe campus will continue to offer a January freshman class.

## LEAVING A LEGACY

### *Nothing Says "Thank You" Like the Senior Gift*

For more than a decade, graduating seniors have honored the college with a gift that class members select together and fund with their personal donations to St. John's. It's a tradition that started with the class of 1992, when a large percentage of the students in that class turned over their "caution fees" (dormitory security deposits) to the college to endow a Class of 1992 scholarship. Caution fees seed many of the gifts today, but seniors often make additional gifts and continue to contribute money to some funds long after they've graduated.

This year's gifts, from seniors in Santa Fe and Annapolis, are eminently practical and stem from needs students perceived during their years at St. John's. Santa Fe students chose to purchase DVDs and CDs of their choice for the Meem Library. Members of the Annapolis class of 2006 may also be remembered with gratitude for many years in the future for their gift: a spiral binding machine for the campus print shop, intended to save future seniors from late-night lines at Kinkos when essays are due and also to upgrade Program materials from comb-bindings to spiral bindings. The machine is already in place in Chris Colby's print shop—a much more convenient place for harried students to queue up to copy and bind their essays.

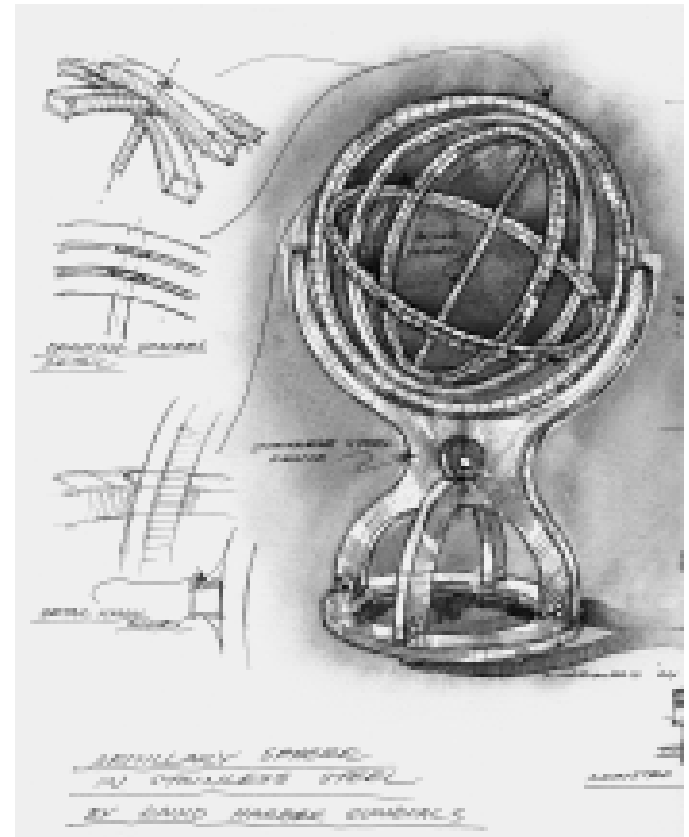
"More than 71 percent of the senior classes on each campus participated in raising funds for their respective gifts, with excellent leadership from the senior class gift committees,"

says Annual Fund director Stefanie Takacs (A89). "We expect the DVDs to be in place for fall 2006 in Santa Fe, and the first use for the new spiral binder will be to make address books for the recent Annapolis graduates, so they can stay in touch with each other after graduation."

Seniors in the class of 2005 in Santa Fe donated \$4,300 toward restoration of the fishpond, a project due to begin this coming summer. In Annapolis, the class of 2005 created an endowment to buy Lobachevski's *Theory of Parallels* as a gift to each incoming senior.

The Santa Fe Class of 2004 has in mind a most ambitious project, and they're seeking long-term involvement in the project from members of their class and any other alumni who are taken with the idea. Graduates chose to commission a stainless steel operational replica of 16th-century astronomer Tycho Brahe's armillary sphere. The class has already raised \$6,000 toward the \$100,000 cost.

Class leaders have selected an artist and hope to install the sphere on campus in the next decade or so, Brenna McMahon (SFO4) said. The sculpture relates directly to the Program because the sphere can be used to replicate the data that Kepler used and that Newton then relied upon, McMahon says. "It's also our hope to install a beautiful sculpture that will reflect the unity of the arts and sciences in the Program. To the best of our knowledge, there are only two armillary spheres in the world (including one at the



Smithsonian), and this would be the only operational sphere in the world. We hope that it will show the St. John's community how invested our class is in the college," says McMahon. ✦

DAVID HARBER'S SKETCH OF THE ARMILLARY SPHERE THAT SANTA FE'S CLASS OF 2004 HOPES TO ONE DAY INSTALL ON CAMPUS.

## SENIOR CLASS GIFTS OVER THE YEARS

1905: The bell in the McDowell Hall tower was a gift from this class.

Annapolis Class of 1997: Funded a portrait of Eva Brann by noted artist Cedric Egeli. The painting graces Room 12 of McDowell.

Santa Fe Classes of 1998, 99: Contributed gifts to the endowment in support of faculty salaries.

Annapolis Class of 1999: Made a gift to the Music Library Fund and acquisition of an apple seed from the tree that inspired Sir Isaac Newton. The apple yielded two seedlings, but sadly the trees did not survive.

Santa Fe Class of 2001: Raised money for an observatory in honor of then-laboratory director Hans Von Briesen (HSFO3).

Annapolis Class of 2003: Funded digital re-mastering and transcription of lectures that existed only on tape.

## REMEMBERING RALPH SWENTZELL

I wept hard when I learned of Ralph Swentzell's death. He was one of my seminar tutors during my sophomore year over 20 years ago. What I appreciated most about him was his gentle, steady, and unpretentious spirit.

He was the only tutor courageous and caring enough to reach out to comfort and support me when I was disabled at the devastating end of my St. John's career. This, to me, was the true actualization of any lofty philosophies examined or perpetuated by this school: to bring it home, where it really does count. Having found such a Great Soul, if only briefly, I cannot begin to imagine the loss that his friends and loved ones must be enduring. I can only hope that they know that he will be truly treasured in our finest of memories. I now wish for them the comfort and support that he so genuinely extended to me. I strive to be as present for my students as he was for us. Be free, Sir Ralph, and many thanks.

BEA BUTLER (SF80)

## WORLD FEDERALISM

I read with great interest your article about Joseph Baratta's scholarship on world federalism, and was especially pleased to see mention of Clarence Streit's work *Union Now*, which was so influential in its day but is now sometimes overlooked.

Actually, the organization which he founded (Federal Union) lives on. For a while it was called the Association to Unite the Democracies (AUD), and it has now morphed into the Streit Council for a Union of Democracies ([www.streit-council.org](http://www.streit-council.org)).

I worked for AUD in Washington in 1986-87 before starting *World Democracy News*, a newsletter spanning the international federalist movement (we lasted only through six editions over three years before

ceasing for lack of funding). I then served briefly as president of the Coalition for Democratic World Government. And I've been on the Board of AUD and now the Streit Council since about 1990. Our focus is on creating a nucleus for world government from the existing established democracies—for example, creating real common decision-making structures for NATO and/or the OECD—to which other democracies could

*"I do not recall what many of my tutors thought that the books were really about, precisely because the tutors themselves didn't teach me anything about the books. The books did."*

CHRISTIAN BLOOD (SF02)

be invited to join. Just as the EU exerts a strong democratizing pull on surrounding countries in Europe (and even North Africa), we would expect to have a similar but more global effect (maybe even restraining the U.S. in the process). The EU hasn't yet been able to make the break to real constitutional government, otherwise it would be a model of what we want.

For a long time, the main split in the international federalist movement was between those (including the world federalists) who wanted immediate world government including all nations, and those who insisted on democracy. But the American world federalists have essentially become UN-reform advocates, and I noticed recently that some of those who want more direct movement toward a federal solution are starting a new "World Democracy Movement-USA." So Streit's ideas, as well as Barr's and Buchanan's, are still in play.

RICK WICKS (SF68)

## BOOKS ARE THE TEACHERS

Your article "Small Waves in a Tranquil Sea: Melville, Literature, and the St. John's Reading List" (Winter 2006) was a very enjoyable read on all accounts.

I was interested to receive some insight into the workings of the Instruction Committee.

However, I was disconcerted by your use of the verb "to teach" when writing about tutors and books. For instance: "Dugan sees no more compelling reason

their most recent publications and to me seems to be more like indoctrination rather than teaching. But none of the students seem to learn much about what they read.

Instead, they learn what the professor taught them. They are indoctrinated. Sometimes this is fine, but often I cringe and a bit of me dies as I think of how their education compares to the one I was lucky to receive from St. John's. I hesitate to liken the activities of a St. John's tutor to the sorts of things that happen at educational institutions elsewhere.

CHRISTIAN BLOOD (SF02)

## NOT BROTHERS

By now you have probably heard from others that Charles and Ray Eames were not brothers, but husband and wife.

According to [eamesoffice.com](http://eamesoffice.com) they were married in 1941. Nevertheless, I am delighted to learn that a Johnnie was instrumental in producing *Powers of Ten*. When my son was a child, we often visited the Air and Space Museum and enjoyed that short movie many times.

Thanks as always for an interesting issue of *The College*.

CHRISTINA LAUTH CONNELL  
(CLASS OF 1967)

*Editor's note: Ms. Connell was one of many Johnnies who graciously alerted The College to this error in the Winter 2006 issue.*

*The College* welcomes letters on issues of interest to readers. Letters may be edited for clarity and/or length. Those under 500 words have a better chance of being printed in their entirety.

Please address letters to: *The College* magazine, St. John's College, Box 2800, Annapolis, MD 21404.

Letters can also be sent via e-mail to: [rosemary.harty@sjca.edu](mailto:rosemary.harty@sjca.edu).

Melville's tale must be on the reading list. And yet, he allows, 'life would be more full' if he could teach *Moby-Dick* and Joyce's *Ulysses*." And from the subsequent paragraph: "Having taught two preceptorials on the book, Annapolis tutor David Townsend acknowledges the impracticality of *Moby-Dick* as a seminar reading."

A St. John's tutor teaching a preceptorial? A St. John's tutor teaching a book? At St. John's, books are the only teachers.

I bristle because I have come to believe, in my time since leaving St. John's, that we observe at St. John's a very important distinction. I do not recall what many of my tutors thought that the books were really about, precisely because the tutors themselves didn't teach me anything about the books. The books did.

I am currently a graduate student and a teaching assistant in literature at a major research university where the professors teach all kinds of things all the time: books, courses, eras, specialties. What the professors teach is generally in line with



# “WITH A CLEAR AND SINGLE PURPOSE”

*St. John's Seeks to  
Preserve the Program  
with an Ambitious  
Capital Campaign*

BY ROSEMARY HARTY

St. John's College has launched a \$125 million capital campaign to build endowment for the future and address immediate priorities. “With a Clear and Single Purpose”: The Campaign for St. John's College will seek to add significantly to the resources of the college. “Our objective is to have all aspects of the college reflect the excellence of our Program,” says Annapolis President Christopher Nelson. “For many years, the college has made many sacrifices for the sake of the Program. We must seize the opportunity now to strengthen the college for the future.”

The last time the college launched a campaign, the goal was \$30 million; \$36 million was raised by the time the campaign ended in 1996. This much larger goal is within reach, Mr. Nelson says, in part because \$71 million has already been pledged or received from individual donors and foundations. “Before we publicly announced the campaign we had already received gifts double the total raised in our previous campaign. Now, we need to take our case for support to all of the college's alumni, friends, and parents, with the strong belief that we have their support for this important undertaking,” he says. An opening celebration for the campaign was held in Annapolis in April, and another special celebration will be held in Santa Fe July 28.

The campaign's theme was intended to underscore the vision that led Stringfellow Barr and Scott Buchanan to begin the New Program at St. John's in 1937. The phrase “With a Clear and Single Purpose” can be found in Barr's 1939 president's report to the board. Even as the college struggled financially in the early years of the Program, Barr stated that the college must always hold firm to the ideals of liberal education.

In its infancy, the Program was viewed by outside observers as a radical experiment. Today the academic program is seen as a standard for liberal education. “Although the notion of a liberal arts education is often challenged today by those who see higher education as a type of job training program, St. John's remains committed to its ideals,” says Santa Fe President Michael Peters. “An education should be about the search for truth and learning for life.”

The quiet phase of the campaign, begun in 2002, was well under way when Mr. Peters accepted the presidency in Santa Fe. He was eager to take part in an endeavor that will benefit the Santa Fe campus and strengthen St. John's collegewide. "I believe that this campaign is important for St. John's College, and I believe that it can be successful. When I joined the college in January 2005, I could see how far St. John's has come in recent years, how much the college has improved while never losing sight of its mission.

"Part of my own vision for St. John's is that the college gains the recognition it deserves as a leader in American higher education," Mr. Peter adds. "Indeed, education at all levels should take a close look at what we do. But to remain true to our mission and to serve as an example to others, we need the support of every alumnus, parent, and friend. I hope that all who know the college will find a way to contribute to this effort."



## GOALS OF THE CAMPAIGN

"Like a Euclid proposition, this is a campaign characterized by clarity and simplicity," says Sharon Bishop (Class of 1965), chair of the college's Board of Visitors and Governors. "Everything that we are seeking to do is in direct support of the Program."

Funds raised through the campaign will be directed to priorities in three areas:

- **Students:** Among the top priorities of the college is the need to sustain the need-based financial aid program that ensures that students accepted to the college can attend regardless of their financial circumstances.
- **Faculty:** St. John's is committed to bringing tutor salaries to the median of those at comparable liberal arts colleges, while providing more opportunities for more tutors to engage in faculty study.
- **Facilities:** In order to house more students on campus, the college seeks to build new dormitories and renovate existing dorms. Academic buildings, especially laboratory classrooms



## THE CAMPAIGN FOR STJOHN'S College

"WITH A CLEAR &  
SINGLE PURPOSE"

The college's capital campaign seeks to address priorities that will sustain the Program and strengthen the college.

Funding these priorities will require \$125 million.

**FINANCIAL AID:** \$33 million for need-based aid.

**FACULTY AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT:** \$34 million to increase faculty salaries to the median of peer institutions; provide faculty development opportunities; develop program-related student instructional material

(manuals and workbooks); and ensure small class sizes and 1:8 tutor-to-student ratio.

**STUDENT SERVICES:** \$3.5 million to improve services to students, fund internship opportunities, and provide grants so that elementary and secondary teachers can attend the Graduate Institute.

**ST. JOHN'S IMPROVEMENT FUND:** \$5 million for library collections and laboratory equipment; improving Information Technology infrastructure;

staff professional development and compensation.

**BUILDING PROJECTS ON THE TWO CAMPUSES:** \$49.5 million for building projects, including a Santa Fe dormitory, a Graduate Institute center in Santa Fe, and the addition to and renovation of Evans Science Laboratory. The renovation of Mellon Hall and the addition of two new dormitories in Annapolis are completed and fully funded.

in Santa Fe, require renovation and upgrading. And the college seeks to build a new Graduate Institute center in Santa Fe that would provide the campus with a much-needed auditorium for lectures, concerts, and other programs.

“The board, the Alumni Association, and the college’s administration are all in agreement about what needs to be done,” says Ronald A. Fielding (A70), a board member and chairman of the Capital Campaign. “We must remain accessible to all qualified students. We need to continue to attract talented and dedicated faculty members and give them opportunities that will help them continue to serve as model learners for our students. We also need a physical environment in which a community of learners can flourish.”

The college hasn’t waited in addressing the most urgent needs of the strategic plan, says Ms. Bishop. Early fruits of the campaign have been directed to the projects that most directly affect student life and learning. Two new dormitories, paid for by gifts to the campaign, have opened in the last two years in Annapolis, enabling the college to house 80 percent of its students on campus. The college committed \$4.5 million to the Santa Fe Initiative, and as a result, students benefit from renovated laboratories in the Evans Science Laboratory, paid summer internships, and overall improvements to the buildings and grounds on the Santa Fe campus.

## BUILDING ENDOWMENT

The St. John’s endowment, a carefully managed investment fund, is larger than it has ever been, at just over \$100 million. The endowment’s primary purpose is to grow and to provide an ever-increasing source of revenue for the college. Compared to other small liberal arts colleges, St. John’s remains seriously under-endowed, a situation that keeps the college too dependent on tuition revenue for its yearly operations. With the current endowment, the college has \$5,000 per student to spend annually, while Grinnell College, with about 1,500 students, has \$43,000 per student to spend annually because of a substantially larger endowment.

“This is a time of opportunity for St. John’s,” says Mr. Fielding, senior vice president and portfolio manager of Oppenheimer-Funds’ municipal bond division. “By growing the endowment, we can support the Program for many years to come.”

Mr. Fielding’s \$10 million gift to the endowment, given in 2003 to support financial aid, was also intended to underscore his support for the campaign and encourage others to join the effort. “Everything else about St. John’s is strong. The college is in

## ENDOWMENT PER STUDENT

Grinnell	\$862,337
Pomona	\$750,470
Swarthmore	\$724,850
Bowdoin	\$313,181
Claremont McKenna	\$303,626
Haverford	\$300,709
Carleton	\$265,283
Reed	\$258,294
Colorado	\$217,326
Oberlin	\$208,039
St. John’s	\$101,590

capable hands, with a solid administration and a dedicated faculty. We have attracted excellent students, and our applicant pool is better than it has ever been. But the largest missing link in terms of the quality of St. John’s is—and always has been—related to money,” he says.

Since its early days, when the Revolutionary War founders of St. John’s had to send out bailiffs to collect pledges from

financial supporters of the new college, raising funds and keeping the college financially healthy has not come easily. Mr. Fielding points out that Barr and Buchanan were able to bring the New Program to St. John’s in the 1930s in part because the college was facing bankruptcy, and the board was willing to take a chance to keep the college open.

“We’ve never had a John Harvard, a Johns Hopkins—a single benefactor whose gift established the institution on strong footing,” he says. “Even in the 1940s and ’50s, when philanthropist Paul Mellon was making very generous gifts to the college, those gifts helped the college survive during some very lean years, but they didn’t build the endowment.”

Mr. Fielding chose to direct his gift to financial aid in part because a comprehensive aid package allowed him to attend St. John’s. The need-based financial aid program at St. John’s is one of the few in the country that devotes every dollar to students who would not otherwise be able to attend the college. About 70 percent of students receive some form of financial aid, and the average St. John’s grant is \$15,000. Today, the amount the college needs to spend on financial aid is growing faster than the rate of tuition increase, with more than \$11 million annually devoted to financial aid.

## THE JOHNNIE GIVING CULTURE

During the campaign, alumni, parents, and friends will be asked to make five-year pledges to the effort. Those capable of large gifts may choose to support an endowment or building project. Most supporters, however, will make their contribution to the campaign through their gift to the Annual Fund. The goal for the campaign is \$29 million in Annual Fund gifts and pledges by 2008. In order for the campaign to be successful, the Annual Fund will need to grow in both the amount of individual gifts and in the number of alumni who give (now at about 36 percent). Alumni can also join the ranks of volunteers helping with the campaign.

Ray Cave (class of 1948) agreed to co-chair the current campaign with Fielding, contributing the expertise gleaned from chairing the Campaign for Our Fourth Century (which ended in 1996). “The \$125 million is going to be a stretch to reach,” he acknowledges. “But thanks to the hard work of a lot of



people, the alumni have really been brought back to the community, and they're responsive to the needs of the college. They want to be involved, and when we ask them, I think they'll be ready to give. They will look upon themselves as supporters of an institution that they admire and that remains on their mind."

Mr. Cave never thought of himself as a fund-raiser; he started out as a newspaper reporter in Baltimore and worked his way up to become editor of *Time* magazine. "When I was asked to be chairman of the previous capital campaign, I said, 'I'm a journalist. I've never asked anyone for a nickel, and I don't know how to do that.'"

But Mr. Cave knew how to tell a story, and the college's story in the mid-1990s was one of unmet needs that could not be ignored without peril to the Program. For example, tutors at St. John's were at the very bottom of the salary scale for faculty members at comparable institutions. "I think it's important to understand that in historical terms, this college basically lived from hand to mouth. You can't run a successful college or a business that way, but that's what St. John's had been doing. It's as if we were embarrassed to ask for money. But of course alumni should support their alma mater—if you don't want to give, it says you don't feel you got anything beneficial when you attended."

When the Campaign for Our Fourth Century was launched, "everyone agreed that we had to give tutors a pay raise, but the endowment couldn't support it," Mr. Cave recalls. "Enough money was raised in the campaign to give tutors a pay raise, and now we've got them pretty darn near the middle."

In the past 15 years, the college has cultivated a strong donor base and has established good relationships with foundations and trusts. "Today, St. John's is well managed in all respects. The college is going out now to raise \$125 million to do two things: support the institution as it exists and strengthen the financial base so that St. John's can keep pace with what students expect and what parents expect, while remaining true to its mission."

As he did in the last campaign, Mr. Cave will meet with donors to ask for a gift to the campaign. He knows he'll hear a lot of good things about the college. "St. John's is the kind of institution that does create passion in those who support it," he says. "There are many alumni who support the college because it did consequential things for them, whether they graduated or not. And there are many people who support the college because they know St. John's matters for America."

## CAMPAIGN PROGRESS

THE COLLEGE HAS ALREADY RAISED \$71 MILLION IN GIFTS AND PLEDGES TOWARD THE CAMPAIGN. THOSE GIFTS INCLUDE: \$10 MILLION, RONALD A. FIELDING (A70), FOR FINANCIAL AID; \$12 MILLION, ANONYMOUS ALUMNUS, FOR SUPPORT OF THE ENDOWMENT; \$10 MILLION FROM THE HODSON TRUST FOR THE RENOVATION OF MELLON HALL AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF GILLIAM HALL; A GIFT (AMOUNT UNDISCLOSED) WARREN SPECTOR (A81), TOWARD CONSTRUCTION OF SPECTOR HALL; \$4 MILLION FROM BOARD MEMBER STEPHEN L. FEINBERG (HSF96); AND \$1 MILLION FROM BVG CHAIR SHARON BISHOP (CLASS OF 1965). THE COLLEGE HAS OBTAINED 100 PERCENT PARTICIPATION IN THE CAMPAIGN BY THE BOARD OF VISITORS OF GOVERNORS AND THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD.

A GROUP OF ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS OF THE COLLEGE HAVE PLEDGED \$2 MILLION GIFT TO THE CAMPAIGN IN HONOR OF EVA BRANN. THE COLLEGE WILL CREATE IN MISS BRANN'S NAME A TUTORSHIP ENDOWMENT FUND.

Steve Thomas (SF74) chairs the Alumni Committee of the campaign. "I loved every one of the four years I spent at the college," he says. "And I believe most alumni feel that way."

Only many years after graduation did Mr. Thomas gain an appreciation for how the college works. He became involved in the Alumni Association Board and is now a member of the Board of Visitors and Governors. He sees some challenges in the job for which he has volunteered. "Alumni love the college, and they're proud of being Johnnies," says Mr. Thomas, a New York lawyer. "But for a long time, we were trained not to like the administration—there was this

suspicion of that side of the college. We need to convince alumni that the money they give is going to go directly to supporting students and the institution."

As a member of the BVG's Visiting Committee, Mr. Thomas has the opportunity to sit in on classes and meet students on both campuses. "I'm pleased that the college is providing substantively the same education as when I was a student," he says. "I don't think I realized until recently how much work goes into preserving the most important aspects of St. John's."

Along with alumni, parents will be asked to make a gift to the campaign. Linda Schaefer, a BVG member and former Santa Fe Parent Association member, has volunteered to serve as one of the chairs of the Parent Committee of the campaign. Her son Eric graduated from St. John's in Santa Fe in 2004, and during his student years she volunteered to assist the college with the Annual Fund.

Mrs. Schaefer believes parents will respond to the needs of the capital campaign. "When you look back at your own sons and daughters, you can see the incredible changes that take place between freshman and senior years, and you know the difference the college had made in their lives," she says. "They leave the college with a lifelong love of learning and the ability to think for themselves."

Mrs. Schaefer and her husband, Mark, are also supporting the capital campaign with a gift because they admire what St. John's represents. "We believe that St. John's is the kind of institution that really needs to be here. Just look at those students who have been to traditional liberal arts colleges and found it didn't work for them. We really need to support and preserve the Program because so many people have benefited from it." ❀

# POETRY *in* MOTION

*Mr. Sinnett and Mr. Braithwaite, Newton and Aristotle*

BY ROSEMARY HARTY

Annapolis students and tutors gathering for a Friday night lecture in January found an unusual setup on the stage of Key Auditorium. A pair of tutors sat facing each other at a coffee shop table, with books and papers spread out before them, and a blackboard positioned nearby. Instead of introducing the lecturer, Dean Michael Dink (A75) stood briefly to quiet the audience. The tutors, Mark Sinnett and William Braithwaite, began talking to each other about the nature of motion in the works of Newton and Aristotle. They were continuing a conversation—now for the benefit of an audience—that had been taking place nearly every week for almost three years.

The role of a St. John's tutor is often described as that of a model learner engaging with students on the lifelong journey of seeking knowledge. During the academic year and summer breaks, tutors work in formal study groups to pursue topics of interest together. In Annapolis this summer, tutors will study Kepler, for example. In Santa Fe, the summer topics include Mann's *Dr. Faustus*. But the

endeavor pursued by Mr. Braithwaite and Mr. Sinnett demonstrates another interesting aspect of life at St. John's: many more tutors take part in informal groups that arise from a particular interest or a question. Their engagement in such pursuits lasts as long as they still have something they want to talk about.

The Braithwaite-Sinnett collaboration on Aristotle's *Physics* and Newton's *Principia* also demonstrates how tutors with different experiences and abilities offer each other a deeper understanding of a work—the same thing that happens with students in an all-required curriculum.

Of the many things unique to St. John's, the requirement that tutors teach across the curriculum may seem most puzzling to outsiders. At most colleges and universities, an English department decides it needs an expert in rhetoric; a history department seeks a Civil War expert. At St. John's, the dean and instruction committee interviewing prospective tutors looks not for a particular expertise, but an agile, imaginative mind.

As the two men described their collaboration a few weeks after their lecture (presented as a public conversation), they also captured what makes conversation at St. John's such a fruitful and satisfying activity. Mr. Braithwaite came to St. John's in 1995 from a law school faculty; Mr. Sinnett came from the pulpit of a Presbyterian church.

"We were both teaching junior mathematics and were in the same archon group," explained Mr. Sinnett. "I have a master's degree in mathematics and I had been pursuing doctoral studies in mathematics when I shifted to theology. But being at St. John's has brought mathematics back to life for me. Mathematics is done here for all the right reasons, because of the way, as Ptolemy says, it orders the soul; it's a way of ordering the mind."

"I'm a former corporate trial lawyer whose mathematics experience before St. John's was limited to



ALEX LORMAN

INSTEAD OF DELIVERING A LECTURE, TUTORS MARK SINNETT (L.) AND WILLIAM BRAITHWAITE CONTINUED THEIR CONVERSATION ON NEWTON AND ARISTOTLE, THIS TIME FOR THE BENEFIT OF AN AUDIENCE.

reading balance sheets,” Mr. Braithwaite said. “I had been out of college and done no other math but basic arithmetic for 40 years. If you look at our backgrounds, it wouldn’t appear that we’d have a great deal to say to one another. And that’s still something of a delightful mystery for me. We never planned to talk for 30 months. We were just going to study junior math together.”

“We found that we were coming at the text in different ways, and it was fruitful,” added Mr. Sinnett. “We had a common interest, and we pursued it. That’s what happens at this college.”

Junior mathematics at St. John’s centers on Newton and calculus. Students begin by reading Zeno, Aristotle, and Galileo. They consider Zeno’s famous paradox: how is continuous motion possible if, at each instant, the moving object fills the space it occupies, equal to its own size? The arrow is not moving *there*, Zeno posited, it’s at rest *there*, and it can’t be moving anywhere else, therefore motion is illusory. Continuing on to Newton’s *Principia*, and armed with a calculus manual, juniors explore the mechanical motions of the universe.

The tutors’ joint inquiry started with Newton’s calculus, but kept returning to questions raised in the *Physics*. Eventually, the two settled on pursuing one central question: How does the mathematical account of motions of bodies in Newton differ from Aristotle’s nonmathematical account of nature and change in general?

“Aristotle has a very limited view of what mathematics can do in relation to nature,” explained Mr. Braithwaite. “In the *Physics* he devotes a chapter to talking about how the mathematician’s study of nature differs from that of the physicist, what he would regard as the nonmathematical student of nature. He says that although the mathematician abstracts from nature, he doesn’t falsify the things that he studies. It looks as if Aristotle was making room for a mathematical inquiry into nature.”

In their public conversation, the tutors started with Zeno’s paradoxes, which are carried through the *Physics*. “Something that intrigued us early on is: how did Newton think about Zeno’s paradoxes? Had he thought about them at all?” Mr. Braithwaite said. “Was Zeno a problem for Newton, or had he worked out a way of dealing with the problems the paradoxes raise that was different from Aristotle’s, or in some sense the same? We talked a lot about that over a long period of time, then we discovered that it looked to us as if Newton had found a way around the paradoxes.”

According to Newton’s understanding, one divides up space and the corresponding times in the same way, resulting in a finite sum of time corresponding to the given finite expanse of space, explained Mr. Sinnett. Thus, an unbounded time is no longer necessary in order to traverse a bounded space. Similarly, he adds, Aristotle divides both space and time in a consistent manner. Both become countably infinite collections in exact correspondence of each other, with the result, as with Newton, that the paradox disappears.

“Aristotle’s whole inquiry into motion, of course, is much broader. He’s concerned with change, which includes the plant over there growing, your writing on that piece of paper, the table decomposing. Newton’s got a very small portion of this: the motion of ballistic objects,” Mr. Sinnett said.

“I think it’s right that nothing in Newton’s calculus tells you about growing plants or the motions of animals,” agreed Mr. Braithwaite. “It’s about moving bodies from place A to place B, so it has a narrow but extremely powerful focus because of his development of the calculus. Newton is asking a different set of questions, but in the background was always this concession by Aristotle that the mathematical account isn’t false—in other words, it could tell you real, true things—it’s just not the whole horizon that Aristotle set for himself.”

Newton’s ultimate ratio is not going to be visible to anyone who doesn’t proceed to it in a regular way, said Mr. Sinnett: “He’s just as dependent upon his reader’s personal insight—seeing into what is not visible to the eye—as Aristotle is, and Aristotle’s language is just perfect for describing what the student of his book has to let happen in his mind to grasp what is important. It’s startling to me to have been teaching calculus on and off for 25 years to find some of the best language for describing what I was doing in Aristotle’s *Physics*.”

“Together we came to see that the *Physics* was extraordinarily helpful in understanding Newton,” Mr. Braithwaite said. “Our effort, when our imagination is not working properly, is to nail something down and hold it still so we can walk all around it and think that’s going to get us to an understanding of it. And the problem is you can’t do that with motion. Zeno’s paradoxes all appeal in some way to this natural reaction of trying to stop something in order to understand it. If you stop motion in order to understand it you’re not going to understand it as motion, you’re going to understand it as rest. That’s the difficulty.”

Mr. Braithwaite had first heard of St. John’s in 1956, when he saw a movie about the college. He applied and was accepted, but for financial reasons, chose Virginia Military Institute. The college came back into his life in the early ’90s, when his two oldest sons Matthew (A96), and David (A97); matriculated here, and when Christopher Nelson (SF70), then fairly new as Annapolis president, asked him to join a President’s Advisory Council. (A third son, Daniel (01) followed, and a fourth, Jonathan, will matriculate with the class of 2010.) In 1993, at age 56, Mr. Braithwaite applied to join the faculty and was astounded to receive an offer.

Similarly, Mr. Sinnett’s path to St. John’s stemmed from his wide-ranging intellectual interests. After earning his Ph.D. in systematic theology at Cambridge University, he was ordained a minister in the Presbyterian Church. He served a congregation in Texas for five years, but he wasn’t a good fit for the second congregation that called him. “One day I preached a sermon in which part of the message—from Paul’s Letter to the Corinthians—was that we shouldn’t turn ourselves down. The world tries hard enough to do that. I was talking with my wife about what to do next and said what I’d really like to do is teach at St. John’s. She said, ‘Well, don’t turn yourself down.’ So I wrote a letter to St. John’s.”

The two are not planning another joint endeavor for some time. But given a moment to think about it, Mr. Braithwaite suggested to Mr. Sinnett, “Maybe we should take a look at the *Metaphysics*? You have a background in theology, after all, and I don’t, so we’d ask different questions—it could be interesting.” ❀



# “EVER THE TEACHER”

*Santa Fe Tutor William Darkey*

BY ROBIN WEISS, SFGI86

**A**s William A. Darkey prepared to become one of the first graduates of the New Program in 1942, he received a startling offer from Scott Buchanan and Stringfellow Barr, founders of the Program.

Mr. Darkey recounts the story—and his own bewilderment—with a grin, recalling the details 63 years later. “Buchanan called me in and he said, ‘You know, Winkie [Barr] and I have been talking . . . we ought to have a student or two on the faculty because none of us have actually been through the curriculum.’ I said, ‘You must be kidding!’ But after the initial shock wore off, I asked, ‘Gosh, you really think I could do that?’ ”

“If I didn’t think you could, I wouldn’t have asked you,” Buchanan replied.

Barr and Buchanan are often described as visionaries, but it’s hard to imagine that they could have foreseen how much Mr. Darkey, now tutor emeritus, would contribute to the life of St. John’s College: as a long-serving and dedicated tutor, willing to take on various duties including admissions director and librarian in Annapolis; as one of the first faculty members and a dean of the Santa Fe campus; and as a mentor and friend to colleagues and students for more than six decades.

Mr. Darkey’s teaching contract, dated May 29, 1942, honored him with a \$500 salary and free board at the college. But his appointment came at a tenuous time for a

struggling college. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, students and faculty began leaving St. John’s for military service. In his book *A Search for the Liberal College*, J. Winfree Smith describes a student body torn between “good thinking about war and peace” and the actual demands of war. Between 1942-43, enrollment plummeted from 178 to 100.

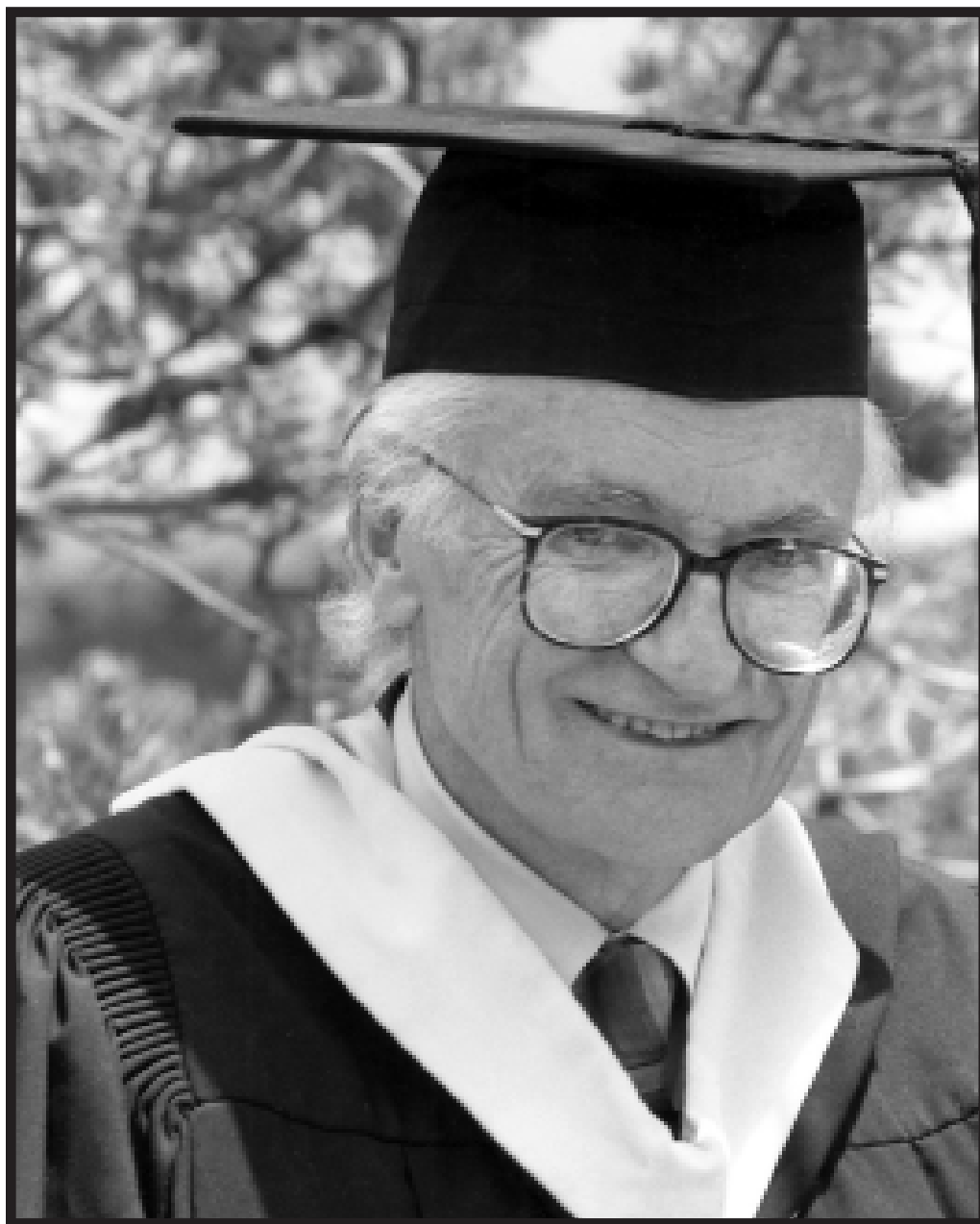
Mr. Darkey himself tried several times to enlist, but poor eyesight stood in his way. “I went through the peculiar initiation of going to Baltimore every six months and going through the routine—and guess what? They discovered I was nearsighted,” he recalls, chuckling. “And then they’d say, ‘No, you won’t do at all.’ This happened quite regularly.”

In November 1943, Mr. Darkey was one of five tutors who served on the committee drafting the first Polity, which (according to Smith) became official by Barr’s fiat in 1945, over the faculty’s objections.

Peter Hamill, class of 1949, met Mr. Darkey in January 1946 when Mr. Darkey was serving as a “third leader” in his seminar, comprising veterans from the war. Hamill attended the college for a year before being recalled by the Navy, and he remembers Mr. Darkey as a quiet presence in the classroom.

“Mr. Darkey seldom spoke up. He mostly sat back and observed. Ford K. Brown [as senior leader] was handling things.” Dr. Hamill remembers how the two men “made it easy to drop any military swagger and become a human being in the group.”

At the end of that year, Mr. Darkey finally succeeded in enlisting in the Army. Asked about his background, he told



TUTOR EMERITUS WILLIAM DARKEY  
AT SANTA FE COMMENCEMENT, 2003.

professor Mark Van Doren, an early supporter of the Program. "The very first lecture I went to at St. John's was by Mark. I remember thinking: My God, this is an honest-to-God poet." At Columbia the two men became good friends, and Mr. Van Doren counseled him through difficulties such as writer's block.

After earning his degree in 1949, Mr. Darkey returned to teach at St. John's. Barr and Buchanan had moved on, and "the center of it all was [Jacob] Klein . . . a great reader of books" and in a sense "the soul of the college." "He knew about good and evil, Greek mathematics, Hebrew, French, English. Europe gave us a great gift in all of these people," Mr. Darkey says of Mr. Klein, Simon Kaplan, Eva

Brann, and other intellectuals who were refugees from Europe and helped build the college's reputation.

Also at the college were gifted musicians and composers who inspired students with their love for music: Nicholas Nabokov, Elliot Carter, and Victor Zuckerkandl. "Music was very much alive," recalls Mr. Darkey. "Scott Buchanan had the notion, deep inside him, that music was a liberal art and that it ought to be cultivated as such."

Mr. Darkey was Miss Brann's seminar co-leader in her first year at the college, 1957-58. "He took me into the community and showed me the ins and outs," she says. As a "member of the old guard," he was the model of a good

his commanding officer he was a teacher. "Ah, a school marm!" the officer replied. "We can use you."

Mr. Darkey was assigned to training methods. "This was teaching people useful things like how to throw a hand grenade." Mr. Darkey worked for a colonel who thought him "a very good training methods man," and asked if he intended to make a career out of the military. No, Mr. Darkey said, he had marriage and graduate school in mind. Although he was up for a transfer to Japan, he was allowed to stay stateside to await his honorable discharge.

With his wife, Connie, he went to New York to embark on a graduate degree in English literature at Columbia University. One of his teachers was noted poet and

*“He had the ability to make the material his own, then lend it to you; he could get inside the material and take you by the hand. He did it with great gentility.”*

BOB WARREN (SFG193)

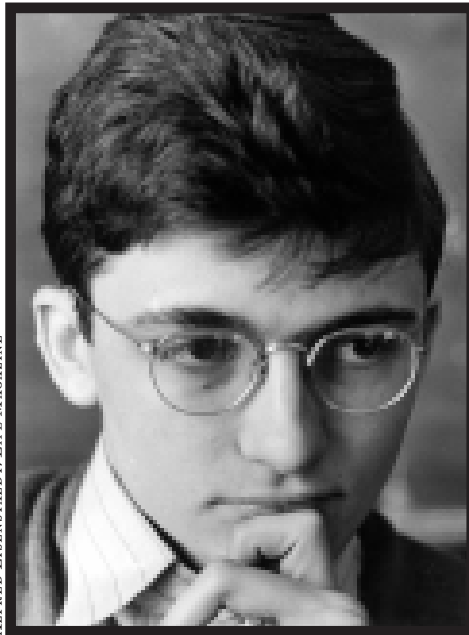
seminar leader. “He’s a gentle man and a gentleman both,” Miss Brann says.

Mr. Darkey’s devotion to teaching extended beyond St. John’s. He was one of several tutors to found The Key School in 1958, and when the independent school based on the St. John’s model outgrew a rented facility in Annapolis, Mr. Darkey was appointed acting headmaster. He took a year’s leave from St. John’s to help relocate Key to a permanent home.

Max Ochs (AGI91) grew up in Annapolis and has known Mr. Darkey for more than four decades. His best friend was Peter Nabokov, Connie’s son from her first marriage to Nicholas Nabokov. One day near Christmas in 1959, when Ochs was elementary-school age, he visited the Darkey home to discover Mr. Darkey cutting out pieces of colored construction paper. “He was trying to teach me and Peter how to make tree ornaments—tetrahedrons and dodecahedrons . . . Just learning the word was wonderful,” says Ochs. “He was ever the teacher. And he did it in a very non-threatening way, always.”

Another memory, from Ochs’ teenage years, is of the time Mr. Darkey decided to offer seminars to neighborhood kids. The first assignment was *Don Quixote*. “When he asked how many people actually read the book, fewer than half of us raised our hands . . . I’ve hardly ever seen his face get dark and cloudy like that,” Ochs says. If disappointed, Mr. Darkey persevered with his seminars. “He has this great, intense love of the truth.”

In the early 1960s, former president Richard Weigle (HA49) spearheaded the move to open a Western campus of St. John’s. When Santa Fe was chosen, Mr. Darkey was selected to be one of the founding faculty members at the new campus. Mr. Darkey describes “the proselytizing aspect” of the endeavor. “Dick Weigle . . . wanted to bring the liberal arts to the West. We had very gifted people working on it.”



WILLIAM DARKEY GREW UP IN WESTERN MARYLAND, EARNED A SCHOLARSHIP TO ST. JOHN’S, AND BEFORE GRADUATING IN 1942 WAS OFFERED A FACULTY POSITION BY THEN-DEAN SCOTT BUCHANAN.

His wife, Connie, he adds, “thought that the notion of founding a new campus in the West was a great idea. She was full of enthusiasm” for the adventure.

A member of Santa Fe’s first class, Marilynne Scott (Maurie Wills Schell, SF68), remembers Mr. Darkey well. He led her tutorial and co-led seminar in her freshman year, and he “listened to us with such intensity,” she recalls. “Out of our ramblings he zeroed [in] on the germ of the idea we were trying to put forth. His eyes looked at the speaker as he asked us to explain, elaborate, give examples. He helped us formulate thoughts we hardly knew we had.”

He also gave Ms. Scott rides to and from church. “Here was a person who dissected the Bible, Augustine, Aquinas and Calvin, yet had a deep and public faith. In the freshman don rag, Mr. Darkey asked me what wisdom was. I can now say a wise person is one who sees with his heart and acts on his convictions. Such a man is Bill Darkey.”

From 1968-72, Mr. Darkey served as the second dean of the Santa Fe campus, bringing to the post “imagination, diligence, and perceptiveness,” Weigle later wrote in one of his memoirs.

Mr. Darkey was a tutor to David Levine (A67) in Annapolis, and when Mr. Levine returned as a faculty member in Santa Fe, he was pleased to have Mr. Darkey as a colleague. “His sense of the mission of the college is well-centered,” says Mr. Levine, now outgoing dean in Santa Fe. “He’s a partisan of a smaller college, someone who has expressed, many times, his concern that the college will become too large to be a community of learners . . . People have looked up to him as a way of keeping our balance.”

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In 1998, Mr. Levine suggested renovating the former bookstore in Peterson Hall into a much-needed common





MARION WARREN

room. Bob Warren (SFGI93), a strong supporter of the college, agreed to underwrite the project if the room was named in honor of Mr. Darkey.

Not surprisingly, the humble Mr. Darkey was reluctant to see a room named for him, notes Mr. Warren. He and his wife, Carol, have taken several community seminars with Mr. Darkey and have always been impressed by his gentle manner and his intellect. "He never raised his voice, or an eyebrow. He had the ability to make the material his own, then lend it to you; he could get inside the material and take you by the hand. He did it with great gentility."

Mr. Darkey was on the Instruction Committee that hired Santa Fe tutor Jorge Aigla in 1985. In terms of the Program, Mr. Darkey is "never complacent, but always reexamining what we do and why," says Mr. Aigla. And as his friend for the past 21 years, Mr. Darkey has taught him what friendship may mean: "he's committed, kind, amiable . . . [and] has a fantastic ability to listen."

"He's the best of a St. John's tutor; he allows differing points of view while inspiring the conversation to continue," says Laura Mulry (SFGI02), who developed a friendship with Mr. Darkey in her years in the GI and on the college staff. "He's broadened my intellect and opened my spirit by always asking: 'What's the discovery for you? What's the pleasure and joy you obtain?'"

Former President John Balkcom (SFGI00) has also enjoyed many long talks with Mr. Darkey, about the

HIS STUDENTS HAVE ALWAYS FOUND TUTOR BILL DARKEY (SHOWN HERE IN A 1961 MATH TUTORIAL) TO BE A GENTLE, BUT VITAL, PRESENCE IN THE CLASSROOM.

Program, students, and faculty. He was always eager for the visits, held every six weeks. "I would basically sit and listen to him just as long as he wanted to talk," says Mr. Balkcom. "He's the soul of the college in my book."

Mr. Balkcom remembers a lecture Mr. Darkey gave in 2002. The Great Hall was packed, people spilled into the Senior Common Room, and Mr. Darkey gave a wonderful lecture on the poems of Mark Van Doren. The next day, Mr. Balkcom learned that Mr. Darkey had left the text at home. "He did it extemporaneously. You would not have known."

Last summer, with his dog Beau close at hand, Mr. Darkey reflected on what the college has meant to him. In a little more than an hour, sitting outside the Peterson Student Center, he had tried to summarize a journey that began in Annapolis and brought him to this beautiful campus built at the foot of the mountains. "It's the life, in all these things we do," he said. "It's a rare thing to understand—you have to live it." ❖

# THE *Remarkable* REVERDY JOHNSON *An American Statesman*

BY ANDREA LAMB

**R**everdy Johnson, Esq., class of 1811, was bold and concise in his defense of Mary E. Surratt, one of the accused co-conspirators in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Johnson's fame rested on his reputation as a constitutional lawyer and senator. He based his defense of Surratt on the argument that the military commission created after the assassination of Lincoln was unconstitutional.

"If a military commission, created by the mere authority of the President, can deprive a citizen of the benefit of the guaranties secured by the 5th amendment, it can deprive him of those secured by the 6th. It may deny him the right to a speedy and public trial, information 'of the nature and cause of the accusation,' of the right 'to be confronted with the witnesses against him,' of 'compulsory process for his witnesses,' and of 'the assistance of counsel for his defense' . . . If then, it was true that the creation of a military commission like the present is incidental to the war power, it must be authorized by the department to which that power belongs, and not by the Executive, to whom no portion of it belongs."

Unfortunately for Surratt, Johnson's defense was unsuccessful, and on July 7, 1865, she was hanged—the first woman to be executed by the federal government.

According to the 19th-century newspaper, *The North American Review*, intrigue may have interfered with justice even with so

eminent a counsel as Reverdy Johnson. On the third day of the session, a member of the military commission, General T.M. Harris, questioned the integrity of Johnson as counsel on the grounds that he had earlier refused to recognize the moral obligation of an oath required of voters in the state of Maryland. Johnson's reason was based on his belief that the state Convention had exceeded its authority in attempting to exact an oath as a condition for citizens to exercise the vote. In a strange turn of events, Johnson was forced to defend himself.

General Harris' attempt to have Johnson dismissed on grounds of integrity failed, due to Johnson's eloquence and comportment in the court room. Unfortunately, such an affront to his character was intolerable, and the dignified Johnson declined to appear in person again, submitting written arguments to the court instead. Although it failed in Surratt's case, Johnson's legal argument was later proven sound. In 1866, one year after Surratt's execution, the landmark Supreme Court decision *Ex Parte Milligan* was issued. It stated that while civilians may be imprisoned by the military during times of war, it was unconstitutional to subject civilians to military courts as long as the civilian courts were operating.

His defense of the doomed Surratt was only one of Johnson's many controversial undertakings. He was co-counsel for the slave owner in the 1857 Dred Scott case. Chief Justice Roger Taney, earlier of the Baltimore Bar and a close friend of Johnson's, rendered the opinion that slaves were not citizens of the United States, and could not sue in federal courts. The decision also



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

declared that the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional, and that Congress did not have the authority to prohibit slavery in the territories. Later, during the Lincoln-Douglas presidential campaign, Johnson spoke at Faneuil Hall in Boston. According to his biographer Steiner, he delivered an eloquent and moving address expressing his view that slavery was a local institution, with which Congress should not interfere. Although he personally opposed slavery, Johnson's respect for the Constitution prevailed over all.

It is not at all unusual to think of many successful St. John's alumni much in the same vein as Johnson—brilliant, extraordi-

nary, but perhaps an irregular fit in a regular world. Some of the intense controversy he attracted can be explained in part by the historical setting of his life. He served in the Senate during a turbulent time: slavery, the Civil War, Lincoln's assassination, war reparations, the Mexican War, and the first impeachment of an American president, in 1868, were issues for men like Johnson and benchmarks in American history. In all of his legal and political pursuits, Johnson met the challenges while maintaining his personal integrity.

In addition to his St. John's education, Johnson had many resources, including influential family connections. His father

## FROM ONE JOHNNIE'S LIBRARY TO ANOTHER

Some coincidences are almost too remarkable to believe. Take, for example, how a volume of *The Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842*, by Brevet Captain J. C. Fremont, came to be included in the rare books collection of the Greenfield Library.

Stewart H. Greenfield (Class of 1953), a member of the college's Board of Visitors and Governors, has always enjoyed visiting used bookstores and adding to his personal library. (About a decade ago, he demonstrated his love for books by providing the gift that allowed the college to renovate the former Maryland State Archives building for a new library—named, accordingly, for Mr. Greenfield.)

Many years ago Mr. Greenfield came across a copy of Fremont's journals. In 1841 Congress commissioned a survey of the Oregon Trail and named Lt. John C. Fremont to head the expedition. Upon his return, Fremont prepared the official report to Congress. It was so well-received that an extra 1,000 copies were printed.

"I have a couple of books about exploration and expeditions, and I saw the Fremont volume and leafed through it," Mr. Greenfield recalls.

Mr. Greenfield read the book, put it back on a shelf, and forgot about it—until he picked up the *New York Times Book Review* one day and saw an advertisement from a rare book dealer.

"It was from Bauman's Rare Books. Bauman's had a copy of

Fremont's journals, and the ad mentioned that it was a senatorial copy, one of the first editions prepared for the report to the Congress. The copy they were selling had a rare map in the pocket of the back cover, and as I recall, the price tag on theirs was \$6,000.

"This gave me incentive to go and see if my copy included the map and was a senatorial edition."

Not only did it have a map, not only was it a senatorial

edition, but it was the copy presented to Reverdy Johnson, St. John's Class of 1811. "This was the first time I'd looked closely at the inscription. It was signed by Reverdy Johnson, whose name I knew well from my days as a student at St. John's. I looked up his history, and indeed on the day he signed the volume, he was a member of the Congress."

Indeed, a remarkable coincidence. Since then, Bauman's has continued to seek buyers for other Fremont volumes; the last one had an asking price of \$7,800. But Mr. Greenfield's volume became a gift to the St. John's library, where, he says, it belongs. ✱



IN NOVEMBER 2005, STEWART GREENFIELD DONATED HIS COPY OF *FREMONT'S REPORT* TO THE GREENFIELD LIBRARY, WHERE IT IS ON DISPLAY IN THE NUTT ROOM. THE INSCRIPTION INSIDE READS "FROM REVERDY JOHNSON TO HIS FRIEND WM PRICE DEC. 30, 1845."



had been a lawyer and appeals court judge in Maryland. After graduating from St. John's at age 15, Reverdy Johnson read law with his father, joined the Baltimore Bar and practiced law in Maryland. After having served as a state senator, he was elected in 1845 to the U.S. Senate as a Whig. In 1849, he was appointed by Zachary Taylor to be attorney general of the United States. He later served as a representative in the Maryland Assembly, and returned to the U.S. Senate, this time as a democrat. During the Civil War, he was a strenuous supporter of keeping Maryland in the Union.

At age 50, Johnson accepted the appointment of minister to Britain's Court of St. James's, launching his international career. Lord Clarendon, at the time of Johnson's appointment, wrote to a friend in America that "Mr. Johnson was the only diplomatic representative that had ever brought out the true friendly feeling of the British people for those in the United States." Some Americans thought him too friendly to England.

Johnson faced the emerging controversies of his day with expansive intellect and largeness of spirit. However, some observers, noting the pattern of shifting alliances and political positions, did not hesitate to charge him with being a "trimmer," one who changes his political opinions to suit popular views. Other accounts cast him in more favorable light. The Hon. J. Upshur Dennis, in writing his recollections, stated that Johnson was "cursed with neither nerves nor liver, but was the robust embodiment of *mens sana in corpore sano*," a healthy mind in a healthy body. (2).

Even Johnson's physical attributes attracted attention. Dennis recalls in his account that Johnson was of "medium height, round bodied, solidly almost sturdily built, just such a physical mould as indicated perfect health, capacity for work, and endurance, without risk of breakdown, of all the oils and strains of the most active life at the trial table . . . his features were strong; his forehead of great height, fullness and breadth; while the back of his head was shaped like a barrel, and seemed to bulge out all around, as if holding capacity. But the dome of his head was its most striking feature—so lofty, so symmetrically rounded, that it seemed to tower above all others, as the dome of St. Peter's minimizes all other designs (2-3)."

Apparently, possessing a measured temperament did not keep Johnson out of a gentlemen's duel, which ended with grave physical consequences before it could even take place. According

to Dennis, the duel resulted from an altercation at a horse race attended by congressmen. The owners of the two horses competing, Rep. Henry Wise of Virginia and Rep. Edward Stanley of North Carolina, were also the marshals. The men got into a fight, and the challenge to a duel was issued. As Wise's second, Johnson went out to practice his shooting. He took aim at a small hickory tree and fired. But the ball failed to penetrate the tree, boomeranged, and struck Johnson in one eye. From that moment on, he needed assistance in crossing streets and rooms, and relied on voices to identify people. He died in 1876 in Annapolis.

Johnson was a persuasive speaker with his own style. He apparently made few references to literary or other authorities, in contrast to other learned men of his day, but rather built his arguments on principles and logic. He attracted many controversies in his life, most often triggered by shifting his political

alliances and revising his opinions. And yet, one may view those shifts as characteristic of open-mindedness manifested in an educated man. His character traits demonstrated, according to John Grene Proud, class of 1834, "the liberality of his mind and his habit of bringing every subject to the test of calm reasoning and cool judgment . . ." which prevented Johnson from becoming "a bigoted partisan."

Such was the legacy of a St. John's education then, and now. ✱

*Andrea Lamb is librarian in Annapolis.*

Sources: *Personal Recollections of a Quartet of the Baltimore Bar* (1905), by

J. Upshur Dennis, in the Reverdy Johnson Special Collection, Maryland State Archives; *Argument on the Jurisdiction of the Military Commission*, by Reverdy Johnson, found in Surratt House Museum Archives at [www.surratt.org/documents/Bplact14.pdf](http://www.surratt.org/documents/Bplact14.pdf); *The North American Review*, 131 and 147 (1888) (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ammemhome.html>); *Biographical Cyclopaedia of Representative Men of Maryland*, Baltimore (1879); *Ex parte Milligan*, 71 US2 (1866). ([www.abanet.org/publiced/criticism.html](http://www.abanet.org/publiced/criticism.html)); *Life of Reverdy Johnson*, by Bernard Steiner (1941); *Memoirs of Deceased Alumni of St. John's College, Annapolis*, by John G. Proud, Baltimore (1879); *Tercentenary History of Maryland*, by Matthew P. Andrews, Chicago, Clarke (1925).

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# TWENTY-SIX DAYS

## *A Senior Essay Diary*

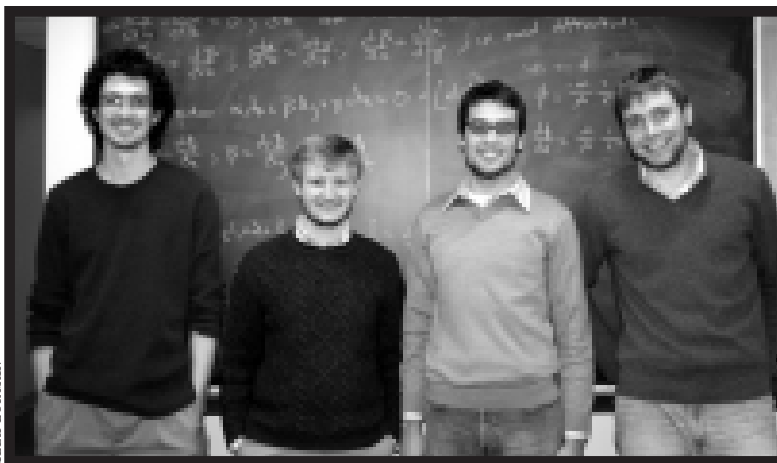
*Christopher Utter, a former editor of the Gadfly and a prolific contributor to college publications, took breaks from essay writing to keep a journal on the process. He overcame a slow start, Seinfeld episodes on DVD, and much angst to complete a fine essay on Plato's Republic. He defended it in April—the morning after Prank.*

*Tuesday, January 10*

It was good to be at home over break, but toward the end I began to feel the weight of my essay pressing on my conscience. My plane landed at BWI last night at about 8 p.m. My girlfriend, Shoshana Goldstein, and my friend Alex Claxton met me at the baggage claim, and we drove to campus without saying much. We are pretending not to be concerned about our essays, although I'm sure most seniors are slightly panicked. We have four weeks (26 days), which sounds like a long time. I had wanted to re-read the *Republic* and write at least an outline for my essay, but neither of these things happened.

*Friday, January 13*

I hope Friday the thirteenth is lucky for me. Yesterday, I met with my adviser, Mr. Kalkavage, and told him I wanted to change my topic. I was originally going to write on freedom in the *Republic*, but the more I thought about it the more I realized that I had no idea how I would write such an essay. So after discussing the matter for a while with Mr. Kalkavage, I remembered how interested and perplexed I was at Socrates' discussion of images and imagery. I finally settled on an examination of Socrates' two treatments of poetry, in Books II-III and X, as the focus of my essay. As I said, I will need a bit of luck to come up with an interesting way to approach this topic so late in the game. Earlier this evening I went for pizza with Shoshana and Andrew (MacKinlay), Jeremy (Coy), and Ben (Cromartie). They (except Shoshana) have decided not to shave until they turn in their essays February 4, and so I decided to join them. I'm told the "essay



ALEX LORMAN

BEARD GROWING AND ESSAY WRITING PROGRESSED SLOWLY AND WITH VARIED SUCCESS FOR SENIORS (L. TO R.) BENJAMIN CROMARTIE, CHRISTOPHER UTTER, JEREMY COY, AND ANDREW MACKINLAY.

beard" is a tradition for the brave few who attempt it each year. I'm curious to see how much of a beard I can actually grow.

*Tuesday, January 17*

Writing, but mostly in the

form of notes, and not very cohesive notes at that. I met with Mr. Kalkavage yesterday, and as a result I have narrowed my focus to imitation in Book X.

It's very strange being here without having to go to class. It's not that I don't feel like I am a part of the school, it's more that I don't feel like I'm going to school at all. It's always the weekend, or it's never the weekend, depending on how you look at it. The only difference between one day and the next is that each day I am closer to the deadline.

Beard progress: still stubble, but at least it's evenly distributed.

*Saturday, January 22*

Go to the library and work there until it closes? Or just stay here at my desk in Gilliam Hall? I have about 20 pages of notes. One major development is that I came up with an outline yesterday covering everything I think I need to talk about, though I have still not written much. Everyone seems to have dozens of pages already! I have to write something substantial to give to Mr. Kalkavage before our meeting Tuesday.

Last night I saw *Match Point* with Shoshana and the other usual people. The only thing about it that was typical of Woody Allen's style was the plot's nihilistic tinge. Because of this it ended up reminding me of my essay and the danger poetry of all kinds can pose to an audience's thought.

Jeremy, perhaps influenced by the movie, is making a film of the writing process. To illustrate what we do with our free time he

TUTORS PATRICIA LOCKE AND WILLIAM BRAITHWAITE WALK OUT WITH MR. UTTER AFTER THE EXAMINATION.

filmed Alex and Ben bouncing a tennis ball across the floor to each other in silence for about a minute and a half.

### *Tuesday, January 25*

Writing. After my last entry I went to the library and wrote until closing, then I went back to my room and wrote for several hours more. I went through about a third of Book X and wrote 15 pages. Mr. Kalkavage thinks they're well written and need almost no revision, so I'm relieved. Now I just have to write the rest of the essay.

My beard is coming along, although I'm not sure how well I like it. It's strange being able to feel the wind through it when I'm standing outside. Also, it itches.

### *Friday, January 27*

The more time I spend on the essay the more time I need to spend doing something else. I've been watching *Seinfeld* episodes on DVD. It's actually very interesting how much *Seinfeld* bears on the subject of my essay. Then again everything bears on the subject of everyone's essay. I have discussed this phenomenon many times with my friends; whenever we read a book or watch a movie or television program, we have to be careful not to say, "You know, this reminds me of something I just said in my essay." I suppose it means our minds are invested in the work.

### *Tuesday, January 31*

Finished a draft of the central part of the essay and sent it to Mr. Kalkavage, but I still have to write a conclusion. A problem: this central section is 50 pages long. I'll see what Mr. Kalkavage thinks tomorrow. Surprisingly, I'm not sick of the *Republic*—just the opposite.

### *Sunday, February 5*

It's done. I spent the remainder of last week cutting my essay and managed to get it down to 37 pages. Mr. Kalkavage thinks it's very good, and so does Shoshana. I am not sure that I can tell whether it is good anymore; I've spent too much time with it. Andrew, Jeremy, and I went to Kinko's to get our essays bound on Saturday evening, and managed to get there just before everyone else—in and out in 20 minutes, not the two-hour wait we feared. At about 10 p.m., a group of us piled into the Polity van and headed to the president's house to turn in our essays. Then we drove back to campus to ring the bell, a tradition we are graciously allowed to continue despite the fact that it violates the city noise ordinance. I guess 100 people ringing the bell at 1 a.m. must be annoying.

Oh, and I shaved this morning.



ALEX LORMAN

### *Friday, March 31*

I just went to the Registrar's office to pick up my commencement invitations. They come with a little slip of paper marked "etiquette instructions" detailing how the invitations should be assembled: "The invitation and calling card go into the small, *un-gummed envelope* with a tissue placed over the face of the invitation and the card inserted inside the invitation . . ." etc. For some perverse reason I enjoy little exercises like this.

### *Wednesday, April 5*

I found out two weeks ago that my oral would fall the day after Senior Prank. I was disappointed at first, of course, because this meant that I couldn't participate in the parties. But it worked out for the best because it gave me more time to prepare yesterday morning.

I was nervous beforehand, but once I sat down at 11:45 a.m. and started reading my précis, I was fine. In the robing room Mr. Umphrey, Ms. Locke, and Mr. Braithwaite explained the procedures—entering and leaving the room, how I should wear my mortar board, etc. My friends sat in the chairs around the table, but I hardly noticed them. I was so entrenched in the conversation that it didn't matter what was going on outside of it. This is true of conversations in general at St. John's; they're deathly boring if you are merely watching them and are not invested in them, but when you are a part of the conversation it so envelops you that you barely notice other things.

The oral was over much more quickly than I thought it would be, and before I knew it I was shaking people's hands and being congratulated from all sides. Shoshana and I had lunch to celebrate. Then there's a seminar reading waiting. ✱

# THE ART OF THE PERSIAN LETTERS: UNLOCKING MONTESQUIEU'S SECRET CHAIN

by Randolph Paul Runyon (A71)  
University of Delaware Press (2005)

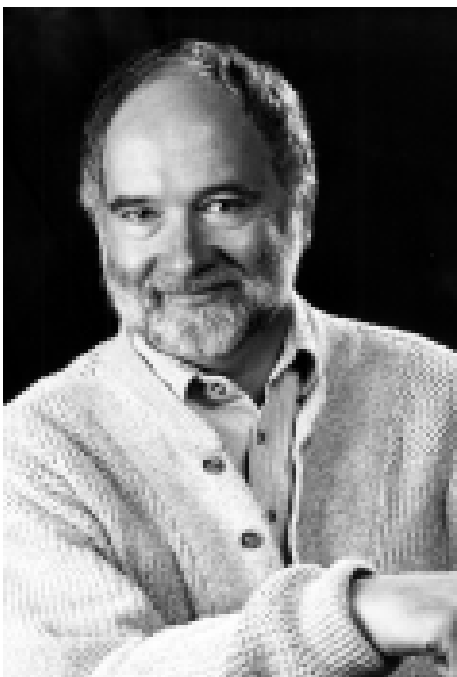
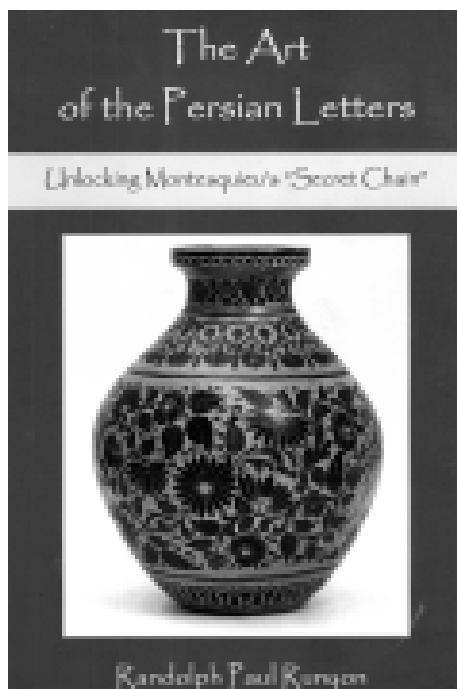
Randolph Runyon, a professor of French literature at Miami University in Ohio, loves a good puzzle. He's also good at finding hidden connections and uncovering secrets—one reason Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* held such interest for him.

Best known for *The Spirit of the Laws*, written in 1738, Montesquieu first achieved literary success with the *Persian Letters*, which tells the story of Usbek and Rica and their journey from Persia into the Western World. The two travelers correspond with the seraglio back home and receive letters of news from Usbek's harem. What develops is an enjoyable and interesting exposition of the differences between East and West.

Thirty years after Montesquieu published his epistolary novel, he hinted that the seemingly disconnected letters held a "secret, and somehow unnoticed, chain" that tied the letters together. No scholars have been quite successful in finding that chain, Runyon posits, because they concentrated instead on finding a unifying theme. While he greatly admires the research of scholar Pauline Kra, Runyon ultimately concluded that her work concentrated on identifying a theme rather than uncovering a structural link.

Instead, Runyon proposes that a chain of linguistic echoes, situational parallels, and reversals carry the reader from each letter to the next. He had already invested months in his labor—a careful textual analysis of the 161 letters—before he was sure his approach would actually work. "I became familiar with the *Persian Letters* because I teach French literature, and it's often anthologized, at least in fragments," he says. "My first response to the work was that it's a whole world on its own. But once you enter it on its own terms, you start to see how it's put together."

For example, Runyon finds a connection in linguistic echoes between Letters 24-25 and 26. The first two letters capture Rica's reports of "Louis XIV searching in vain for hidden Jansenists . . ." Runyon writes. Rica uses the words "*a cherchés*" and "*le chagrin*" in reference to the



king's fruitless searches. In Letter 26, when writing to his elusive love Roxanne, Rica refers to his own "*chagrin*" when his searches ("*recherches*") for his love are unsuccessful.

Runyon also enjoyed Montesquieu's political satire: "So here we have Louis XIV beating the bushes for Jansenists and Usbek doing the same for the object of his desire," writes Runyon. "It's a hidden parallel, but it's a pretty funny one. The

absolutist Sun King in his persecuting mania is likened, in the hidden chain, to a husband who can't even make love to the wife over whom he supposedly has absolute power (19)."

After leaving St. John's at the completion of his sophomore year, Runyon earned a doctorate in French from Johns Hopkins University. He joined the Miami University faculty in 1977. Runyon's research covers a wide range of English and French literature (*The Art of the Persian Letters* is one of eight books he has published), but lately he's been fascinated by uncovering links within an individual work. He may take on Montaigne next to show how the first essay relates to the last essay in each of his three books. He's found the writer "intentionally self-contradictory" in many of his essays. "At one point he says we have too many commentators on poetry and not enough poets, but at another he says we have too many poets," says Runyon. "He says civil war is terrible at one point; in another, he says such wars serve a purpose."

His studies of the poetry of Fontaine and Baudelaire have also uncovered hidden chains. La Fontaine, for example, seems to employ a rhyme scheme that many readers believe "disintegrates into chaos." Instead, what Runyon has found is that different syllable counts in individual poems often correspond with sudden shifts in action or mood. "And each fable is connected to its neighbors by the same kind of linguistic and situational parallels found in the *Persian Letters*."

While he appreciates the enduring ideas behind great books, Runyon is more fascinated by the manipulation of language, more interested in how the parts form an esthetic whole. His love of language was nurtured at St. John's, where he enjoyed studying Greek and working through Euclid's propositions. He credits the college with helping him develop his ability to find disparities, and therefore, identify similarities. In studying the *Persian Letters*, he could see when one letter contradicted the one preceding or following it because he could also pick out the underlying sameness. "I had Ford K. Brown as my tutor for Greek, and he used to say, 'The closest you can be to being right is to be exactly wrong.' I was greatly influenced by this, and it influenced my approach to all these writers."



His love of French was also discovered at St. John's, not in the classroom, but in the library in Woodward Hall. "I worked there in the evenings, and they had these lovely 19th-century editions of Racine and Diderot. I had never liked reading literature in English, but I fell in love with French literature. It's now extended to English."

Runyon has always found the *Persian Letters* to be amusing and interesting, and he recommends the book as good reading for Johnnies. Although today Montesquieu's approach to Arabic culture seems somewhat misinformed and patronizing, "at least he was writing about another culture in a serious way, long before anyone else," he notes. ❀

—ROSEMARY HARTY

### THE CYCLE OF LEARNING/ EL CICLO DE APRENDIZAJE

by Jorge Aigla  
Bilingual Press (2005)

It is understandable for a poet to write about his own friends and family, but perhaps only a poet who is also a St. John's College tutor could so deftly speak to such a broad range of topics as family, martial arts, and classical works, extending from the streets of Mexico City to the three sons of Socrates, "or the waif/ adopted by an aging Epictetus."

Santa Fe tutor, poet, and head karate-do instructor Jorge Aigla has released a third volume of poetry entitled *The Cycle of Learning*, his first book that includes Spanish and English versions of each poem. Haunting and evocative, the poems explore the mysterious ways in which we apprehend the world, and the dichotomy between internalizing our awareness and using language to express ideas and forms that come to us independent of language. On the book's left-hand pages, poems are printed in the language—Spanish or English—in which they were first composed; the right-hand page offers the translation.

"Poetry comes to our imagination and its linguistic representation differently," writes Aigla in the book's preface. "Perhaps this work could serve as an invitation to a case study on the psycholinguistics of bilingualism."

Influences of the Program abound in *The Cycle of Learning*. In "Ruminations of a Monk," Aigla writes: "Why do we not

realize/ that we do not learn,/ that we must always/ start again in love from the beginning/ as Kierkegaard suggested." There is a poem called "Miguel de Cervantes" and another called "Don Quixote's Mill." Socrates, Goethe, Baudelaire, Plato, Confucius, Augustine, Mencius (Meng Tzu), Milton, and Shakespeare also gain mention.

Each poem opens onto wider worlds of imagination, family, discovery, and the passage of time. Drawing inspiration from his family members, his martial arts practice, and his boyhood in Mexico, the poems sketch moving images of his loved ones in such gentle ways as to honor their place on the mantel of his life. Aigla creates imagery as vivid and colorful as portraiture, as moving as breath, as in "One Morning":

That cement wasteland  
on an early Mexico City morning,  
as I waited for the bus  
to take me to the high school gym,  
revealed to me a man:  
the same thin and dirty and dark  
manual laborer carrying a hemp sack,  
his face a bible of sorrows,  
condemned to ride for perhaps two hours  
to the factory whose stoves  
and chimneys devour men.

Charles Bell, Santa Fe tutor emeritus, wrote in his forward to the volume: "Let me promise the reader this mature and powerful experience of this *Cycle of*

*Learning*, the poetic counterpart to William Carlos Williams's collection of prose essays *The Embodiment of Knowledge*."

One of the most sensory-rich poems is entitled "A Flower for My Mother." Crossing borders and decades, Aigla reflects on his mother while sitting in a garden spot on Canyon Road in Santa Fe. He writes, "The garden is full this year/ after so much rain, of all/ the colors you enjoyed, and especially the deep magenta/ of that low and shy flower/ you once so tenderly straightened/ as we walked carefully on the path/ between the two large horse chestnut trees/ trees like the ones you used to help me/ climb as a boy in Cuernavaca."

Aigla was born in Mexico City. He earned a degree in medicine from the University of California, San Francisco, in 1979. Prior to coming to St. John's, he was a medical examiner in San Francisco and taught at both the City College of San Francisco and at St. Mary's College.

His first volume of poetry, *Sublunary* (Pennywhistle Press), was published in 1989. His previous book of poetry, *Aztec Shell* (Bilingual Press, 1995), in which some poems are in Spanish, is set in both Mexico and the United States. ❀

—ANDRA MAGURAN

### THE CYCLE OF LEARNING

I closed the senses  
and allowed the dark to envelop me,  
I dreamt. A wind visited me:  
People had loved me;  
I had been sick  
for a long time,  
almost unconscious,  
and had been taken care of,  
fed, and watched.  
I had not realized  
what this implied;  
I stared at the enormity  
of some of my actions  
and of my secret inertias.  
Awaking, alone,  
I opened once more  
the cycle of learning.

### EL CICLO DE APRENDIZAJE

Cerré los sentidos  
y permití que la oscuridad me envolviese.  
Sõné. Visitóme un viento:  
Gente me había amado;  
Había estado enfermo  
por largo tiempo,  
casi inconsciente,  
y me habían cuidado,  
alimentado y vigilado.  
No me había dado cuenta  
de lo que esto significaba;  
Miré la enormidad  
de algunos de mis actos  
y de mis inercias secretas.  
Despertando solo,  
abrí de nuevo  
el ciclo de aprendizaje

—JORGE AIGLA

## OUT OF AFRICA

*Journalist Lydia Polgreen (A97)*

BY PATRICIA DEMPSEY

**A**s the *New York Times* foreign correspondent for West Africa, Lydia Polgreen (A97) is accustomed to danger. Last winter, she boarded a flight to Nigeria to meet with militants in the oil-producing delta region who were holding nine foreigners as hostages. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta invited journalists to interview them, as Polgreen wrote later, “to show their strength and outline their demands.” But before the meeting could take place, Polgreen found herself sitting in a small boat, her hands in the air, looking at the barrel of an AK-47 assault rifle.

“We were navigating the creeks and rivers of the Niger Delta, and the Nigerian military were looking for the hostages the militants were holding, so there was a strong possibility that we could get caught in the crossfire,” she recalls. “A boat with a group of men wearing hoods over their faces, aiming AK-47s and a grenade launcher, came speeding up to us. There had been a misunderstanding with our guide. We talked to them, convinced them that we meant no harm. Finally they gave us permission to proceed to meet with the militants.”

Polgreen covers two dozen countries, including the war-ravaged areas of eastern Chad and western Sudan, politically volatile Liberia, and regions such as the Niger Delta. She travels for two to three weeks at a time, returning to the *Times*’ West African bureau, her home in the suburbs of Dakar, Senegal, that she shares with her partner, Candice Feit (A96), a freelance photographer. Any down time is used preparing for the next assignment: haggling with embassy employees to get visas and permits, or arranging for translators and drivers. Reporting on the oil pipeline in Chad, for instance, required two weeks of planning complex logistics and six days driving around the dusty

desert. “The biggest part of this job—being a foreign correspondent—is showing up,” she says. “How can you know for sure you will be safe? You cannot. So you gauge the risks.”

Polgreen’s willingness to take these risks is rooted in a childhood spent in Africa. She grew up in Kenya and Ghana. Her mother, Pamela, is from Ethiopia, and her father, John (SF71), once worked as an agricultural engineer involved in sustainable development. “For me, covering the war or events in Iraq is not compelling, but covering Africa is,” she explains. “Africa has always been a part of my life. I love Africa. I want to communicate about it to the rest of the world. The situation in Africa is not hopeless. Even if it is not going to be easily remedied, my job is to tell the world about it with style, intelligence, and humanity.”

To this end, Polgreen brings an insider’s sensibility to African culture, a gift for crafting succinct, vivid prose, and an outsider’s perspective on what is newsworthy. Polgreen moved from Ghana to the United States when she attended

St. John’s. (Her brother, David, is also a 1997 graduate of St. John’s.) After an internship in Washington, D.C., she went to Columbia University to earn a master’s in journalism—a natural career choice for her and for many Johnnies. “It’s the critical thinking skills, being able to question, to think independently,” she says. “You are coming to things with an open mind. In journalism, you go to the primary source so you can get information—a Johnnie would be drawn to that.”

The headlines of Polgreen’s *Times* stories convey the breadth of her coverage: “Why So Starry Eyed? Misery Loves Optimism in Africa”; “Chad’s Oil Riches, Meant for Poor, Are Diverted”; and “Why Hope in Africa is Not a Paradox.” Africa’s startling contrasts fascinate Polgreen. “Particularly in Africa, one of the world’s poorest continents, there is a paradox that I love. There is great suffering, abject misery, yet there is dignity, joy, and an optimism in life that sustains people. I find this compelling. We as Westerners, we arrive and we say, ‘Oh the horror, the horror.’ Yet in fact these people have an incredible spirit full of hope.”

Polgreen describes encounters with seemingly poor people who are rich in kindness and generosity. “When I was in Chad reporting a story on the civil war, one of the town officials let me camp in his compound. Here I was sleeping under the stars, eating mush and stew from a communal bowl. Yet it was all done with the most gracious, kind hospitality. He said, ‘I wish you had been here when my children were here.’ He sent them to another town for safekeeping. This is a village that is under constant attack from Arab militia from the Sudan. You see how terribly they suffer. Yet here is this man, so gracious, his capacity for joy, spirituality, and survival is so great. This is true everywhere you go in Africa: despite the poverty and misery, the human spirit is powerful.”

*“This is true  
everywhere you go  
in Africa: despite the  
poverty and misery,  
the human spirit is  
powerful.”*

LYDIA POLGREEN (A97)



Given the misery she encounters, it's no surprise that Polgreen sometimes questions the impartiality journalism demands. "You try not to get personally involved, but it is difficult. For example, when I was reporting in Haiti during the 2004 rebellion and working with a photographer, a young man had been shot. He was going from one public hospital to the next. I don't know how many were injured in the protests we were covering, but he was turned away. He had a bullet in his gut and private hospitals were not going to treat him without money. You as a human being, you make a choice." Polgreen and her colleague decided that since they were not going to report on the young man, it was not a breach of professional ethics to give him \$100-\$200 to save his life. "But usually you can't intervene. You see so much on a daily basis—sick babies, hungry families. There is always some form of human misery. I don't believe the pie-in-the-sky nonsense that just because journalism is a public service—it gets information out there—it will change these things. Yet it is important

that the world knows. I am not foolhardy, but still I write hoping to have an impact."

To have an impact Polgreen needs to interview a wide range of individuals, many of whom do not see the importance of sharing their stories with a *New York Times* reporter. "You want, as a journalist, to believe in truth, in openness. So you make arguments as to why it is in someone's best interest to let you interview them. I say, 'You should talk to me. We do not want to support your cause, but we want to tell the world about it.' " Polgreen says the difficulty in getting someone to talk "increases exponentially" with their level of sophistication—unless they have something to gain from it.

The media-savvy militants holding nine foreign oil workers hostage in Nigeria sought out news coverage. "They wanted to talk, to show the world that they were a serious military force, a powerful force that operates brazenly on the major waterways," Polgreen says. "They understood 'the media increases our power.' "

Polgreen may never know the impact of the stories she files with the *Times*, many

LYDIA POLGREEN, INTERVIEWING MEMBERS OF A MILITANT GROUP IN THE NIGER DELTA LAST WINTER, ENCOUNTERS DANGER, DISEASE, TRAGEDY, AND HOPE IN AFRICA.

of them from dangerous places where, "my phone is on the fritz and satellites are down." She can't be sure if her February 25 story, "Armed Group Shuts Down Part of Nigeria's Oil Output," contributed to the militants' freeing six of the nine hostages. But within days of visiting the Niger Delta Polgreen hopped back on a plane—this time to cover the violence in Darfur pushing across the border into Chad.

Her work is never finished, she says, because there is always more to discover, one more question to ask. "You learn so much with every story," she says. "I'm always wishing and wanting one more day for more reporting." ♦

## 1935

**RICHARD WOODMAN** is still practicing law in a small town in central New York and enjoying long trips abroad with his daughters and their husbands. "I'm just back from a trip around South America, and it was pretty interesting," he writes.

lively group of residents, numerous activities, current affairs discussions—even a five-session course on Greek mythology! Our apartment overlooks the Hudson with spectacular views, sunsets, and barges going up and down the river. Yes, we are politically engaged, and I am vice-chair of our resident council. And, we are in good health."

## 1943

**MARTIN ANDREWS** has begun his roth year as commander of the Nassau-Suffolk L.I. Chapter of the American Ex-Prisoners of War and has passed his 6,000th hour of volunteer service at the Northport V.A. Medical Center.

## 1956

"I wonder—what would Tocqueville make of us now?" writes **DORIK MECHAU**.

## 1959

A note from sunny Florida, from **GAY HALL**: "My husband, Mortimer, died June 30, 2005. I am retired and will continue to live in the Keys. It's warm here!"

## 1944

A note from **PETER C. WOLFF**: "I suffer from an irreversible condition: getting older."

## 1948

"Phyllis and I have moved to Kendal-on-Hudson, a Quaker-sponsored community in Washington Irving country, Sleepy Hollow, N.Y.," writes **PETER J. DAVIES**. "Enjoying the

"My son, Will, graduates with a B.S. in Business from the University of Southern California in May," writes **GEORGE ANTHONY (A)**. "My daughter, Beth, graduates with a B.S. in Human Physiology from the University of Oregon in June."

## 1969

## 1970

"After having my own optical shop in Georgetown for the last 17 years and receiving the highest rating in the Washington Consumer Checkbook, I have cut back to being open only four days a week," reports **VIRGINIA HINDS BURTON (A)**. "My customers have been wonderfully supportive and business has even improved. I'll never retire. This job is way too much fun. But a three-day weekend every week feels so civilized!"

## 1974

"After 19 years at Dartmouth in Hanover, N.H., I am pleased to return to Santa Fe and am looking forward to being closer to St. John's College again," writes **RENATE LEWIS (SFGI)**.

**STEPHEN A. SLUSHER (SF)** moved to the East Coast.

## 1975

"I'm finally having surgery on the knee I injured in 1972 while borrowing stage lights from the Naval Academy for SJC's production of *The Taming of the Shrew*," says **CHRIS HOVING (A)**. "I tried to turn on the ladder while holding the big lights and my knee popped—and after a few steps, collapsed."

## 1976

**BETSY DAVENPORT (SF)** has been living in Portland since 1978. She has married and has had one child. She also has three step-children and three grand-children. She has been running a

private psychotherapy practice. Lately she has been evaluating and treating adults with AD/HD. The first of several writing projects on the subjects is ready to publish.

## 1983

**JOYCE HOWELL (AGI)** recently began an SAT tutoring business, Haddontutors@aol.com. "There seems to be a great demand!" she writes.

## 1985

"I'm teaching a spring 2006 semester course at Anne Arundel Community College on 'Emergence of Ancient Israel,' " writes **PAUL SCHATZBERG (AGI)**. "This course presents the latest scholarly knowledge on how and why desert-roaming pastoral nomads settled in the Canaan highlands beginning in 1300 B.C.E. and later identified themselves as a distinct ethnic group called Israelites. Sources of information are the Hebrew Bible, hi-tech archeology, Egyptian records, philology, epigraphy, Mesopotamian sources and others."

## 1986

**JAY POWERS (SF)** is in Chicago: "In January, I joined McDougal Littell as a senior editor. First project: an economics textbook (gasp!) for high school seniors. I moved to McDougal from The World Book Encyclopedia, where I had been in charge of the articles on Europe and Russia since 1999. When the weather turns warm here in Chicago, I still like to bike and skateboard. Haven't played table tennis in a while, though. I started with the

## HONORED FOR SERVICE

**LIZABETH AIELLO (SFGI69)** has been honored by AARP New Mexico for her ability to enhance the lives of others, improve the community around them, and inspire others to volunteer. Among other volunteer efforts, Aiello served as secretary of the Los Alamos AARP Chapter, where she helped to build membership, ran a group for retired local teachers, served the Los Alamos Retired Senior Organization, worked on the senior center's advisory council, and ran a great books discussion group for more than 15 years.

In recognition of her accomplishments, AARP nominated her for a 2005 Andrus Award. ♦



SF class of 1986, and I am curious to learn what happened to everybody. I would welcome an update from the reunion this summer."

**ROBERT F. RICHARDS (A)** is a professor of engineering at Washington State University. "I live in Pullman with my wife (also a professor here) and two children, Dmitry (10) and Alexander (7). Although I left St. John's after two years to finish up at the University of Chicago, I have fond memories of my times there. I recently bought a St. John's sweatshirt and I wear it around town here, but sadly I have yet to run into anyone who is familiar with the Program. Are there any other Johnnies in the inland Northwest?"

## 1987

**CHRISTOPHER BAILEY (A)** recently published *The Grail Code: Revelation of an Ancient Mystery*, published by Loyola Press, according to one of his fans. "Christopher Bailey has worked as a writer, editor, translator, and researcher for more than 15 years. His articles have appeared in *Touchstone*, *Columbia*, *New Covenant*, the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (second edition), and elsewhere. Schooled in the great-books tradition, he has spent many years in close study and translation of the Arthurian Texts. I know this because I am his proud wife, **TERESA FULLINWIDER BAILEY (A)**."

**SCOTT CUTHBERT (SF)** was made chairman of the Research Board for the International College of Applied Kinesiology, 2005-06, and his research literature can be seen online by going to [www.soto-usa.com](http://www.soto-usa.com), where his CV and online research papers can also be found. "Living with diabetes since the age of 4 and going to the john without a blood-testing instrument to control my diabetes

has made my calling as a functional medical physician a perfect fit," he writes. "Such a study as I am upon may continue for a lifetime and keeps me learning and learning. It is a wonderful thing to discover a professional activity, a calling, that has no horizon or limits on it, one that can continually romance, glorify, and excite your daily work. I am also going to India in March 2006!"

## 1988

**ELAINE PINKERTON COLEMAN (SFGI)** has completed the screenplay for the film adaptation of her WWII suspense novel, *Beast of Bengal*. The Gage Group Inc. has selected Elaine's book for development as a feature movie.

**THEODORE (TED) MERZ (A)** and **DIANA MARTINEZ (SF86)** recently celebrated the third birthday of their son, Hayden.

**KIM PAFFENROTH (A)** is the co-author, with Tom Bertonneau, of a new book, *The Truth Is Out There: Christian Faith and the Classics of TV Science Fiction* (Brazos Press, 2006). The book looks at the religious relevance of *Dr. Who*, *Star Trek*, *The Prisoner*, *The Twilight Zone*, *The X Files*, and *Babylon 5*. Kim is associate professor and chairman of the Department Religious Studies at Iona College, New Rochelle, NY.

## 1990

**MARK KREIDER (A)** and **SARAH WETHERSON (A89)** announce the birth of their child, Isaac Levi Bechtel, on Thursday, February 23. Isaac weighed in at 9 lb., 8 oz., and is "chubby- cheeked and beautiful." His parents love to hear from other Johnnies: e-mail them at [wimmin@teleport.com](mailto:wimmin@teleport.com).

## A BIG SURPRISE

**JOHN C. WRIGHT (A84)** received a Nebula nomination for his book, *Orphans of Chaos*. Along with the Hugo, the Nebula is one of the most prestigious awards in science fiction publishing. "This was a big surprise to us because he was not on the preliminary ballot, but apparently the judges have the discretion to add a book of their choice to each category," wrote John's wife, L. Jagi Lamplighter Wright. Though the book was a dark horse, she says, "it is still very exciting to be nominated and this will get his name out in front of new readers." ❀



## 1991

**ANNE MARLOW-GETER** and **KEN GETER** (both SF91) completed their first half-marathon in September 2006. 2006 also brought Anne a promotion to planning supervisor at the Colorado Department of STD/HIV Public Health and Environment and the completion of a fellowship with the Regional Institute of Health and Environmental Leadership. Ken continues the work to save us from mad cows and bird flu at the USDA.

Luca (1 year): "We plan to be here at least one more year, and I'd love to hear from other Johnnies in the area, to know if there is an alumni group meeting already. My e-mail remains: [elyette@hotmail.com](mailto:elyette@hotmail.com)."

## 1993

A DWI program manager for the local government division of the Department of Finance and Administration for New Mexico, **MICHAEL A. BALDWIN (SF)** encourages everyone not to drink and drive.

**MARIA PUMILIA (SF)** and Brian Bolding are the proud parents of Annika Marie Bolding, born March 9, at 7:25 a.m., weight 7 lbs., 4 oz. Annika was born in her room at home, right smack into the waiting hands of her dad.

## 1992

**ELYETTE BLOCK KIRBY (SF)** lives in the Paris area (near Versailles) with her husband, Jonathan, and three children, Benjy (5 years), Bronwyn Elyse (3 years), and

*continued on page 33*

## WHERE THERE'S SMOKE

*Aman Cholas (SF98) Finds Purpose in the West's Endangered Forests*

BY JASON BIELAGUS (SF98)

It's still dark when the siren sounds at the Redmond Air Center. The ready room at the jump base becomes a whirl of activity. A lightning storm moved across Northeastern Oregon earlier in the night, and multiple 'smokes' have been sighted by lookouts in the Wallawa-Whitman National Forest, about 200 miles away.

Spirits are high as Aman Cholas and his fellow smoke-jumpers don their gear-padded Kevlar jumpsuit, harness and parachute, reserve chute, personal gear bag, and a helmet with a steel mesh face guard. In a minute they have added 60 pounds to their body weight. They waddle out to the tarmac, where they load the twin-prop Sherpa. As the plane makes its way to the runway, carrying ten smokejumpers, two spotters, the pilot and co-pilot, a veteran jumper shouts above the engines' drone, "Another early commute to the office!" In the cabin, smiles flash in the early dawn light.

Once they've reached their destination, the crew members spot smoke rising from a steep, heavily wooded ridge-line. It appears to be a relatively small fire, maybe an acre in size, enough work for four smokejumpers. The spotter confers with the pilot on the best jump spot, a small opening in the trees a few hundred yards further down the ridge. It's a narrow target and missing it would mean drifting down off the ridge into a thick mat of 150-foot ponderosa pine and Douglas fir. After a few wide passes to drop wind-indicating streamers, the spotter signals for the first set of two jumpers to come to the rear of the plane and clip in their parachute rip cords.

Cholas will be first. After confirming that Cholas has seen the jump site and the streamers, the spotter calls out, "Turning final, 1500 feet, get in the door!" Cholas positions his body with his hands on the frame of the doorway opening to the vast



IT WAS DANGEROUS, EXHAUSTING, AND DIRTY—BUT BEING A SMOKE-JUMPER WAS ALSO EXHILARATING, SAYS AMAN CHOLAS.

untangled and out of the jump gear. Cholas' jump partner doesn't quite make the spot and is left dangling 40 feet in the air from his parachute, caught in a tree. However, within minutes, he rappels to safety. A big danger, Cholas explains, is not properly "bagging" a tree. If only the edge of the parachute catches a limb, it could collapse the canopy. If the limb breaks or the parachute comes loose, there is little to break the fall the rest of the way down.

Once the jumpers are safely on the ground, the Sherpa makes another pass for the paracargo drop—boxes of tools, food, water and other gear for fighting the fire. Cholas makes one last call on his handheld radio to the plane, confirming that the crew has everything it needs, and the Sherpa heads for the next fire.

forest below, the slipstream of air just brushing his face. With the spotter's shout—"Get ready!"—Cholas rears back like a spring, the sudden slap on the back of his calf initiating the lunge that propels him into the void. Without hesitation the second jumper follows.

In a few seconds, the parachute canopy fills with air. Cholas checks his position in relation to the jump spot as well as to his jump partner, then feels a moment of peace. The noise of the plane and the burden of his gear are replaced by a quiet weightlessness, a beautiful suspension over green wilderness.

"It's the last couple hundred feet that are scary," Cholas explains. "The ground suddenly begins to show its true roughness, a broken snag here, a boulder there, and it's all rushing towards you."

In this case, the opening in the trees is a dense patch of oak brush, a soft enough landing area, but it takes some effort to get

The smokejumpers make their way to the fire, determine its behavior, identify hazards, and make a plan of attack. The fire is fought by creating a "fire line," a break in the fuel around the fire's edges. This particular fire is not moving very fast yet. One of the jumpers uses a chainsaw to cut trees and heavier logs on the ground. The others use hand tools, shovels and Pulaskis (tools with an ax on one end, a hoe on the other), to dig and scrape a line down to mineral soil. By late afternoon, the fire is "contained," and the jumpers gather for a break. Everyone pitches in to make camp comfortable and prepare a meal. They eat, joke, and enjoy the rest before it is time for "mop-up," moving through the "black" to extinguish anything still burning by digging and mixing it in with the soil. A small fire could take a day or two; a larger one could take weeks.

Their work completed, the smokejumpers load everything into enormous backpacks

that often weigh over 100 pounds and hike to the nearest trailhead to be picked up. Only occasionally are they lucky enough to get a mule train to come for the gear or get a helicopter pick-up.

"Often the pack-out can be the most grueling challenge of a fire," says Cholas, remembering the exhaustion—and excitement—of eight years spent fighting fires. It was a career born from a love of the mountains, discovered in Santa Fe. And it's led him to another side of preserving forests, by preventing fires.

Cholas grew up in Vieques, Puerto Rico, and Corozal, Belize, with his parents, four sisters, and a brother. After graduating from high school, he spent several years working and traveling in Europe and Israel. He was working as a gardener at the Bahai World Center in Haifa, Israel, when he visited a friend who owned the Britannica Great Books of the Western World series. He remembers thinking, "I wish that I could just sit here and read all these books." That set him on the path to St. John's.

In Santa Fe, Cholas discovered his enchantment with mountains and forests when his freshman lab class made an outing to the Sangre de Cristos to examine coniferous trees. He often took long walks on Monte Sol to do his seminar readings and spent many weekends hiking around the Santa Fe National Forest.

His firefighting career began with a summer job with a ground crew in Isleta, N.M., where his mother's family lives. Every

summer, he continued firefighting, moving to a Forest Service helicopter rappel crew, Sandia Helitack, based in Tijeras, N.M.

"Fire fighting complemented St. John's well," Cholas says. "By the end of spring semester, all I wanted to do was be out in the woods. And by the end of a fire season, all I wanted to do was hang out in the library and read. So it was a good balance."

After graduating from St. John's, he went to work for the Forest Service full time, becoming the crew leader for Sandia Helitack. Later he spent his summers in Redmond, Ore., working as a smokejumper.

After nine seasons of fighting fires, Cholas became disillusioned with the Forest Service's fire suppression policy. In keeping with its original mandate "to furnish a continuous supply of timber" (Organic Act of 1897, 16 U.S.C. § 475), the Forest Service maintains a policy of stopping all forest fires. Many of the fires he helped put out needed to burn, Cholas realized.

"After almost a century of stopping fires so aggressively, we have hindered the natural process that fires perform in the forest ecosystem," he explains. "As a result, most of our forests in the Western United States are unhealthy and overgrown, clogged with dead and fallen timber, and are prone to disease and catastrophic wildfires."

Low-intensity fires in a healthy forest can rid the forest of dead and sickly trees, while leaving stronger trees to thrive, as well as reintroducing nutrients to the soil, he adds.

On the other hand, though fire is part of a

forest's natural cycle, fires of recent years have grown so intense that they "kill everything in their path" and "leave moonscapes of sterilized soil and cause unnatural erosion and other problems," he says.

Two years ago, Cholas and fellow firefighter Jeremy Hanlon left the Forest Service to start their own company, Forest Fitness, based in Tijeras. They work primarily to protect properties from fire danger by thinning forested areas of overgrowth and dead material. Forest Fitness has been very successful at promoting thinning as a way to prevent the danger of fires around homes and properties. "Like a fire, we remove the unhealthiest trees and leave a mosaic of the strongest healthiest trees with room to grow," Cholas says. "We also try to achieve a mix of tree types and age classes that is indicative of the natural vegetation. Even people who are against the cutting of trees are often very happy with the results of our work. The beauty and balance that is achieved, as well as the reduced fire danger, is very appealing to people."

As satisfying as he finds his current work, Cholas looks back fondly on his smoke-jumping days. "It was the most incredible job I have ever had." ❀

*Author's note: For more about smoke-jumping, see Norman Maclean's Young Men and Fire (an account of the Mann Gulch fire); the Forest Service documentary The Greatest Good, or the NOVA documentary Fire Wars.*

"Never thought I was the home birth type, but the right midwife and doula can make a world of difference," writes Maria. Maria ditched software development for real-estate last year—get in touch with her if you're in the market.

## 1994

**SARAH and MICHAEL AFFLERBACH** (both A) have been having a great year watching twins Max and Evie grow into little people. "They are so fun to have around and each day brings something new to enjoy," writes Sarah. "I received my architectural license last year and work for a wonderful firm

here in New Bern, N.C. Mike's radio business continues to grow and they are building a new station which will be on the air in February. We had a great time traveling to Columbia, South America, to witness **JON ARCHER'S** (A94) wedding to his lovely wife, Monica."

"I finally finished my philosophy doctorate in December of 2005, specializing in 18th- and 19th-century German philosophy, history of modern philosophy, and logic," writes **PETER BEZANSON** (A). "The title of my dissertation is 'Idealism: A Brief History, Taxonomy, and Nietzschean Evaluation.' I continue to teach calculus

classes and a philosophy seminar at a great books liberal arts school in Tempe, Ariz., (Tempe Preparatory Academy). In addition, I serve as the mathematics curriculum consultant to Great Hearts Academies ([www.greatheartsaz.org](http://www.greatheartsaz.org)) helping them realize their mission to create a network of academically rigorous, liberal arts middle and high schools in the Phoenix metropolitan area. My wife, Alison, and I have one son, Noah, who was born nearly two years ago."

## 1995

**JOEL ARD** (A) and **HANNAH (STIRES) ARD** (A92) welcomed Ruth Anne Ard into the world on April 4, 2005. Ruth joins big brother David (2 years old). **TED NAFF** (A92) is Ruth's godfather. The Ards sadly left their Annapolis abode and moved closer to D.C. in June. They are now in University Park, Md. Hannah is working part time for a law firm in D.C. and Joel is working at the Department of Justice. They would love to hear from old friends and can be reached at [joelandhannahard@hotmail.com](mailto:joelandhannahard@hotmail.com).



## PREFERS SLEEPING

**B**ETH MARTIN and ALEX GAMMON (both A94) are pleased to announce the arrival of their son, Theodore Jasper Gammon. Theodore made his appearance on January 29, 2006, at 8:27 a.m., weighing in at 8 lbs 9.4 oz. All are doing well, and Theodore prefers to spend his time eating, sleeping, and making his parents smile. ❀



**ZENA HITZ** (A) has accepted a job teaching philosophy at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, starting this fall.

**MIKE LAYNE** (A) writes: "My family moved from Barrow to Anchorage last summer. We live next door to **DANNY MYERS** (SF93). I am happy to report he still has long hair and has stopped wearing high-heels to Halloween parties. **THEA AGNEW** (SF95) is also living in Anchorage and expecting her first baby in February or March. Audrey Rae will turn 4 in February, and Jackson will celebrate his first birthday in March. And I still have a full head of hair -thank goodness. My work e-mail has changed to: MikeL@EATribes.net-I'd love to hear from SJC alumni. I am a grant administrator and grant writer for a non-profit tribal organization. This spring I am running for one of the seats on the Anchorage School Board. Feel free to visit the campaign Web site at: [www.MikeLayne.info](http://www.MikeLayne.info)."

## 1996

**ANNE** and **MARK CORMIER** (both SFGI) write: "We've recently moved to a new house to accommodate our newest addition, Sarah Clare, who was born September 29, 2005. Her older sisters Anna (5) and Eliza (3) continue to astonish us with their limitless energy and fresh perspective on our (their?) world. Mark is still teaching English literature at Longmeadow High School, and Anne is home attempting to impart something that might lead to virtue to the three girls."

**ALLISON** and **JOHN EDDYBLOUIN** (SF) are enjoying life in mid-coast Maine: wooden boat building, home schooling, etc . . .

**HANNAH GOLDSTEIN** (NÉE GILLELAN, A) joyfully announces both her November 2005 marriage to Stephen Goldstein and the opening of her own law practice. Hannah and Stephen live on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., just blocks from

fellow Annapolis alums **RICH** (A96) and **KARA** (A99) **LUNA**. Hannah's law practice focuses on estate planning and adoptions. She'd love to hear from anyone in the area—her e-mail is [hannah@dcadoptionlaw.com](mailto:hannah@dcadoptionlaw.com).

## 1997

**MICHAEL CHIANTELLA** (SF) has been practicing law for three years. "Started my own firm in 2004 in the lovely seaside town of Venice, Florida. In October of 2005, my wife and I attended the wedding of **TAFFETA ELLIOTT** (SF97) in New York City.

**DOMINIC CRAPUCHETTES** (A) is enjoying the life of an entrepreneur: "North Star Games is now putting on corporate team-building events and monthly trivia nights at several local bars. These events are a blast! Come join us. You can learn about them at [www.North-StarGames.com](http://www.North-StarGames.com)." Sales of "Wits and Wagers," he notes, have picked up dramatically since the game was featured in *Time*, *Games Magazine*, *Knucklebones*, and other media.

**ARAND PIERCE** (SF98) graduated from the University of New Mexico Medical School May 12. He also was presented with an award for academic, research and service excellence May 11 at a public ceremony at the UNM Health Sciences Center.

## 1998

**RICK FIELD** (SF) recently published a children's book, *Momma, Momma Brown Toes*. The book is a collection of poems and pictures inspired by his eight-year-old daughter, Amanda.

## 1999

**GREG KOEHLERT** (SFGI) wants all his old friends to know that he and Merrie have bought an apartment in Park Slope in Brooklyn. Also, Greg and Merrie's daughter is turning one around Thanksgiving.

**PATRICK BARRINGTON REED** (AGI) writes: "Our first baby, Lucille Lahja Reed, was born June 17, 2005. Now, we move in April to Bitburg, Germany—thanks to the Air Force. We expect to be on hand at the World Cup this summer and at the Tour de France in July. May God bless St. John's College!"

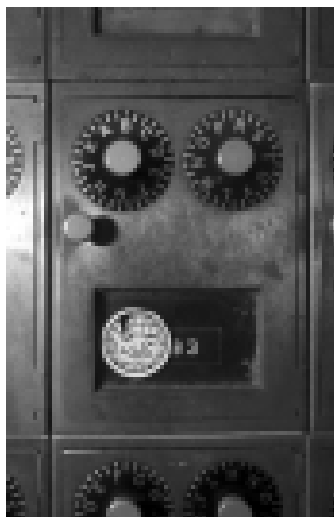
"It's been 10 years since I last saw most of you, and I hope life is treating you well," writes **BENJAMIN THORNER** (A). "After leaving St. John's in '96, I transferred to Guilford College, a Quaker school in North Carolina. While there, I met my fiancée, Eva, whom I'm marrying this July. I graduated from seminary in 2004 and I'm now the pastor of a Quaker church. While my time at St. John's was quite brief, I really value the friendships that I made there. Let's get back in touch!"

## 2000

**ZACHARY WARZEL** and **ERIKA CARLSON** (both SF) were married in August 2005 in Colorado, their new home after a move from New York City in May 2005. Erika received a master's degree in historic preservation from Columbia University in May 2005 and is working as a preservation specialist at Humphries Poli Architects in Denver. Zach received a law degree from Brooklyn Law School in May 2005 and is currently working as a litigation associate at Roberts



## No MAIL?



HAVE YOUR FELLOW JOHNNIES LOST TRACK OF YOU? RECONNECT WITH YOUR CLASSMATES BY JOINING THE ONLINE ALUMNI COMMUNITY AT [WWW.STJOHNSCOLLEGE.EDU](http://WWW.STJOHNSCOLLEGE.EDU); CLICK ON FOR ALUMNI AND FOLLOW THE LINKS FROM THERE. MORE THAN 3,000 ALUMNI HAVE REGISTERED FOR THE COMMUNITY. JOHNNIES CAN ALSO SIGN UP TO RECEIVE A FREE ST. JOHN'S E-MAIL ADDRESS FOR LIFE, POST RESUMES OR JOB OPENINGS THROUGH THE CAREER SERVICES SECTION, FIND OUT WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THEIR LOCAL CHAPTERS, AND REGISTER FOR EVENTS ONLINE.

Levin & Patterson in Denver, a plaintiffs' litigation firm.

**CHRISTOPHER VAUGHAN** (A) continues to work with his older brother, renovating old houses. He is engaged to **ASHLEY BROOK TYLER** (Ao7) and is taking classes at a local college to prepare for grad school.

"I have been accepted into the University of Tennessee's College of Veterinary Medicine and will be starting that program in the fall," writes **BEN YOUNG** (A). "My wife and our dogs still have not tired of my stories from St. John's."

## 2001

**DANIEL FRAM** (SF) reports that he is "living cheap in Boston; playing the now smoke-free Irish pubs and sneaking into classes on ethics."

**JESSICA K. REITZ** (A) and Christopher Wallace proudly announce the birth of their first son, William Alexander Wallace, born March 21, 2006.

## 2002

**ALANA** and **JOEY CHERNILLA** (both SF) had their second little girl, Rose Isabella, in February. Sadie Pearl recently turned two. "Besides enjoying our intense domesticity, Joey runs a daycare, and I work in publishing and tutor home-schoolers in Euclid," Alana writes.

**MEGAN GRAFF** (A) writes: "After a few years spent working in what is laughably known as 'the real world,' I will begin attending the North Carolina School of the Arts this fall as an MFA candidate in Performing Arts Management."

**ERIN KRASNIEWICZ** (A) is living in Philadelphia with **RANDY PENNELL** (also Ao2) and working as a library research assistant for the Pew Charitable Trusts. "This is really the time to be in Philadelphia, which is undergoing a renaissance of sorts," she writes. "Drop us a line if you'd like to see the sights, we love to show off our city."

**GEORGE NELSON** and **MONICA ANATALIO** (both A) are getting married this August in downtown Washington, D.C., and will be honeymooning in Rome and Athens. George is in his first year at American University's Washington College of Law and will be pursuing the litigation track.

Monica is graduating from Catholic University's Columbus School of Law and will be an attorney for the U.S. Government Accountability Office, the investigatory arm of Congress.

## 2003

**CORINNE HUTCHINSON** (SF) and **PAUL OBRECHT** (SF02) are getting married in Santa Fe this coming spring.

**KATE REDDING** (A) is enrolled at the University of Western Ontario in Canada, where she is studying for a certification in piano technology.

**ISAAC SMITH** (A) is going to the University of Maryland this fall to begin studies toward a master's degree in public policy. He writes, "Johnnies in the D.C. area interested in politics, policy, the old days, or anything else should drop me a line at [ikesmith@gmail.com](mailto:ikesmith@gmail.com)."

## 2004

After her retirement from St. John's a few years ago, **GINGER ROHERTY** (HSF) is now director of development for the Santa Fe Children's Museum.

**DOUGLAS C. TURNER** (A, aka Rex Nerdorum, Archon of Melee) married **DARLENE B. ROGERS** (Ao5) on September 3, 2005, in Alford, Mass., Rev. David Rogers, father of the bride, presiding. Several Johnnies were in attendance, women in various green costumes and men in tuxedos, armed with broadswords for the ceremonial arch. The honeymoon in London included *Phantom of the Opera* and two plays at the Globe, *Pericles* and *The Tempest*. The newlyweds live in Annapolis. Darlene works for

Coldwell Banker in Annapolis, and Douglas works as a court reporter for a firm in Washington, D.C. ✨

## 2005

**CYNTHIA BARRY** (AGI) has recently completed text-editing the *National Geographic Collegiate Atlas of the World*, to be published in fall 2006. She and **ANDREW ROMITI** (Ao6) are currently conducting Touchstones discussions with middle-schoolers at St. Martin's-in-the-Field Day School in Severna Park, Md., where Ms. Barry is the librarian. ✨

## 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 August 1.

IN ANNAPOLIS:  
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## THE SECRET LIVES OF CRABS

*Biologist Denise Pope (SF89) Finds the Charisma in Animals*

BY ERICA NAONE (AO5)

Studying individual fiddler crabs is interesting to biologist Denise Pope (SF89). But what she really likes to do is get them in a group, stand back, and see what develops.

In her research on fiddler crabs, Pope focuses less on the brain and body of a single crab and more on how many crabs interact and communicate. For her, the arthropod's life is as much about its environment and society as it is about its breath, blood, and neural signals. "I enjoy being able to make inferences by watching whole organisms and what they do and how they interact," she explains. "I want to manipulate them just enough to ask questions."

An assistant professor in the biology department at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, Pope spends the academic year communicating her enthusiasm for the life of animals to students. Her summers are spent going to where the crabs are—Panama and Portugal—for example. Days in the field are spent observing animals and recording her observations in the summer sun; during the evenings she enjoys local cuisine and good conversation.

In her classes, Pope teaches students to ask scientific questions and discover answers in the lab. Her research into animal behavior gives her students plenty of opportunity to see science as an undiscovered country. When Pope began studying fiddler crabs, enough was known about the animals to give her a basis for her research, but enough was unknown that Pope had to learn for herself the advantages and disadvantages of studying crabs in captivity.

Pope knew she wanted to study animal behavior since high school. "I was a shy kid," she says, "and gravitated toward animals. Lots of people would say, 'Oh, you must want to be a vet.'"

Through a high-school assignment, Pope found that a person with an interest in animals did not have to become a veterinarian. She discovered the work of



Nikolaas Tinbergen and Konrad Lorenz, two key researchers of animal behavior.

"My reasons for studying animal behavior come from a fascination, appreciation, and love for the natural world for its own sake, not for what it teaches me about myself or my species," Pope says. Though she recognizes commonalities between humans and animals, Pope also notes, "Our culture, society, and our obsessive and intense internal life that enables us to analyze and question our own actions set us apart in some ways from other animals." Because of this, she is careful about comparing human behavior to that of animals.

The breadth of Pope's interests brought her to St. John's for her undergraduate degree. Her teaching philosophy is heavily influenced by her experience at the college, and by seeing the process of discovery rather than only the discovery itself. She wrote her essay on Kant and quantum theory.

"I couldn't get over how much everything is overturned," Pope says, "seeing what a huge shift there was. Quantum mechanics blew me away, but it wasn't just that. I read Joyce for preceptorial, and then we read Nietzsche and Freud. It was the accumulation of it all. There was the building up of this realization that the physical world isn't at all what I thought it was. It epitomizes the sense of science as natural philosophy."

Soon after graduation, Pope worked for the GenBank Project in Los Alamos National Laboratory, which paid for biology

WHEN SHE'S NOT DOING FIELD WORK, DENISE POPE SHARES THE ST. JOHN'S METHOD OF INQUIRY WITH HER STUDENTS AT TRINITY UNIVERSITY: ASK QUESTIONS AND TALK IT THROUGH.

classes that allowed her to prepare for the Graduate Record Exam. She enrolled in Duke University, where she earned her Ph.D. in zoology in 1998.

At Duke, Pope discovered her love of fiddler crabs. Having begun with the study of birdsong,

the typical focus of scientists with her type of interest, she found herself feeling discouraged.

"It seemed as if everyone else had perfect pitch and an excellent sense of acoustics," Pope says. "... I decided I was more visual and wanted to look at visual signaling."

A friend pointed her toward fiddler crabs because the males have an enlarged claw that they wave in a visual display, "which is presumed to attract females for mating." "They're surprisingly entertaining and charismatic animals," she says.

This experience of science as hands-on, a work-in-progress, full of unknowns and the need for ingenuity, is an experience she tries to re-create in her classes. She gives her students a great deal of autonomy in the lab, autonomy she knows can be daunting before becoming liberating. She is also helping to redesign introductory biology courses at Trinity, reshaping them to emphasize the questioning and searching of real science.

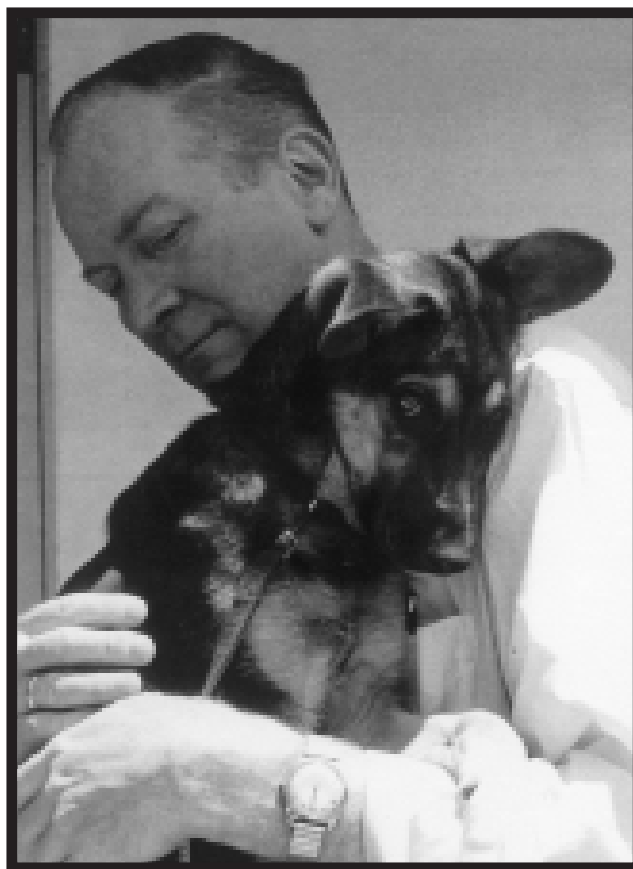
With such an intense and busy working life, Pope pursues a more relaxing schedule outside academe. She read Gregory Maguire's *Wicked* during breaks from a symposium she recently attended in Japan. She has three cats at home and loves to cook. Though she learned to cook red and green chili and *posole* after the time she spent in Santa Fe, Pope has given up cooking New Mexican dishes for friends, offering Tex-Mex instead. "They can't take the heat," she says. ❀

## REMEMBERING TOM McDONALD

*Thomas McDonald, who was a tutor for 33 years in Annapolis and Santa Fe, died in December 2005. His former student and good friend John White (class of 1964) prepared this remembrance of Mr. McDonald for a memorial service that was held in Baltimore earlier this year:*

Tom was the best teacher I had. He was the most intelligent man I've ever known, and he was the best educated. His memory was extraordinary, but it never seemed to be just a scholar's memory. It was part of his living and thinking, a "human" memory; he was never showy or pedantic. His personality was compelling. His classes were intense, but relieved by bursts of laughter. Whatever you studied with him was worth your best effort, but being serious is not the same as being grim. His classes were long and often exhausting because of the nervous stimulation of concentration. I felt I was asked to give all I could and felt "used up" and elated. I learned more, and more quickly, than from any other academic experience. Tom somehow elicited his fierce attention and urgency without using anything that might lead to argument rather than thought. My contact with him as a teacher had a beginning and end. Although I never stopped learning from him (and [his wife] Julia), he became a friend as well.

In the fall of 1964, Tom's second year at St. John's, Ed Weinberger (class of 1965), a classmate, gathered a group of students to read a Kant essay with Tom. I didn't know Tom at the time . . . We met in Tom's apartment at 214 Prince George Street. The day was cold and the room was very hot. Tom's voice was soft and monotonous. The building was old and the windows had the old glass, the glass of uneven thickness and bubbles. I stared outside, slowly moving my head back and forth, watching the trees the cars ripple and wobble. Then a word or an intonation caught my attention. By chance I actually heard two or three sentences. At first they were strange sounding, difficult, then



*"He helped you to see things clearly from all sides, to keep the difficulties in mind while not being over-powered by them."*

JOHN WHITE

they became clear, then they became thrilling. I had a moment where I lost my orientation, even got a little dizzy: This man was saying wonderful things in an unemphatic way. Why wasn't he shouting and gesturing? Strange man.

In the next years he gave many of these extra classes on diverse subjects such as poetry, mathematics, Latin, and German. All faculty members were generous with

JOHNNIES ADMIRER TOM McDONALD (CLASS OF 1948, SHOWN HERE WITH HIS DOG BELLE) FOR HIS BRILLIANCE, HIS SENSE OF HUMOR, AND HIS HUMILITY.

their time, but no faculty member had done so much teaching "just because people wanted to learn." He did all of this and advised 6-10 senior essays each year, until his health gave out.

After that first Kant class, a group of us asked Tom to give a preceptorial on Hegel. Hegel was a daring choice (in a teeny-tiny way): for some reason, without exception, the faculty was against German philosophy and Hegel. They made fun of Hegel. Not only was there no serious effort to understand Hegel, there was pride in claiming not to understand him. *The Philosophy of History* was read in senior seminar at that time. The book encouraged students to produce grandiose historical statements, the kind of statements that their freshman

seminar leaders had convinced them not to make.

The preceptorial meetings always ran longer than the scheduled time—partly because at the beginning of class Tom always came 10-15 minutes late, partly because at the end of class Tom took 5-10 minutes to decide on the next reading, but mostly because we never looked at the clock. We never stopped in the middle of a conversation. After the preceptorial was over, we gathered around Tom to ask more questions. Tom loved to think; he couldn't stop. He had patience and concentration beyond anything I'd ever experienced. Once when I was on my way to a one o'clock class, I saw him and a student standing on the corner of College Avenue and Prince George Street, deep in conversation despite the falling snow. And when I left two hours later, they were still there, still talking, brushing snow off their sleeves.

In class Tom spoke more directly than my other teachers. But he was not gathering disciples, even though he was much admired. He always made one feel that the material was important and subtle, and it needed and deserved serious effort. Usually his students did not know what Tom's opinion was. He helped you to see things clearly from all sides, to keep the difficulties in mind while not being overpowered by them.

After the Hegel preceptorial, I asked Tom to advise my senior essay. We talked at length and he came up with a suggestion that allowed me to pursue several of the things I was interested in. We had to consider passages from four or five Platonic dialogues and some Hegel. The plan was exciting. Up until that time at St. John's I had had only three or four paper conferences. But now I met with Tom two or three times a week, and the meetings lasted two to four hours. Sometimes I went there in the afternoon, worked on revisions, was invited to dinner, then started to work again. (Julia also helped me.)

I had never worked so long or so hard on one thing; new standards and habits began to take hold. We worked on my essay beyond the deadline—one week, then two weeks, all the time the dean giving me looks. But I couldn't actually get the essay from Tom, who saw new paths, better ways of interpreting and explaining. I sort of tricked him to get the paper back and hand it in. (I think he was not a fan of finishing things.)

Between the end of essay writing and the end of the year, I saw another side of Tom. One Friday afternoon, I was in lab, in the midst of a long discussion. Ed Weinberger opened the door and interrupted the class. "Excuse me, is John White in this class?" I raised my hand. Ed said, "You have an important call at the switchboard. Could you come with me?" As we walked down the hall, Ed told me not to worry; "McDonald and I wanted to play Monopoly and we need you." We played a lot of Monopoly at that time (driving Julia crazy). I learned from Tom that the best properties on the board were Tennessee, New York, and St. James. I also

learned that Tom had a dark side. He said that during a game his motives were greed and spite, no more, no less: he bought every property he landed on—even pathetic Waterworks—because 1) he wanted it for himself and 2) he didn't want anyone else to get it. At graduation several of his students got together and gave Tom a present to thank him for a wonderful year: an 8" x 11" card for Boardwalk . . .

I think of Tom as liberal, generous in his actions and judgments. He was free with his time and his mind to those who sought him out. He didn't care for foolish, shallow people. He liked people who worked intensely and liked to laugh. To be serious is not to be grim. He was side-splittingly funny at times. He was intelligent, well-educated, serious, witty, good company—also unusual, different, and even eccentric. But whenever you talked to him, after five minutes, you felt, "This is what sanity is, this is the way a human mind was meant to work." ❖

## { O B I T U A R I E S }

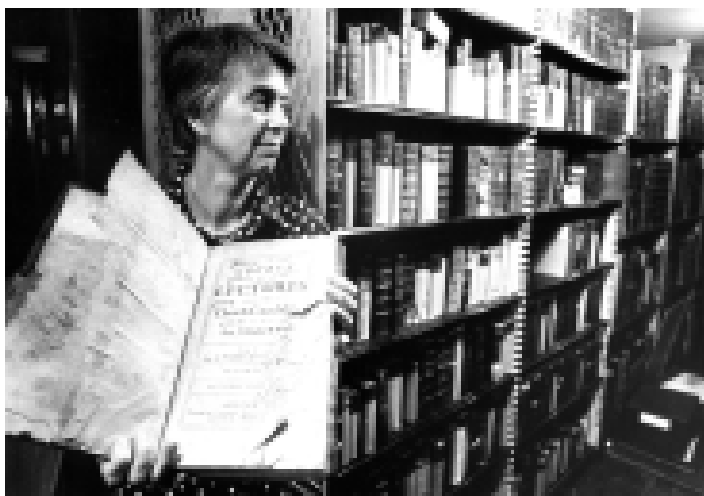
### CHARLOTTE FLETCHER, HA69

Charlotte Goldsborough Fletcher (HA69), former librarian of St. John's College in Annapolis, died of pneumonia March 29, 2006, at the age of 90. After her retirement in 1981, she pursued a scholarly interest in the early history of the college and published several works, including *St. John's Forever: Five Essays on the History of St. John's College* and *Cato's Mirania: A Life of Provost Smith*.

In one of her essays, Miss Fletcher made the most solid case yet for explaining how St. John's got its name. Many hours spent poring through the Maryland and St. John's archives led her to conclude that St. John's was likely named by Masons involved in the founding of the college for St. John the Evangelist—perhaps to honor George Washington. "It is hard to understand why a cloud of mystery has ever since enveloped the circumstances of the naming," Miss Fletcher wrote. "But if Masons were responsible, one could expect

secrecy about their role. Discretion . . . is the first of the Masonic virtues."

Miss Fletcher was born in Cambridge, Md., in 1915. She earned her bachelor's degree from Hollins College and a bachelor's in library science from Columbia University, both in 1939. Miss Fletcher was conferred with a Master of Arts, *honoris causa*, from St. John's when Woodward Hall was rededicated on October 18, 1969.



After several years at the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, she became librarian of the Talbot County Free Library. In July 1944 she began 37 years of service to St. John's College. She retired in 1981, but as she lived close to the college, was a frequent visitor to campus.

Miss Fletcher was a favorite of students and faculty. During the years before the Naval Academy-St. John's croquet matches, Miss Fletcher kept her own croquet set at the library and was always willing to lend it to students—often with the stipulation that she be invited to join them. Although normally a gentle, soft-spoken person, on the croquet court she took no prisoners. In addition to croquet, she

LONGTIME ST. JOHN'S LIBRARIAN CHARLOTTE FLETCHER DISPLAYS A BOOK FROM THE ST. JOHN'S "CAGE" IN THE MARYLAND STATE ARCHIVES BUILDING, LATER TO BECOME THE GREENFIELD LIBRARY, IN 1974. MISS FLETCHER PURSUED A SPECIAL INTEREST IN THE COLLEGE'S HISTORY.



instructed generations of students in the esoteric art of bookbinding.

Miss Fletcher traveled widely with her sister, Mary Henry Fletcher, who died earlier this year. At the time of her death she was planning another trip to Europe and in the midst of writing a second book, a collection of short stories.

The college plans a memorial service for Miss Fletcher in the fall.

—ROSE WYNN

#### **ARCHER JONES, CLASS OF 1947**

Archer Jones, Class of 1947, died in Richmond, Va., on January 23, 2006. Mr. Jones enrolled in St. John's in July of 1943. After three years at the college he was drafted into the Army in 1946. After his discharge in 1947, Mr. Jones, apprehensive about taking the enabling examinations after such a long break, transferred to Hampden-Sydney College, graduating in 1949.

He then enrolled in the University of Virginia's law school, but later decided to pursue his deep attachment to history. He received a doctorate in history from UVA in 1958 and launched a career as a teacher, academic administrator, and author. He taught at the University of Virginia, Hampden-Sydney, Randolph-Macon Women's College, and the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The capstone of his teaching career was his service as Morrison Professor of History at the U.S. Army's Command and Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Mr. Jones held a number of key academic posts: dean of Clinch Valley College of the University of Virginia; founder of the Department of History and Political Science at Virginia Tech; associate dean of the University of South Carolina; and for many years, dean of the College of Humanities, Social Sciences, Business Administration, and Education at North Dakota State University.

He was a prolific and prize-winning writer in the field of military history. He was the co-author of: *Politics of Command*; *How the North Won*; and *Why the South Lost*. His magnum opus was *The Art of War in the Western World*.

Mr. Jones is survived by his wife, Joanne Leach Jones, a son, and two grandchildren.

Ever a loyal St. John's alumnus, Mr. Jones felt that whatever success and recognition he may have achieved were the direct result of his undergraduate studies in the New

Program. He always expressed great affection for the college and his fellow Johnnies, and was a frequent attendee of homecomings and a generous contributor to various St. John's fundraising efforts.

—GEORGE M. VAN SANT, CLASS OF 1947

#### **EDWARD LATHROP, CLASS OF 1938**

Edward Flint "Ned" Lathrop died April 8, 2006, in Annapolis. He was a decorated Naval officer and a St. John's tutor who also taught mathematics. As director of athletics, he organized the intramural program at St. John's.

Capt. Lathrop spent two years at the Coast Guard Academy before transferring to St. John's. He joined the St. John's faculty and taught until 1941 before enlisting in the Navy. During World War II he served aboard submarines in the Pacific and was awarded the Bronze Star and Silver Star medals.

After the war he rejoined the St. John's faculty in 1945, where he remained until 1950 before returning to active duty in the Navy. At the time of his retirement in 1965, he was commanding officer of the Naval Reserve Training Center in Baltimore.

In 1965 Capt. Lathrop began teaching mathematics at the Landon School in Bethesda, Md. He created Landon's first varsity lacrosse team and served as head coach until 1974, when he returned to Annapolis.

#### **MERLE SHORE, CLASS OF 1954**

A gathering in honor of Merle Shore, a member of the class of 1954 who became a noted artist and art director, will be held at the home of tutor Sam Kutler and his wife, Emily (classes of 1954 and '55), during Homecoming Weekend 2006 in Annapolis. Mr. Shore died January 28, 2006, in Santa Barbara, Calif., at the age of 86.

After serving in the Navy for five years during World War II, Mr. Shore started his own graphic and commercial art studio in Hollywood, Calif. In 1950, at age 31, he fulfilled a lifelong ambition to attend St. John's and put his art career on hold while he immersed himself in the Program.

After graduating from St. John's, Mr. Shore resumed his professional art career in Santa Barbara. Mr. Shore served as art director for Frank Sinatra's Reprise label, as well as art director for Verve and Warner Brothers, where he also illustrated album covers. He illustrated for magazines including *Esquire*, *Playboy*, *Saturday Evening Post*, and

*Atlantic Monthly*. He did book illustrations and commercial advertising. His artistic talents extended to the cinema as well; he designed graphics for the films *Manchurian Candidate* and *Spartacus*. He was also a serious painter.

Mr. Shore is survived by his wife, Priscilla Bender-Shore (class of 1955), whom he married in 1951 and who attended St. John's with him, a daughter, son, son-in-law, three grandchildren and two brothers.

For details on the luncheon gathering, contact Mr. Kutler at: 410-263-2261, or by e-mail at: reltuk@comcast.nrt.

#### **ALEX MAGOSCI, SF89**

Alex Magosci, SF89, died Friday, March 24, 2006, in Santa Fe. Born in New York and raised in Dallas, Mr. Magosci was an accomplished writer and musician who made many friends, especially in the music scene in Santa Fe. After graduating from St. John's in 1989, he became music editor for *The Dallas Observer*. He moved back to Santa Fe in 1990 and later became an editor and columnist for the Santa Fe *New Mexican*. He was a drummer for a number of rock groups both in Dallas and Santa Fe.

#### **ALSO NOTED:**

**JOHN BRUNN** (class of 1947), Jan. 17, 2006

**D. MASON CHEEZUM** (class of 1933), Feb. 2, 2006

**BRUCE COLLIER** (class of 1965), March 26, 2006

**THE REV. FREDERICK P. DAVIS** (class of 1949), Jan. 7, 2006

**THOMAS G. FROMME** (class of 1950), March 31, 2006

**MICHAEL F. GRAY** (SGI84), Jan. 29, 2005

**MARK HABREL** (SF75), March 10, 2006

**THOMAS JUSKEVICH** (A03), March 15, 2006

**LAWRENCE KANTOR** (class of 1935), Feb. 20, 2006

**HAROLD MILSTEAD** (class of 1937), March 23, 2006

**RALPH RACE** (class of 1930), died February 20, 2006

**STEWART A. WASHBURN** (class of 1951), Feb. 17, 2006

**INA WUNDRAM** (SFCI97), Jan. 18, 2006

# SWEET VICTORY

Jeremy Coy (Ao6) never dreamed he'd get to be "the man." He had never been hoisted atop the shoulders of a little league team after hitting the winning home-run, never doused with Gatorade after scoring the winning touchdown.

But thanks to croquet, Coy got to be a sports hero. Three-and-a-half hours into the annual contest with Navy, the Johnnies had won two matches, and a tense match was unfolding between Coy and Mac Ward (Ao6) and their Navy opponents. The Mids were determined to try to take the Annapolis Cup for the second straight year. Coy was in position to make the winning shot. With Zen-like concentration, he took the mallet into his hands . . . and had ESPN been there, this is what he would have told the interviewer:

"I had gone through all my wickets, so all I had to do was finish. There's a rule that if the other team knocks your ball into the stake, then you lose two turns, and you have to go to the other end of the court, hit that stake and then go back down and hit the

other stake. That happened; Navy staked me out. So, on my first turn after sitting out, I took a shot to go to the other end of the court, and that turned out nicely. Navy set themselves right in front of the wickets that they needed to go through next, and they were halfway back to the finishing stake. They could have won.

"The closest ball to me was blue. But it was probably about 20- to 30-feet away—the Hail Mary shot of croquet. On my turn—what actually turned out to be the actual last turn—I took probably an eight-foot shot to hit the stake. Because I hit the stake, I got an extra shot. The first plan that presented itself was to rocket my ball to the other end of the court so I could be close to that stake. But Navy was guarding that stake, so there was a chance of being staked out again.

"As I was setting myself up to take that shot, suddenly Plan B arose, and I saw blue, lodged in his wicket. That was the long shot. I struck the ball—it was a leap of faith shot. I worried I hadn't put enough on it, but it took the perfect little curve and hit blue—the crowd erupted, this was huge!

"So, I had a second shot on them, and now I had to get to black, all the way over on the other side of the court. I reared back, put as much as I could into it, somehow it bounced off a nearby wicket, and struck black! Now I had two more shots, and this serene calm. Since Navy had been sticklers about the quiver rule [when two balls are in contact, the striking player must make the opponent's ball quiver], I was careful when I

hit the ball. But my ball ended much farther from the stake. All I had to do was hit the stake and win the game. I bent down on one knee. I could hear people on the sidelines. I reared back, hit the ball, hit the stake, Mac rushed at me, people were swarming, and my glasses were lost."

Final score: St. John's 5, Navy 0. ♣



DIMITRI FOTOS

ABOVE: MAC WARD AND GEREMY COY (BOTH Ao6) PONDER THEIR STRATEGY; AT LEFT: COY CELEBRATES VICTORY. OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE: THE DOBBYN FAMILY, DECKED OUT IN SEERSUCKER SUITS; JACK (Ao2), JOE (Ao5), MIKE (Ao6), AND DICK (Ao6), WITH FUTURE JOHNNIE ALEX DOBBYN; TUTOR CORDELL YEE AND HIS DAUGHTER, BEFORE THE SKIES CLEARED; A NATTY GROUP OF JOHNNIES ENJOY A BEAUTIFUL AFTERNOON; NAVY'S MINIONS AWAIT THEIR DUTIES; PETER KALKAVAGE LEADS THE FRESHMAN CHORUS.



ALEX LORMAN



### THE THEME

Soviet Domination. The team uniforms this year were red t-shirts with the hammer and sickle (croquet mallets taking the place of the hammer).

The team emerged from the Barr-Buchanan Center to the Beatles' "Back in the USSR."

### THE TEAM

Imperial Wicket Matt Mangold (Ao6); Rob Hurst (Ao7); Tommy Dyer (Ao6); Micah Beck (Ao9); Ian Hanover (Ao8); Charlie Fleming (Ao8); Mac Ward (Ao6); Jeremy Coy (Ao6); Paul Patrone (Ao6); Andrew MacKinlay (Ao6); Will Kelly (Ao7); and Dan Houck (Ao6).

### THE TOUCH OF IRONY

As part of the croquet tradition, the Imperial Wicket went to the Naval Academy the Friday before the match to speak to the Corps of Midshipman at lunch in the mess hall following their noontime formation. In keeping with the Soviet theme the Johnnies adopted, Matt Mangold read two pages of excerpts from the *Communist Manifesto*. But not a word could be heard above the din of the Middies, hooting, hollering, and banging their silverware against their plates and on the tables. (It is another good-natured part of the tradition for the Corps to shout down the Johnnie.) "It was hard to pass up the chance—so rich with irony—to read Karl Marx to this room of some 4,000 screaming midshipmen," said Mangold. ❖



## FROM THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

I recently made my pledge to the college's Capital Campaign, and I am hoping you will, too! As my non-Johnnie husband and I talked about our gift, I had a chance to articulate for him the several reasons that I wanted to give the largest gift we could afford.



First, I hope that generations of eager readers and talkers can immerse themselves in the St. John's Program long into the future. I want to help ensure that others have the same opportunity I had when I went to college to engage with the books and fellow students as we learned about ourselves, each other, and the most profound questions. I feel honor-bound to help others share this experience.

Second, I see my gift as an acknowledgment of the people at the college who taught me so much. Tutors, administrators, and fellow students all shared their questions and emerging answers with me. I want to say "thank you" to one particular tutor who read my Kant essay, gave me a copy of Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*, and sent me home to rewrite and rethink it. I can name the people who influenced me, just as I'm

sure you can name those who were important in your time at St. John's. Conversations with these people were most intense while I was on campus, but they have continued through the years and (I expect) will carry on through my lifetime.

Third, I wish to help make an investment in the physical and fiscal infrastructure that supports the college. As a student I had little appreciation for the practical side of the college community. I didn't know (or care) what it cost to house and feed us, to maintain a committed faculty, and to take care of the myriad challenges of daily life. Today I appreciate the institutional needs and monetary necessities of sustaining a community like St. John's, and I want to do what I can so those on the campuses can focus on the work that really matters—reading and talking about the books.

Finally, my gift is, in part, a thank-you to those alumni and friends of St. John's who have made leadership gifts to the campaign. We have received some remarkable gifts from individuals with much greater giving capacity than mine. My gift is one way I can thank them for their commitment to the college's community, institution, and Program. They have invested in our college because they believe in our principles and want to help perpetuate this special way of learning and teaching. With my gift, I want to thank everyone who invests in St. John's.

There are many other reasons for me and probably for you, too:

- Foundations are impressed and give more when a high percentage of alumni participate in giving to the college.
- Government support for private colleges is dwindling or being redirected.

- Many students who want and would benefit from a St. John's education struggle to make ends meet.
- Giving to the college keeps me connected with a community of people I admire and enjoy.
- I see a new level of strength and stability in college staff and leadership.
- I am concerned about the state of the public discourse across the country, and I think the college offers a good alternative to dogma and demagoguery.
- I want to be sure that when I come back for my 40th, 50th, and 60th reunions the college is there to greet me—stronger than ever.

The Alumni Association is independent of the college, and as an organization we focus on serving the constituency of the alumni (as opposed to being organizationally focused on fundraising). We provide opportunities for alumni to engage in many ways that do not involve financial support. On the other hand, the Alumni Association board recognizes the significance of this campaign and is committed to supporting the "clear and single purpose." The board has approved a campaign gift of \$75,000 to support the college's new online alumni community (click on "For Alumni" on the college's Web site) and endowment for scholarships. We also expect that every one of the 47 members of the Alumni Association board will make a personal pledge to support the campaign. Please join us. Whatever your reasons, I'm sure they are compelling. Thank you for all the ways you support the college!

Glenda Eoyang (SF76)

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## EVA IN ISRAEL

Annapolis tutor Eva Brann was asked to lecture at the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities in January. She spoke on Plato's *Republic* and the next day took part in a seminar with members of the Philosophy Department of the Hebrew University. "It began wonderfully when a professor said, 'I will tell you the difference between a Socratic conversation and a Talmudic discussion. In the first, Socrates and his partners all come knowing nothing and they leaving knowing nothing, friends as before. In the second, the rabbis come each with his opinion and they leave each with that opinion, friends as before.'"

The college knows of 23 alumni living in Israel. Miss Brann had an opportunity to meet about half of them at a lively dinner in Jerusalem. "One, Jed Arkin (A85), made himself my special host, and we did something marvelous," Miss Brann says. "We—he and his lovable two sons and his army pal and I—went to the Negev, the beautiful desert in southern Israel. We went in two jeeps, intercom, mini-Uzi, water and all, but the land was empty and grand." ❀

## WEST COAST JOHNNIES

Dedicated volunteers have always been the hallmark of strong alumni chapters, and Elizabeth Eastman (SFGI84), president of the Southern California Chapter for the past six years, is no exception. "I've always been looking for ways to extend the mission of St. John's outside the boundaries of the Annapolis and Santa Fe campuses," says Eastman, "Alumni chapters can play a critical role in extending the college's reach."

Six years ago, Eastman, with the help of Susan Allen (SGI89), a member of the college's Board of Visitors and Governors, reinvigorated the Southern California chapter, drawing members from a wide geographic area that was once served by three chapters. "There is an enormous challenge here because of the distances people have to travel and the traffic. To make this viable we had to select a central location, the Westwood area of Los Angeles, and the time we picked, Sunday afternoon, is also dictated by the



A DESERT WANDERER: TUTOR EVA BRANN WITH TAL AND MATIN ARKIN, SONS OF JED ARKIN (A85), IN THE NEGEV LAST WINTER.

traffic," says Eastman. Members, who include Benjamin Friedman (SF95), Dierdre Lenihan (A67), and Amy Cooper (SF75), come from Los Angeles as well as areas such as Claremont, 40 miles east, Santa Barbara, 90 miles north, and Orange, about 32 miles southeast.

The geographic spread of the chapter's area also dictates the kinds of events the chapter can hold. "We don't have signature events like wine tastings and cultural activities. We are solely a reading group," says Eastman. "It can take some members longer to travel here than they're here for the seminar, so we have a potluck following it to make it worthwhile. It is a contrast to New York chapter, for instance, where they have ease of access to the downtown area."

Eastman mails postcard reminders one month prior to each gathering, inviting alumni, friends of the college, and also participants in the Summer Classics program offered at Santa Fe. Alumni—about half are from Annapolis and half from Santa Fe—bring along significant others, spouses, and friends for the monthly two-hour seminar which focuses on a reading chosen the month before. This spring, the Southern California chapter discussed Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* in March, and in April they will discuss "The Concept of the Political." "It's a short political tract that Carl Schmitt wrote during the Weimar period in Germany after World War I,

but prior to Hitler's rise to power," says Eastman.

The person who chooses the reading typically leads the seminar, says Eastman. About half of the readings are from the St. John's curriculum, including the Eastern Classics program. "We talk about life experiences," says Eastman. "It is not uncommon to have someone from every decade, back to the 1940s. This makes for a fabulous discussion with different perspectives from different generations, and yet age is transcended."

Benjamin Friedman, who grew up in Santa Fe, where his mother worked at the college and both his parents attended the Graduate Institute, agrees, "It's very interesting having seminars with a more diverse group than I had as an undergrad; the maturity of the participants make for some fascinating and surprising discussions. I run into people at the seminars who babysat me when they were students, or were the parents of children I played with during the summer GI sessions oh so many years ago. I always wonder who I'll encounter from my past when I walk into a seminar."

Over the years the chapter members have invited tutors to lead their discussions, among them Eva Brann, Frank Pagano, John Balkcom (SFGI00), and Sam Kutler (class of 1954). "We also had Danielle Allen, (Susan Allen's daughter and a professor of classics at the University of Chicago) lead a seminar on her book *Talking to Strangers*. I actually went to the St. John's summer day camp in Santa Fe with Danielle when we were both kids and her mom was in the GI," says Friedman.

Eastman, a busy mother of two who has a master's degree in political science, will step down this spring as president of the Southern California chapter. But she'll always make time for seminars with other Johnnies. "The opportunity to have a conversation is so welcome, it brings balance to my life," she says. ❀

## SUMMER IN SANTA FE: GREAT BOOKS, GREAT FRIENDS

Through the Summer Alumni Program in Santa Fe, alumni from both campuses can spend a week revisiting a favorite Program work, discussing something they've never read before with other Johnnies, painting, listening to opera, and enjoying the company of others who love books and ideas. The program this year starts Sunday, July 23, and runs through Friday, July 29, when Homecoming begins. To find out more about the program, visit the college Web site: [www.stjohnscollege.edu](http://www.stjohnscollege.edu); click on "Alumni" and follow the link to the "Summer Alumni Program." More information is available by calling the Santa Fe Alumni office at 505-984-6103. Two avid participants of the Summer Alumni Program shared their thoughts on what makes the week worthwhile.

### "REVELLING IN ART"

*Elizabeth Pollard Jenny (SF80), an artist who lives in Boulder, Co., brings art to participants in the Summer Alumni Program.*

In 1995, I noticed that St. John's was offering alumni the chance to return to Santa Fe for a week with fellow alumni from all different years and from both campuses to study together. This seemed to me like a way to really keep the conversation going. St. John's alumni leave the college with the message that we are the enduring community of the college. I have always construed being a Johnnie to mean being a life-long learner who keeps the conversation going, in our world and in our college community.

I responded to the mailer because, along with giving me an opportunity to check in with my fellow alumni, it offered me the chance to study art in one of the art capitals of the United States. That summer, I was fortunate to take the seminar, practicum, and lecture with tutors Charles Bell and Steve Houser, and with Steve's wife, Michelle Bender. Steve and Michelle designed the art tutorial in Santa Fe. In addition, John Agresto, then president of the Santa Fe campus, took Alumni Program and Summer Classics participants on a tour of Hispanic religious folk art in Chimayo, Taos, and Truchas.



CATCH UP WITH FRIENDS THIS JULY IN SANTA FE. REGISTER BY JUNE 30 FOR THE SUMMER ALUMNI PROGRAM.

In addition to sharing his knowledge about the artwork, John showed us a great restaurant along the Rio Grande, where we stopped and had fresh trout for lunch.

During another summer, I took the course offerings that focused on issues relating to consciousness, artificial intelligence, and optics, with one of my former tutors, Phil Chandler (A68), and his son. The Alumni Program has been a wonderful way to revisit familiar friends and places, but it has also been a way to meet new people and explore new paths in this Johnnie enterprise of learning together.

That brings me to my role as offering an art practicum to alumni through the Summer Alumni Program. To me, painting in and around Santa Fe with fellow alumni is like a dream come true. Add to this that you are in Santa Fe, you can see contemporary art shown in local galleries, and you can meet artistic alumni during the All-Alumni Art Show.

With tutor Phil LeCuyer, this year I will be leading the practicum side of "Plein-Air Painting as Practice and Reflection." The program includes seminar discussions of the nature of perception and the role of visual art in the formation of our language of perception. Complementing seminar

discussion, the practicum brings participants to paint outside at some of the most compelling sites in Santa Fe. Guided gallery tours will provide an opportunity to revel in contemporary and classic Western art. No painting experience is required.

This year's other offerings are: Descartes' *Discourse on Method*, led by tutor Sam Kutler (class of 1954) and the Book of Job and Karl Jung's "Answer to Job," led by tutors Keri Ames and Jessica Jerome.

### "THERE'S A SPECIAL CONVERSATION"

*Mary Fisher (AG192) of Ontario, N.Y., will attend the Summer Alumni Program for her fifth straight year.*

After I graduated from the Graduate Institute in 1992, I received information about the Summer Alumni Program. I thought it would be a dream come true to reconnect with the college and have enriching conversations with Johnnies. There's a special kind of conversation that we develop among ourselves, and it's a wonderful way to encounter other human beings.

In 2002, I thought, "If I don't start doing it, when will I do it?" It's not easy to make these treks, but since my oldest son and his family live in Colorado, I can get to Santa Fe on my trips to visit them. As I considered signing up for the first year, the thing that really clinched it for me was that Eva Brann and David Carl were leading a discussion on the *Republic* and I had the never had the opportunity take a seminar with Miss Brann.

And there was Mozart's *Così fan Tutte*, with Peter Pesic. I'm a musician, so that was a joy. One of the wonderful things about the Summer Alumni Program is that we have access to Santa Fe Opera tickets at a reduced rate.

One summer, as part of the seminar that included plein-air painting with Liz Jenny, we made trips to artists' studios. We were also reading Heidegger and listening to Don Giovanni. I really have a special appreciation for the seminars on the arts. In painting and in sculpture—in all the arts—we find different aspects of the

human community. Last year, I had another seminar with Miss Brann and Mr. Carl, this time on Milton.

What I find really remarkable is that we alumni can encounter each other in conversation about so many different aspects of what life is about, not just in the philosophy and the sciences, but also in the various arts—which in my world is a huge part of what I consider the riches of being on this earth. In a seminar, we don't just look at the structure of the music, we also talk about human themes. That brings me to one of the real riches I find in this kind of alumni encounter. We've gone out into the world, done a multitude of things, and lived all kinds of different lives. That enriches our conversation, but it also gives us an added opportunity to reflect on what our ongoing lives are about.

When we revisit a book such as *The Republic*, we have a wonderful opportunity

to look at larger issues and gain more insight into the work. These books don't stand alone; it's the tutors and the other participants who help lead us to a greater understanding of these ideas.

St. John's is not just a four-year experience. It's the kind of ground on which we build our lives. There's always more to be learned, and there's always something interesting to talk about. We are works in progress. Any of us can become a little harassed by things so that we get hog-tied, like Gulliver being tied down by the Lilliputians. Every summer, we have the opportunity to reacquire ourselves with all the college can offer us. The college arranges this special time just for us alumni.

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ALUMNI FROM BOTH CAMPUSES CHOOSE A THINKING VACATION WITH THE SUMMER ALUMNI PROGRAM.

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It's something much richer, and sustaining and balancing, and it stays with us when we leave. It is nutrition for our mind's eye. We really are privileged to have this opportunity. ❖



## ARE YOU READING?

From Portland, Oregon to Putney, Vermont alumni chapters and groups all over the country continue to “read the books.” Eighteen chapters and three reading groups held events during 2005. In the last four years, several new groups worked with the alumni offices to organize seminars and other events. As one alumna wrote, “Anyone wish to start a reading group? I'm starving for some intellectual discourse.”

Here's a look at some newer locations creating SJC alumni groups:

- The Pittsburgh group became a chapter in 2003 after more than a year of regular activities as a reading group. Though there are fewer than 70 St. John's alumni in their area, they have 6 to 10 people at their monthly events.
- The Western New England reading group has been holding seminars since 2002. In 2005, they had a regular bi-monthly schedule of events for their nearly 130 alumni.
- The Miami/South Florida reading group, drawing from over 200 alumni in their area, has held regular seminars during both 2004 and 2005 and will be petitioning to become a chapter this coming year.
- The Salt Lake City reading group has held seminars since November 2004.

There are only 45 alumni in the area, but they have had 6 to 14 people attending each event.

- In Atlanta, alumni stay connected with informal groups and at gatherings sponsored by the Alumni office.
- A meeting is planned in Phoenix to organize area alumni this spring.
- Interest is brewing to start a local chapter in the Indianapolis area.

Though the number of alumni in the area is small, the desire to read and talk to other Johnnies remains strong.

Though not every attempt to start a reading group has been successful, there does not seem to be a minimal number of alumni needed to have sufficient interest. Christopher Nelson (SF70), president of the Annapolis campus, and President Michael Peters, president in Santa Fe, regularly visit chapters and reading groups. Tutors from Annapolis and Santa Fe are interested and available to travel to chapters and groups throughout the country. The Alumni Office funds their trips and provides an average of two tutor visits per year to chapters.

Alumni interested in assessing interest in holding seminars and other activities in a new area should contact Jo Ann Mattson, Alumni Director, at JoAnn.Mattson@sjca.edu or 410-626-2531. The alumni office staff provides support in setting up an initial event, answering questions, giving advice on how to get started, and

## ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

All alumni have automatic membership in the St. John's College Alumni Association. The Alumni Association is an independent organization, with a Board of Directors elected by and from the alumni body. The board meets four times a year, twice on each campus, to plan programs and coordinate the affairs of the association. This newsletter within *The College* magazine is sponsored by the Alumni Association and communicates association news and events of interest.

*President* – Glenda Eoyang, SF76

*Vice President* – Jason Walsh, A85

*Secretary* – Barbara Lauer, SF76

*Treasurer* – Bill Fant, A79

*Getting-the-Word-Out Action Team Chair* – Linda Stabler-Talty, SFG176

*Mailing address* – Alumni Association, St. John's College, P.O. Box 2800, Annapolis, MD 21404, or 1160 Camino Cruz Blanca, Santa Fe, NM 87505-4599.

mailing notices to all alumni within the geographic area identified.

The new Online Community is also an excellent way to keep in touch with alumni in your area and to stay involved. You can find a listing of your chapter or group's events at [www.stjohnscollege.edu](http://www.stjohnscollege.edu). Click on “alumni” and then “chapters.” ❖

# TWO MONTHS BEFORE THE MAST

BY TODD WILSON (AG100)

*Todd Wilson spent two months aboard the Makulu a 43-foot sailboat, documenting his experiences for Reach the World, an educational organization that seeks to give inner-city students in grades three through six a wider view of their world.*

**B**ased in New York City, Reach the World is a nonprofit organization founded by Heather Halstead.

Sailor-educators circumnavigate the world and document their journey using digital cameras, laptops, and the Reach the World Web site. They post answers to eight essential questions for each geographic region on the site, which teachers use as part of their curriculum. Before the voyage, we met the students and toured their schools in the Bronx, Queens, and Harlem, talking to them about the itinerary. The goal is to open their minds to the idea that they belong to a global community.

Since graduating from the GI, I have sought eclectic positions in education, such as teaching English on the Texas/Mexico border with Teach for America and managing an environmental education campus in Yosemite National Park. When RTW offered me a job, I thought: How can I pass on this opportunity? I have always been interested in documentary films, photography, and journalism. The great books, being the ancient documents of societies and human thought, seemed the perfect foundation.



TODD WILSON COMBINES YOGA WITH DUTIES AT THE HELM. WILSON NEVER QUITE GOT HIS SEA LEGS DURING HIS REACH THE WORLD VOYAGE.

cooking schedule, meeting about the program, writing, and for me, finding time to practice yoga on the aft deck—usually in three- to six-foot waves. We all worked to keep a tidy, safe ship. And the weather was consistently helpful with more wind and sunshine than galls and high seas.

As the days turned like pages from a great, blue mind, I found the open ocean to be a true wilderness. From my first glimpse of the Great Barrier Reef to dolphins racing to and fro off the bow, sparkling with phosphorescence in midnight waters, I realized that the ocean is untamed and amazing. We bring a floating shell of humanity, yet our coming is one precarious rise and fall upon the waves after another. I embraced the austere vastness of being at sea with respect and humility.

Three days out of Australia in the Timor Sea, we stopped *Makulu* for an afternoon swim. After 20 minutes, Hannah called us aboard quietly. Once atop, she pointed to the five tiger sharks that joined us from the depths. “Just visiting,” I whispered.

Komodo Island was truly enigmatic, a land rare and sculpted by time into timelessness. The land befits the dragon that exists only there, the largest lizard in the world. When I first saw two dragons below the kitchen, they were flattened out like

Thus, I went to learn about modern human life from observing how people live and the environment living around them, documenting it all for students.

As part of a five-person crew, I sailed from Cairns, Australia, to Bali, Indonesia. Jim, the captain, and Hannah, the first mate, taught the fundamentals of sailing to Amie, Tonia and me: steering a course, reading charts, and navigating open waters in daylight and darkness. Each day at sea was spent rotating through a watch and





TODD WILSON

dogs: content and lacking ferocity. Two hours later we tracked a female with a radio collar to her nest. Again, the sight of her brought a fearless awe. She, like all things rare, lived through the myths and labels in the simplicity of being.

Two weeks later, we visited a school on Balo-Baloang Atoll. The tiny island (two-hour circumambulation) is the home of shipbuilders. These men have honed their craft for a thousand years, and like the dragons, only these Indonesian seas are home to their designs. In their presence, *Makulu* looked extravagant and awkward in her modernity. We felt the slowness of time here when we signed the school's register, the sixth visitors in five years! In a classroom without electricity, we interviewed the students about their unique and simple lives, their teacher translating our words. Afterwards, we enjoyed lunch at the teacher's stilt house: sweets, tea, black-sugar coffee, rice, and vegetable broth eaten on the floor of the kitchen, with our fingers, the women and children waiting for the guests to eat first.

I had signed on for a two-year journey. But my new environment rattled my equilibrium, and days were more about

attaining balance than enjoying the ocean's grandeur. It was not seasickness (though I did lose my crackers coming into Bali after 10 hours enduring 10-foot seas); I can only describe it using the Ayurvedic term *ahamkara*, which translates as the

LEFT: A HUT ON KOMODO ISLAND FRAMES THE *MAKULU*.

BELOW: SCHOOLCHILDREN ON BALO-BALOANG STOP TO POSE FOR WILSON.

integral feeling of self despite the commingling of the numerous physical elements of which we are composed. My *ahamkara* was tilted, and this feeling combined with the understanding that my overall health was the foundation of any position. Even though I loved the work on land, the days at sea took my legs from me.

After an amazing two months before the mast, I chose to leave and offer the rare opportunity to someone who is an educator and a sailor. I am sure there are a few Johnnies who fit this description. ✧

*Wilson's articles on Australia and Bali can be found at [www.reachtheworld.com](http://www.reachtheworld.com)*



TODD WILSON



## BOOKS, BALANCE AND A BELL TOWER

A crane sets in place the iron finial in the bell tower of Weigle Hall in Santa Fe, circa 1972. The finial was designed by John Gaw Meem, the noted architect who also donated the land for St. John's Western campus. Meem's finial was meant to represent a "stand-up" version of the

college seal, according to an article in the Santa Fe *New Mexican*. First called the Tower Building and later renamed for former St. John's President Richard Weigle (HA49), the campus' main academic building was dedicated in 1971, while work on the finial was still under way.

Design of the finial was one of the few commissions that Meem took after he

retired in 1960, according to *John Gaw Meem: Southwestern Architect*, by Bainbridge Bunting: "... Meem accepted only a few commissions from close friends or produced occasional designs for a public cause or for historical preservation. Among these ... the delightful bell tower on the administration building of St. John's College ..." ❁

## ALUMNI CALENDAR

### Come home to Santa Fe this summer!

This year's festivities including a special Opening Celebration for "With a Clear and Single Purpose": The Campaign for St. John's College, along with the traditional Homecoming Banquet, art show, and varied parties. Catch up with your old friends, make new ones, and learn about the college's plans for the future.

### Friday, July 28

2 - 5 p.m. Registration

5:30 p.m. "With a Clear and Single Purpose," Opening Celebration for the Capital Campaign

9 p.m. Rock Party in the Coffee Shop

### Saturday, July 29

10 a.m. Seminars

Noon - 2 p.m. Picnic

2 - 3 p.m. All-Alumni gathering

4 p.m. Alumni and tutor book signing

5 - 6 p.m. "Speaking Volumes" lecture:  
Louise Heydt (EC97), author of *Divine Rainbow: Nature as Spiritual Teacher*

5:30 - 7 p.m. All-Alumni art show

5:30 p.m. Combined art show and  
"Speaking Volumes" reception

7 - 9 p.m. Homecoming banquet

9 p.m. Cantina San Juan: margaritas and mariachi at the Homecoming ball

9:30 p.m. Movie: *Singing in the Rain*

### Sunday, July 30

8 - 11 a.m. Early Riser - light breakfast fare  
in the Fireside Lounge

11 a.m. Brunch, hosted by Mike and Eleanor Peters

## Annapolis

Mark your calendars for Annapolis Homecoming, Sept. 29 - Oct. 1, 2006. The theme: Oktoberfest. Look for a brochure to be mailed this summer, or watch the St. John's Web site, [www.stjohnscollege.edu](http://www.stjohnscollege.edu), for more details.



BILL DENISON

## Mountain in Santa Fe

by Virginia Strong Newlin, SFGI74

One August night three of us tried to scale  
a small peak above the college.  
We took the rock face, sneakers slipping,  
gripping whatever felt firm to grasping  
hands.

hauling ourselves to the top, we sat upon  
stones

spoke softly, looking over St. John's  
in silver sleep amongst its great books.

In the sky great constellations spread  
near enough to finger in the midnight air.  
I thought of being East again, the session  
over,

minus this evening's mountain walk  
and the highs of a seminar's lively talk  
on Aristotle and Aquinas, Aeschylus and  
Socrates,  
handholds for people scaling peaks.

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