

# swarthmore

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE  
BULLETIN | APRIL 2011



## DEPARTMENTS

### 3: LETTERS

Readers react.

### 4: FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Character of Our Conversations

*By Rebecca Chopp*

### 6: COLLECTION

- Inn project moves forward
- New summer language program
- Top 10 Sharples “bars”—and recipe
- Tribute to Eugene Lang '38
- How history changes the present
- Professor George Moskos dies
- Winter sports wrap-up

### 40: CONNECTIONS

- A passage to India
- Musical premiere
- New Alumni Council members
- *Quizzo* and chocolates
- Upcoming alumni events

### 42: CLASS NOTES

The world according to Swarthmoreans

### 45: IN MEMORIAM

Farewell to cherished friends

### 50: BOOKS + ARTS

Alumni Works

### 62: IN MY LIFE

#### 28 Years Untouched

Opening cartons of old college papers releases a flood of memories and reveals surprising connections between Swarthmore and what I do today.

*By Noah Ephron '82*

### 72: Q+A:

#### “Not Self”

Donald Swearer, popular emeritus professor and renowned scholar of Buddhism talks about religion and life.

*By Jeffrey Lott*

**On the cover:** Author Jonathan Franzen '81. Digital sculpture by Joel and Sharon Harris. Story on page 18.

## PROFILES

### 58: A Pillar in the Rubble

At Haiti Clinic, Neil Heskell '74 and Kevin Browngoehl '78 provide free medical care to struggling residents of Port-au-Prince.

*By Mike Agresta*

### 64: Like a Frying Pan to the Head

Kendal Cornell '86 and her clown troupe raise spirits and consciousness about women's behavior.

*By Audree Penner*

### 68: From Rowdy Kid to Public Historian

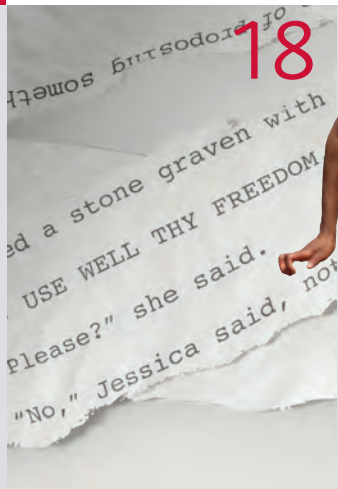
Perhaps because of disciplinary stops during childhood road trips, Allison Marsh '98 is now a public historian.

*By Mike Agresta*





18



27



34



## FEATURES

**18: Six Degrees of Jonathan Franzen**  
Before the National Book Award, before Oprah, before the *Time* cover—before anything really, really big happened—Jonathan Franzen '81 taught fiction writing at Swarthmore. His students remember it well.

*By Paul Wachter '97*

**24: Possiplex:**

**Ted Nelson '59 and the Literary Machine**  
Nelson's ideas, once dismissed as utopian, have become central facts of modern life. But none of this is enough for him. The computing world we know is but a dim shadow of what might have been.

*By Mark Bernstein '77*

**27: Balancing Act**

How do students achieve and maintain balance while developing their intellectual and personal potential? For many, it involves active and intentional membership in community—both on and off campus.

*By Alisa Giardinelli*

**34: The Janitor and the Judge**

Using empathy and intellect to make humane and right decisions is the essence of practical wisdom.

*By Barry Schwartz and Kenneth Sharpe*



Dolores Luis-Gmitter (*center, in red skirt*), associate in dance performance, works with members of the flamenco repertory class during the College's first annual Arts Weekend this month. The class focuses on *zapataedo* (footwork) and *braceo* (armwork). Photograph by Eleftherios Kostans.





ELEFTHERIOS KOSTANS



THIS YEAR MARKS THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY of Swarthmore's Writing Associates (WA) Program, a remarkable peer education system that helps students become better writers. In campus parlance, a WA is a trained student writing coach who works across a wide variety of disciplines with individuals and with entire classes. WAs provide feedback that helps fellow students examine the structural, organizational, and stylistic skills needed for good college writing; they also help peers

analyze their writing and thought processes and improve the clarity of their arguments. By lifting up writing as an essential skill for success in college and the world beyond, the WA Program, directed by Associate Professor of English Literature Jill Gladstein, has become a vital ingredient of a Swarthmore education.

Yet according to Kenneth Sharpe, the William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of Political Science and co-author—with Barry Schwartz, the Dorwin P. Cartwright Professor of Social Theory and Social Action—of the new book *Practical Wisdom* (page 34), something else happens in the WA process—and it happens to the WAs themselves.

Speaking at the writing associates anniversary celebration in March, Sharpe said: "In most of the work we all do and in our lives as friends and colleagues and citizens, we are constantly called on to teach others. I think one of the unsung blessings of the WA program is that it has caused you to learn to be better citizen-teachers [and] it has done this by 'causing you to learn' the practical wisdom that good teaching demands."

Sharpe paused and returned to the phrase *caused you to learn*. "Now there's an awkward phrase any good WA would bring to my

attention," he said. "Why not just say, 'The WA program has *taught* you to be good teachers?'"

The answer is that the one-on-one nature of the WA process intentionally creates a learning environment that causes the WA to learn through trial and error. "You have to get it wrong to get it right," Sharpe said. "And that is very painful." Along the way, the WA is constantly asked to reflect on the process, to recognize errors, and "to learn to love what is best."

The process of teaching writing—and, I think, editing a magazine—requires constant application of practical wisdom.

The process of teaching writing—and, I think, editing a magazine—requires constant application of the elements of practical wisdom: guiding someone while respecting their freedom and autonomy; challenging and questioning but respecting another person's choices; being generous, not just with your time but in your spirit of giving to another; balancing generosity with fairness and making choices

about how to distribute your time; being empathetic and understanding of the other person's feelings; and listening carefully and knowing when to interrupt—and when not to.

Most of the Swarthmore alumni I know are good writers—and for the past 25 years that's been no accident. No matter which side of the WA equation a student is on—learning to write more clearly or practicing the practical wisdom needed to teach that skill—the benefits of learning to love what is best are enormous.

—Jeffrey Lott

### ON THE WEB



Find this issue and more than 13 years of *Bulletin* archives at [www.swarthmore.edu/bulletin](http://www.swarthmore.edu/bulletin). Also on the College website:



JUNEXIE '11

**Watch:** Ninjagram delivery on Valentine's Day included a visit to the office of President Rebecca Chopp. <http://bit.ly/ninjagram>

**Listen:** In a campus talk on Islamist activism in Britain, Jonathan Githens-Mazer '97 suggests that religion, identity, and political behavior must be disaggregated from discussions

about security and the nature of any contemporary terrorist threat. <http://bit.ly/Githens-Mazer>

**Listen:** Charles and Harriett Cox McDowell Professor of Philosophy Richard Eldridge examines how, for both Kant and Benjamin, historical narrative plays an essential role in furthering the task of (critical) philosophy. <http://bit.ly/Richard-Eldridge>

### CONTRIBUTORS



LINDA THORSEN '77

**Mark Bernstein '77** is chief scientist at Eastgate Systems, Inc. He is the designer of Tinderbox, a personal assistant for visualizing, analyzing, and sharing notes, and writes on hypertext, new media, and the future of fiction. His most recent book is *Reading Hypertext*, a collection of classic essays on hypertext fiction, co-edited with Diane Greco; and he is completing a book on *The Natural History of Links*.



MEREDITH LEIGH

**Meredith Leigh '08** is a Brooklyn-based words/images artist, who works at the Six Points Fellowship—a project that supports artists who create new work exploring Jewish ideas and experiences. She also plays the violin and viola, writes comics, and spends time in Berlin as well as designing websites. To see more of her art, visit [meredithleigh.com](http://meredithleigh.com).



JEFFREY LOTT

**Kenneth Sharpe (left)** the William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of Political Science, and **Barry Schwartz**, the Dorwin P. Cartwright Professor of Social Theory and Social Action, are both popular teachers and prolific authors—of works including *The Paradox of Choice* (2004) and *Drug War Politics: The Price of Denial* (1996), respectively. They first co-taught a course (offered in 1989 and 1992) that explored liberal individualism.

**swarthmore**  
COLLEGE BULLETIN

EDITOR  
Jeffrey Lott

ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
Carol Brévar-Demm

CLASS NOTES EDITOR  
Susan Cousins Breen

ART DIRECTOR  
Phillip Stern '84

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER  
Eleftherios Kostans

DESKTOP PUBLISHING SPECIALIST  
Audree Penner

PUBLICATIONS INTERN  
Madeline Williams '12

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT  
Janice Merrill-Rossi

EDITOR EMERITA  
Maralyn Orbison Gillespie '49

CONTACTING SWARTHMORE COLLEGE  
COLLEGE OPERATOR  
(610) 328-8000 [www.swarthmore.edu](http://www.swarthmore.edu)

ADMISSIONS  
(610) 328-8300 [admissions@swarthmore.edu](mailto:admissions@swarthmore.edu)

ALUMNI RELATIONS  
(610) 328-8402 [alumni@swarthmore.edu](mailto:alumni@swarthmore.edu)

PUBLICATIONS  
(610) 328-8568 [bulletin@swarthmore.edu](mailto:bulletin@swarthmore.edu)

REGISTRAR  
(610) 328-8297 [registrar@swarthmore.edu](mailto:registrar@swarthmore.edu)

WORLD WIDE WEB  
[www.swarthmore.edu](http://www.swarthmore.edu)

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Send address label along with new address to:  
Alumni Records Office  
Swarthmore College  
500 College Avenue  
Swarthmore PA 19081-1390  
Phone: (610) 328-8435  
Or e-mail: [alumnirecords@swarthmore.edu](mailto:alumnirecords@swarthmore.edu).

The *Swarthmore College Bulletin* (ISSN 0888-2126), of which this is volume CVIII, number 4, is published in August, October, January, April, and July by Swarthmore College, 500 College Avenue, Swarthmore PA 19081-1390. Periodicals postage paid at Swarthmore PA and additional mailing offices. Permit No. 0530-620. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Swarthmore College Bulletin*, 500 College Avenue, Swarthmore PA 19081-1390. ©2011 Swarthmore College. Printed in U.S.A.



**METZIDAKIS MEMORIES**

I was saddened by the news of the death of Professor Philip Metzidakis last November (January *Bulletin*). I have him to thank for fueling my interest during the early 1970s in several of the “Generación del 98” Spanish literary figures, particularly Miguel de Unamuno—his favorite, mine, and the favorite of many. The article mentioned that Professor Metzidakis studied at the Universidad de Salamanca; this was in fact the university in Spain where Unamuno was rector for many years, almost until he died in 1936 in the midst of the chaotic Spanish Civil War.

Professor Metzidakis was my faculty adviser during my freshman year at Swarthmore, when I was still undecided as to my major. I later chose history over Spanish and so was assigned another faculty adviser in that field. Nonetheless, I continued to take courses in Spanish literature and remember well Metzidakis’ often-present smoldering cigar during class and other times. While initially I thought he had a gruff exterior, I know now that it only housed a heart concerned with his students and with sharing his love of the Spanish language and literature.

ROGER KARNY '76  
Denver, Colo.

**YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE**

It is curious that in the article “Inquiring Minds” (January *Bulletin*), you write that scientist John Seely Brown “observes that the teens’ attention span ranged between 30 seconds and five minutes, which [Brown writes] ‘parallels that of top managers who operate in a world of fast context switching. So the short attention span of today’s kids may turn out to be far from dysfunctional for future work worlds.’”

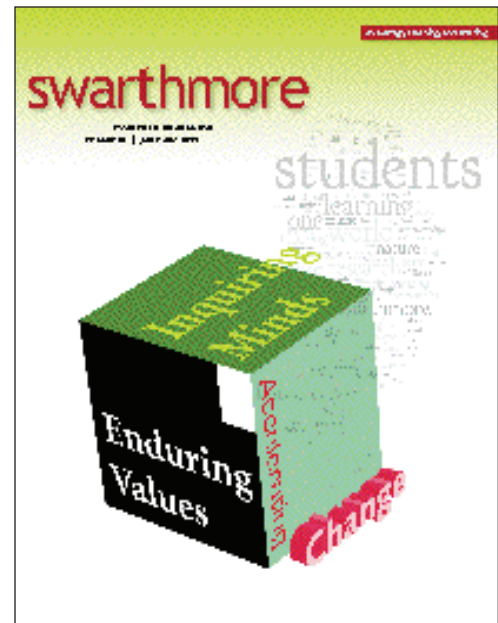
Yet in “The Dances of Adele Diamond,” [also January *Bulletin*] cognitive neuroscientist Adele Diamond '74 is quoted as saying: “Executive function skills, such as sustained attention, are stifled by video games and TV programs that assume short attention spans.”

Perhaps Brown and Diamond should communicate.

DICK KIRSCHNER '49  
Albuquerque, N. M.

*We asked Diamond for her reply:*

I do not agree with Brown. A short attention span is never an advantage. You want to able



to stay focused and attend for a long time when you need to. For example, if you are listening to a report on how your company has been doing or the results of your latest medical tests, you don't want to space out in the middle—you want to be able to stay present.

You also want to be able to quickly, smoothly, and easily switch from one thing to another, and back and forth if needed—but that’s because you choose to switch, not because you can't stay focused.

It’s one thing if you choose to switch between a call on Line 1, a call on Line 2, and a person in your office. It's another if your attention keeps getting grabbed by a beep for a new email, a new text message that pops up, or when the screen changes to reveal a different news story. Most teens are having their attention grabbed, rather than their learning to prioritize and choose to allocate 15 minutes here, three minutes there, an hour here, etc.

ADELE DIAMOND '74  
Vancouver, B.C.

**FOR THE RECORD**

In “Books & Arts” (January *Bulletin*), Justin Kramon’s [’02] book *Finny* was incorrectly described as a “young adult novel.” Random House published it an adult literary/mainstream novel.



ELEFTHERIOS KOSTANS

# THE CHARACTER

By President Rebecca Chopp

MENANDER, THE GREEK DRAMATIST, ONCE SAID, “THE CHARACTER OF A MAN IS KNOWN FROM HIS CONVERSATIONS.”

IT IS ALSO THE CASE, I THINK, THAT THE CHARACTER OF A COLLEGE IS OFTEN REFLECTED IN ITS CONVERSATIONS. So, let me describe, briefly, the conversations we are having in our strategic planning process and then share with you my sense of a few emerging, commonly recurring themes.

The Alumni Council has hosted Connection events around the country in order to elicit alumni perspectives on the core values of the College, our strengths, and the opportunities and challenges we will confront in the future. I have traveled to cities in Asia, to London, and throughout the United States to engage in dialogue with alumni, parents, and friends of the College about strategic planning. Each of these stimulating events has been filled with rich conversations on issues such as the distinctiveness of our Honors Program, the importance of science literacy, the role of athletics in preparing our students, and the desire to preserve our need-blind admissions process and the strength of our financial aid policies, among many others.

Since we formally kicked off the planning process last fall, our website ([www.swarthmore.edu/strategicplanning](http://www.swarthmore.edu/strategicplanning)) has received more than 150 blog postings from alumni, parents, students, staff, and faculty. The volume alone is impressive, but the quality of the content is even more so. On campus, faculty members have had numerous conversations in meetings and at ongoing weekly lunches. Members of our staff have discussed strategic planning in their divisional meetings and as participants in our working

groups. Students are engaging in fireside chats, and Dean of Students Elizabeth Braun and I are hosting open-table sessions with them over lunch in Sharples Dining Hall.

Our strategic planning conversations have been characterized by a diversity of opinions, ideas, and suggestions on how best to continue our mission in the future, building upon our considerable strengths and value-infused traditions. While we are still in the William James “let a thousand flowers bloom” phase, we are listening attentively, gathering all the insights and perspectives we can, and identifying common themes and opportunities as well as challenges. I’d like to highlight three of the common themes I see emerging amidst the thousand flowers.

The first of these is the *changing nature of teaching and learning*. The pre-eminent value that has emerged across all of our conversations is that we should not, under any circumstances, compromise the excellence and rigor of our academic program. It has also become clear that 20th-century structures do not provide adequately for all of our 21st-century forms of knowledge. Knowledge in the 20th century was organized, in large part, into distinct disciplines, and the concentration of thought within each led to enormous advances. But in the 21st century, we realize that just as we must continue to mine knowledge within each of these disciplines, we also need to work across them in order to advance knowledge in new and meaningful ways and to effectively address contemporary problems. The rate of change in knowledge formation has dramatically accelerated in

# OF OUR CONVERSATIONS

---

terms of consumption, production, performance and expression, techniques for experimentation, investigation and inquiry—and in sheer volume. Collaboration and teamwork, problem-based inquiry, innovation and entrepreneurship in nearly all fields, and the blending of teaching and research are referenced frequently in our conversations.

Given this changing context, how do we best support our faculty and students as they explore the new landscape of knowing, teaching, and learning? Although this landscape will continue to include the 20th-century quest to fully explore the depth of the disciplines, it must also include new strategies for pushing out the frontiers of knowledge. Students and faculty will continue to work together in the traditional spaces of the classroom, the lab, and the studio but also increasingly in community-based learning settings in Chester and China, summer research programs at Penn and in Poland, internships in entrepreneurship in San Francisco and Singapore, field-based research in New Guinea and the Amazon, and arts programs in Ghana and Ireland. We must think now about how problem-based learning will affect the way we organize our time and courses, our disciplines and resources.

Another recurring theme shared among alumni, students, staff, and faculty members alike is the need to attend to the *well-being of*

There is a deep longing for  
and a need to find new ways  
to engage what we might call

Swarthmore's global  
knowledge network.



*individuals, of our community, and of the world.* Students desire more spaces where they can work together and connect with one another in small groups, but they also want a space for the whole community to gather. Some students have expressed interest in re-imagining and re-instituting Collection in order to be together as a diverse, inclusive, and engaged community, adding to the existing ways the community already gathers in smaller groups and affinity alliances. There is a deep sense that the College must enhance support of the physical and mental health of individuals—especially students—and promote wellness, resiliency, and balance. Nutrition, meditation, athletics and fitness, the arts, spirituality, gardening, positive psychology, and practical wisdom are all topics being raised under the canopy of well-being. We are also looking outward—discussing our ongoing commitment to the well-being of the earth and other communities around the world. We are in deep discussion about how our Quaker values and our commitment to sustainability, and to the development of engaged, civic-minded, and visible leadership of individuals and of ourselves as an institution can most effectively contribute to the common good.

A third theme is our *community's desire to be connected throughout the world.* Although Swarthmore's essence is rooted in our beauti-

ful campus, ours is a worldwide intellectual community that likes to exchange ideas, perspectives, experiences, hopes, and concerns, no matter where alumni find themselves after graduation. There is a deep longing for and a need to find new ways to engage what we might call Swarthmore's global knowledge network. Might we use technology to offer webinars on critical topics of the day among our alumni? Can alumni interview our students via Skype or other forms of technology to help them strengthen their communication skills? We need to understand and engage members of our larger community as responsible leaders and thinkers in all parts of the world as well as on campus. Can we become an institution that convenes faculty, students, alumni, staff, and visiting scholars to address the most pressing issues of the day? Will the Town Center West project (*see page 6*)—including a new inn with small conference capacity—allow us to host members of our knowledge network in substantive ways?

These three common themes are dominant among the many emerging from our conversations. I urge you to consider these ideas and to share your own on the website at [www.swarthmore.edu/strategicplanning](http://www.swarthmore.edu/strategicplanning) or via e-mail to [strategicplanning@swarthmore.edu](mailto:strategicplanning@swarthmore.edu).

I believe that if Menander could join us in our planning conversations, he would judge our character to be robust, critical, creative, inclusive, intense, rigorous, and thoroughly enjoyable as we discuss together the future of Swarthmore College. ☺



Join the Web conversation about Swarthmore's future at <http://sp.swarthmore.edu>.

# collection



## BOARD GIVES GREEN LIGHT TO INN PROJECT

Picture a group of visiting scholars on campus attending a conference on the future of the liberal arts. Or alumni gathering in a comfortable inn and restaurant space on campus, meeting with faculty and students to discuss the College's vision and commitment to sustainability issues. Imagine faculty, students, and staff mingling with Borough residents at an inn, restaurant, and bookstore at the edge of campus. These opportunities will soon exist for the Swarthmore community as a result of the Board of Managers recent approval of a plan that includes building a 40- to 45-room inn with conference space and a restaurant and relocating and expanding the campus bookstore. Following more than a decade of study, the project, named Town Center West (TCW), is expected to be completed by late spring 2014 on a College-owned site adjacent to the athletic facilities and close to the regional rail line.

President Rebecca Chopp noted that TCW would support a number of College objectives including the need to create the kind of spaces necessary for the "robust and evolving intellectual life of faculty and students." According to Provost Constance Hungerford, faculty are eager to have nonacademic spaces where they can meet with colleagues



The College's current softball field on the Town Center West site will be moved closer to the Palmer Residence Hall and will remain a natural turf field with dugouts, backstop, and fencing similar to the one that exists today. Swarthmore's 130-year-old barn will be preserved. The new inn will honor the principles of the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment, of which President Rebecca Chopp is a signatory. This commitment includes designing the project to the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED Silver certification.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PHILLIP STERN '84





more informally, and across departments, in an increasingly collaborative and interdisciplinary intellectual landscape.

The inn, restaurant, and conference spaces will also allow departments and the College to host small conferences on campus during the academic year for the first time in its history. During a time when many in the United States advocate for a more vocational approach to higher education, other countries are interested in replicating the liberal arts model in which Swarthmore excels. “Many alumni, faculty members, staff, and students voice a long-held desire that we play a more active and more visible role regionally, nationally, and internationally in order to contribute in a more meaningful way to the conversations about the future of the liberal arts,” Chopp said.

TCW also meets another longstanding objective—to help revitalize the Borough’s commercial district and strengthen ties between the College and Borough. The idea for TCW first arose in a 1999 planning document titled “Swarthmore Town Center Revitalization Strategy,” prepared by Urban Partners with Kise Straw and Kolodner. This 34-point plan was the result of study and analysis of current and projected economic conditions in the Borough and included input from more than 900 individuals, including members of the College community and Borough residents. It has since served as a blueprint for the Borough’s revitalization efforts and many of its suggestions have been implemented.

An inn would also help meet the practical need to provide close, comfortable lodging and dining options for alumni, prospective families, visiting athletes, and friends and family members of Borough residents.

“I’ve been waiting for this project to come to fruition for many years,” said Sabrina Martinez ’92, president of Alumni Council. “I would love for our alumni to have a nice place to stay on campus when they’re visiting. I also believe it would help the College considerably in its recruitment efforts and in

its capacity to host other scholars and administrators.”

As is typical with development projects, TCW has gone through an extensive vetting process since it was first proposed in 1999. After requesting qualifications and proposals from potential developers in 2007, the College put the project on hold during the financial crisis of 2008 and 2009.

In 2010, prospects for TCW were bolstered when the Borough received a \$2 million grant from Pennsylvania’s Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program. (See July 2010 *Bulletin*.) After further study over the course of this year, the College decided to self-develop TCW, concluding that self-development would allow far greater control with respect to meeting the project’s primary mission to support College objectives as well as more control over the management of its lodging, restaurant, and meeting spaces. In addition to the state funding, there has been donor interest in the project because of its potential to further the College’s educational mission, according to Suzanne Welsh, vice president for finance and treasurer. She added that the College will have additional opportunities to pursue grant funding and will not tap into operational funds to finance the project.

A steering committee, comprised of senior members of the administration and Board members, is managing the project through the formative stages. Last fall, the Board of Managers appointed a TCW Ad Hoc Advisory Committee, which included faculty, students, and staff. The Committee met throughout the year to act as a sounding board for the steering committee and provide feedback from the College community. The College also commissioned two independent market studies to guide decisions about the appropriate size and amenities for the inn, restaurant, and meeting space. Both studies recommended an independently operated three-star inn with 40 to 45 rooms, a small business center, and a combined restaurant/lounge with about 100 seats—

plus seating for outdoor dining in good weather and an outdoor function space.

Community members and Borough residents alike have expressed interest in the future shape the project will take. Borough residents have shared concerns about traffic patterns and environmental considerations, among others. The student group, Swarthmore Labor Action Project (SLAP) has raised the possibility of unionizing the hotel staff in order to ensure positive working conditions.

To address some of the issues that have been raised, the College hosted two forums this spring, one on the hotel industry, featuring a presentation by a hospitality industry expert, and another featuring a panel discussion on labor issues. Other public forums will be held in the fall. The College has also developed a website, which is frequently updated with new information about the project and provides answers to new questions as they arise.

In March, President Chopp reaffirmed the College’s commitment to a positive work environment for anyone working on Swarthmore’s campus and issued a statement of principles in a guest column that appeared in the student and local press. The College’s principles include an unwavering commitment to ensure that every employee will work in a safe and healthy environment; that each person will be able to discuss issues freely; and that every worker will be empowered to make their own choices about whether or not to join a union. For the full text of the guest column, please see [www.swarthmore.edu/x32226.xml](http://www.swarthmore.edu/x32226.xml).

The College and Borough continue to collaborate closely on TCW. The College will begin the architectural design process shortly, and the Borough will undertake a series of zoning and land use reviews before the project is considered fully approved.

—Nancy Nowicki Nicely



For more on the TCW, go to <http://bit.ly/towncenterwest>.

## A THOUGHTFUL GIVER

At Swarthmore, Eugene Lang '38 is legendary. His gifts have created three buildings—the Lang Music Building, the Eugene and Theresa Lang Performing Arts Center, and the Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility—as well as the Theresa Lang Garden of Fragrance, student financial aid funds, endowed professorships and staff support, and the 30-year-old Lang Opportunity Scholarships.

Lang funds not only the scholarships but is also an active mentor, visiting the scholars on campus one Saturday each semester, making himself available for advice by phone, and maintaining close connections through the decades with his former scholars.

“We all need heroes,” said Salem Shuchman '84, one of the first Lang Scholars, “and Gene is mine.”

To honor Lang, on Feb. 19, the College hosted a lunch featuring speakers representing the organizations he founded; a symposium on social responsibility and artists as agents of social change; and a celebratory dinner.

Maurice Eldridge '61, executive assistant to the president and vice president for community and College relations, led the committee that planned the event. “Gene lives a life in devotion to the well-being of others, an example of ‘letting your life speak,’” Eldridge said.

Scores of “Langs” attended, recalling with gratitude the Lang Opportunity Scholarships that set them on their life paths. The 30-year-old scholarships encourage students to design and initiate service projects in the United States and abroad. Also present were nine members of Lang’s family, including his children Jane Lang '67 and her brother, Stephen '73, H'10; Jane’s daughter Jessica Lang McGrew-Kosa '92; and Stephen’s son Noah '10.

Vincent Jones '98, senior program officer of the Liberty Hill Foundation in Los Angeles, said the Lang Scholars program instilled in him the value of “strategic philanthropy”—investing in young leaders and in projects that can ripple outward to benefit many. As a champion of young people who think big and are prepared to act, Lang is a “thoughtful giver,” Jones said.

Indeed, the philanthropy of Eugene Lang, a self-made businessman who led REFAC Technology Development Corporation, has launched generations of civic engagement. The Lang Opportunity Scholarship Program alone has funded 164 student projects in 30 countries since its inception.



In addition to his long involvement with Swarthmore, Lang founded the I Have a Dream Foundation, a landmark program supporting low-income students starting in elementary school through college, and Project Pericles, a national organization of colleges and universities working to include social responsibility and participatory citizenship as essential elements of their educational programs. For his far-reaching efforts, Lang received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Bill Clinton in 1996.

At the dinner in his honor, President Rebecca Chopp said, “Gene has supported and inspired the heart of our campus—the faculty and the students . . . he has been a prophet of our aspirations, our hopes, and our dreams.”

Lang, who came of age during the Great Depression, has demonstrated that aspirations need to be met with careful thought and hard work. At the first Lang Scholars breakfast in 1982, recalled Shuchman, Lang asked “probing questions that left me thinking for many hours afterward.... As a mentor, he didn’t tell me what to do, but through his questions he sparked new ideas. The notion that you can achieve what everyone tells you cannot be done changed my life forever.”

That lesson motivated symposium panelists Gayle Isa '93 to launch Philadelphia’s Asian Arts Initiative, Lourdes Rosado '85 to pursue public interest law, and John Alston, associate professor of music, to found the Chester Children’s Chorus. Their Lang-funded work begins to pay it forward, said Alston. “My stu-



Watch and listen to Eugene Lang talk about his relationship to Swarthmore at <http://bit.ly/eugenelang>.



At the Feb. 19 celebration, daughter Jane Lang '67 applauds as Eugene Lang '38 (center) is honored “for making a significant difference in business and philanthropy” at Swarthmore. Lang was the first recipient of a new award created by the Alumni Council and presented by Joy Charlton, professor of sociology and director of the Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility. In future, the award will be given as the Eugene M. Lang Class of 1938 Impact Award.

dents are beginning to learn what it’s like to be in charge, to tell the adult in charge what they think,” he said. “They must have practice as children at being in charge so they can talk to mayors and other leaders in their adult lives.”

For Teya Sepinuk, associate in performance in the Dance Program, the impact of social change is rooted in storytelling. As executive director of the Theatre of Witness Programme, Sepinuk has told through performance art stories of the elderly, prisoners serving life sentences, and the people of war-torn Northern Ireland. She has worked with Lang Scholars on her projects and considers the sharing of stories “the chance for social change to begin . . . when we hear with the ears of our hearts.”

Lang’s story starts with Swarthmore, which he has called his “lodestar.” He credits the College for considering visionary ideas and says he is proud to have leaders from other schools ask: “How does Swarthmore deal with this problem? How does Swarthmore handle it?” At the same time, Lang recalls his late wife Theresa as a “constant source of inspiration.” “Everything I’ve done,” he said, “I’ve done because she was always by my side.”

—Jennifer Baldino Bonett



ELEFTERIOS KOSTANS

## MISUNDERSTANDING HISTORY

When Sudharshan Seneviratne, a professor of archaeology at the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, first visited Swarthmore in 1990 to give a talk, he found the area around Parrish Hall thronging with students, faculty, and staff members protesting against the Gulf War. Although his talk had to be postponed until later that day, far from being upset by the disruption of his schedule, Seneviratne—then a Visiting Fulbright Professor at Cornell University—was impressed and delighted by the community’s enthusiastic antiwar stance.

“People are unbelievably engaged here,” he says.

Seneviratne, also director general of the Central Cultural Fund—a custodian organization for UNESCO World Heritage sites—is back at Swarthmore this year as the Cornell Distinguished Visiting Professor in the department of religion. His fall course Buddhist Ideology and Social Response focused on the multifunctional role of Buddhist ideology over the last 3,000 years with respect to social legitimacy, economic enterprise, state-monastery power dynamics, artistic expression, and militant response to colonialism. The students explored its impact on sixth-century B.C.E. urbanism and empire systems in North India; mercantilism in Central and South Asia in the first century B.C.E.; monastic feudalism in Sri Lanka; and 19th- and 20th-century colonialism and postcolonial nationalism of South Asia.

“I think the students thought I was going to teach them about Buddhist philosophy—the romanticized notion of Buddhism that is generally known in the West,” Seneviratne says. “But I gave them an entirely different picture of how religious and social ideologies evolve over time, how very simple initial teachings become institutionalized according to demand. You have an original, pristine ideal form, but anyone who wants to use it in a certain way will do so. Really, the flexibility of any religion is the secret to its survival.”

Several of the students who attended Seneviratne’s fall class also enrolled in his spring course Politics of the Past, which is

Professor Sudharshan Seneviratne [*above, left*] assigned the students of his Politics of the Past course to create posters depicting issues surrounding ownership and interpretation of the past from various periods and countries. A March exhibit in Eldridge Commons stimulated reflection and lively discussion among visitors. “Heritage and liberal arts are gifts to humanity,” says Seneviratne. “So it’s incumbent on us to pass the best of what we do to the next generation.”

cross-listed in classics and peace and conflict studies. Examining case studies from around the world, the class discusses ownership of the past—“who has the right to own it, interpret it, whose past are we talking about, and how is the past linked to and an intrinsic part of the present,” Seneviratne says. Museums come under scrutiny.

“Whose histories are being shown, and whose are left out?” he asks.

“We also examined to what degree the past’s heritage can be used for conflict resolution,” he added. “In Sri Lanka, for example, he says, a bloody war imposed 30 years of pain and suffering on his people.

“Thousands died because they misunderstood history—with imagined communities and political ownership deduced from the past and used to legitimize power over other people,” he says. “We need healing processes—not just conflict resolution but reconciliation.” He mentions South Africa’s Truth Commission and his own country’s Truth and Reconciliation Committee.

“Both courses were problem-oriented, issue-related, and very demanding,” Seneviratne says. “I pushed the students to work at a graduate-course level, and they stood the test really well.” He is grateful to the College for support that allowed him to invite a variety of scholars from related disciplines to speak in his classes.

This type of far-reaching, multidisciplinary, liberal arts education is dear to Seneviratne’s heart—as is his passion for heritage, which he defines as a combination of culture that is nationally inclusive of all ethnic groups, custodianship of the past, environmental preservation, and looking forward to future generations.

—Carol Brévert-Demm



Listen to Seneviratne’s lecture “Heritage Odyssey: Unfolding the Multifaceted Personality of an Island Civilization” at <http://bit.ly/seneviratne>.



ELEFTERIOS KOSTANS

## The Sharples **TOP 10** “Bars”

### 1. Caribbean Bar

Chef Benton Peak’s claim to fame is jerk chicken, “homemade with love,” featuring his special sauce. Plantains, yucca fries, and green beans almondine are among the fixings, and jerk tofu is offered as a vegan dish.

### 2. Pho Bar

Vietnam’s treasured noodle soup is a Swarthmore favorite. Options include vegetable along with traditional beef.

### 3. Oatmeal Bar

This Saturday morning breakfast delight includes three kinds of oatmeal (steel cut oats, plantain oatmeal, and apple cinnamon oatmeal) and topping choices ranging from brown sugar to blueberries.

### 4. Specialty Salad Bar

The tortellini and fresh fruit salads are perennially popular. The salad of choice features nuts, goat cheese, and candied cranberries on a bed of Romaine lettuce.

### 5. Greek Bar

Students can take a virtual trip to the Cyclades thanks to a menu that includes dolmades (stuffed grape leaves), Greek salad, spanakopita, baklava, and tzatziki.

### 6. Thai Bar

A culinary journey to Southeast Asia that features pad thai, chicken satay, red curry tofu, and red lentils.

### 7. Indian Bar

Sophisticated spices flavor authentic dishes including chicken vindaloo, samosas, palak paneer, and raita served with hot nan.

### 8. Pasta Bar

Students queue up quickly for pasta with three choices of sauces. Mangia!

### 9. Asian Bar

Favorites from the Far East include dumplings, lo mein, fried rice, and sauces.

### 10. Yogurt Parfait Bar

Ready for dessert? Yogurt Parfait Bar offers three flavors and a heavenly assortment of toppings. Peak and Kassab rank it No. 10.

## LOVE THOSE PLANTAINS AND OH, THOSE YUCCA FRIES!

“My favorite bar is Caribbean bar,” says Ashley Oudenne ’11. “Before coming to Swarthmore, I had never had plantains or yucca fries, so trying them for the first time freshman year was exciting. Now, I always make time to go to Sharples for Caribbean bar.”

Oudenne has company. In a not-so-scientific study of food “bars” at Sharples Dining Hall, Caribbean bar has emerged as the most popular choice among Swarthmore students. “Caribbean bar is the best,” says Mary Klap ’11. “The plantains are amazing!”

For the uninitiated, Sharples food bars offer a variety of mealtime selections around a central theme. The theme can be regional or ethnic—as in falafel and fajita bars—or it can feature a particular type of food, such as salad and even oatmeal. A regular lunch bar (shown at left) is called Puppy Club Bar with Texas Tommies. Bars are offered at breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and they include vegan and vegetarian choices along with meat-based dishes.

Between them, Sharples Executive Chef Benton Peak and Menu Planner and Director of Purchasing Janet Kassab have decades of experience feeding Swarthmore students, incorporating culinary trends along with the tried-and-true.

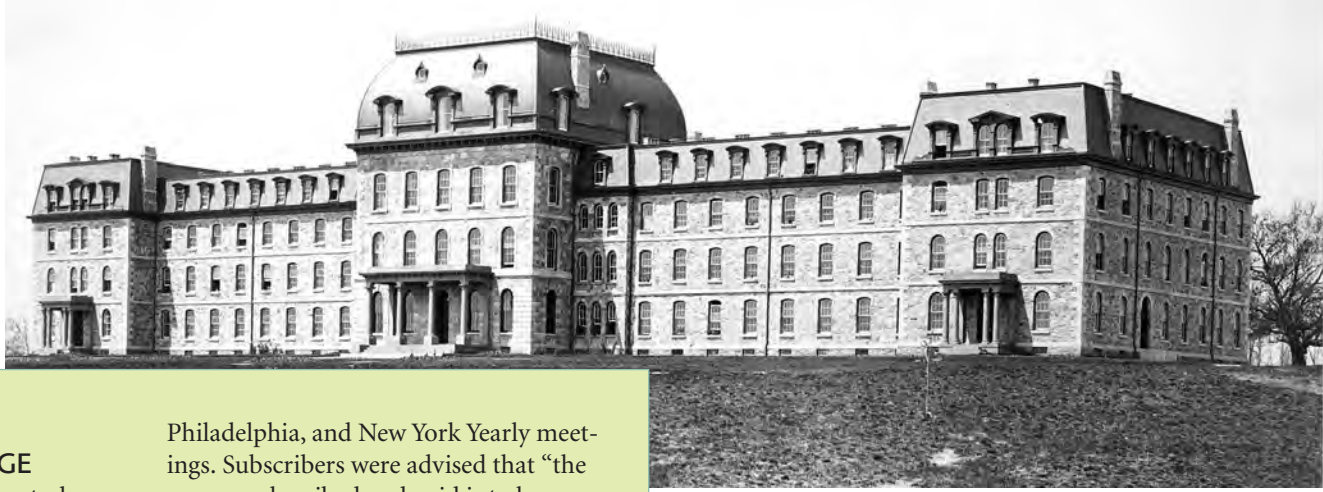
—Susan Clarey



**Chef Peak's Jerk Chicken**

To prepare dinner for Caribbean Night at Sharples, Chef Benton Peak marinates more than 350 pounds of chicken and 50 pounds of tofu. Each piece of chicken and tofu is seared on the charbroiler and garnished with dipping sauce. “It’s the best tofu you’ll ever eat,” says Janet Kassab, the menu planner. The Sharples team also steams 60 pounds of rice and 80 pounds of green beans. During the meal service, 250 pounds of yucca and 300 pounds of plantains are fried.

# 15



FRIENDS HISTORICAL LIBRARY

## 150 YEARS AGO: THE DREAM OF A COLLEGE

The idea to create what we know today as Swarthmore College was first raised at a meeting in Baltimore in October 1860, and, by spring 1861—coinciding with the beginning of Civil War hostilities at Fort Sumter—committees of Friends from Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York had been organized to solicit subscriptions (*on forms such as the one shown right*) for “the purchase of a farm, erection of suitable buildings, procuring school furniture, philosophical, and chemical apparatus.”

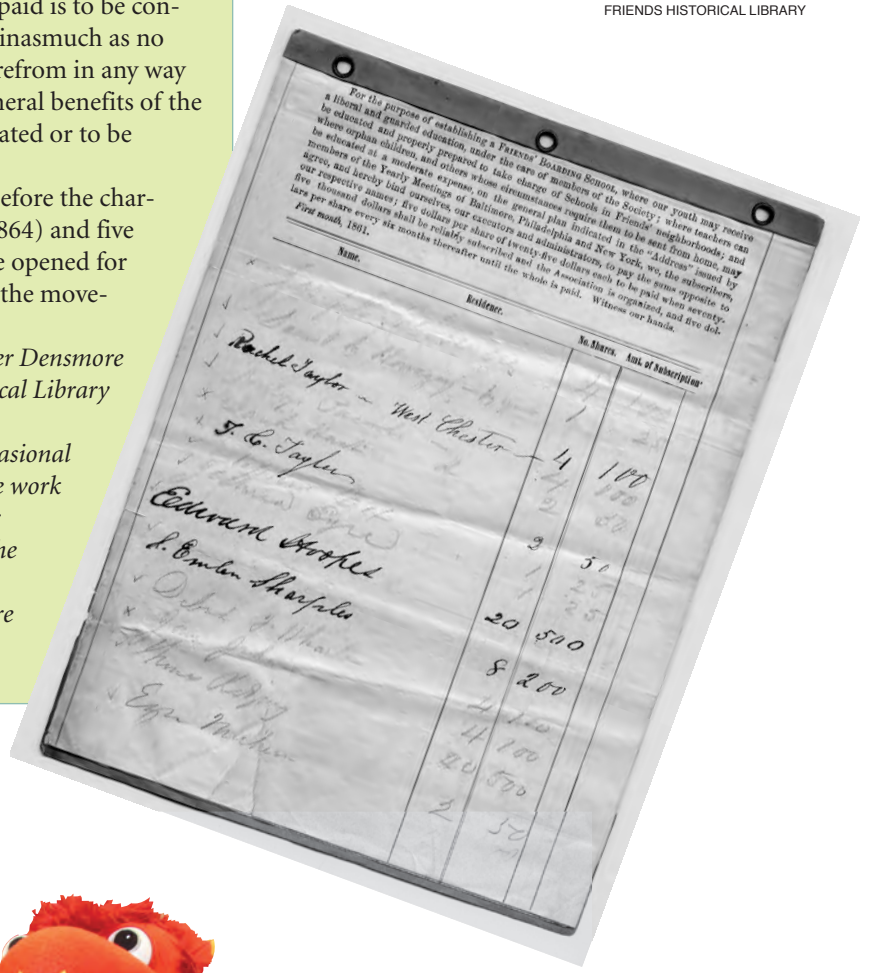
The founders thought \$150,000 would be sufficient for the land and construction of a main building able to accommodate 100 boys and 100 girls. When sufficient funds had been subscribed, the individual subscribers (who were actually provided with stock) were to select 24 managers for the new school, eight each—four men and four women—from the Baltimore,

Philadelphia, and New York Yearly meetings. Subscribers were advised that “the money subscribed and paid is to be considered a contribution, inasmuch as no dividend, or return therefrom in any way other than from the general benefits of the institution, is contemplated or to be expected.”

Three years passed before the chartering of the College (1864) and five more before the College opened for instruction (1869), but the movement had begun.

—Christopher Densmore  
Curator, Friends Historical Library

*This is the first of an occasional series that will follow the work of Swarthmore’s Quaker founders leading up to the sesquicentennial of the chartering of Swarthmore in 1864.*



To make Peak's Jerk Chicken or Tofu at home:

### Jerk Marinade

- 1 Spanish onion
- 1 fresh jalapeno or scotch bonnet pepper to taste
- 10 sprigs of thyme
- 12 scallions
- 4 T grated fresh ginger
- 2 T chopped fresh garlic
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1 T brown sugar
- 3 tsp balsamic vinegar
- 2 tsp kosher salt
- 2 tsp black pepper

Puree ingredients in a blender or food processor. Add vegetable oil slowly to form a thick paste. Combine marinade with 1 pound extra firm tofu or chicken breast. Marinate overnight, and grill.



ELEFTHERIOS KOSTANS

It was quite a night for Phineas the Phoenix when he got to pal around with two college presidents at the same time: While Swarthmore’s Rebecca Chopp (*right*) and her longtime friend Bryn Mawr’s Jane McAuliffe served as honorary coaches at the Garnet’s annual WBCA Pink Zone game to promote breast cancer awareness, ace cheerleader Phineas was never far away.

## RICH IN TONE AND JAZZ HISTORY

Practice Room 426 in the Lang Music Building is the new home to a beautiful old Steinway grand piano, a gift to the College from Anthony Marks '81. According to Bernadette Dunning, the administrative coordinator in the Music Department, student pianists vie to play the lovely old instrument and enjoy its rich tone. No less rich is the history of the piano and the serendipitous path that brought it to Swarthmore.

The piano, built in 1923, long served influential American jazz pianist and Down Beat Jazz Hall of Fame inductee Bill Evans as his recording piano. In a message to Dunning, Marks wrote that his father, Lawrence Marks—an

amateur jazz pianist who had played with Billy Holiday, Al Haig, and Dizzy Gillespie—purchased the piano in 1972 from the New York studio where Evans had made several of his recordings. Ten years later, it was placed in storage with the Steinway company, from where Marks retrieved it in 2004.

“This piano meant a great deal to my father. It would be wonderful if it could find a place at Swarthmore,” Marks wrote, proposing to donate the instrument.

The piano came to the College in December 2009. It was first placed in the home of Cornell Distinguished Visiting Professor and renowned jazz pianist Hans Lüdemann. At the end of Lüdemann’s yearlong tenure on

campus, the piano was moved to Room 426. It bears a plaque above the keyboard, identifying it as “The Marks Piano (a Bill Evans recording piano) given by Anthony Marks '81 in memory of his father, Lawrence Marks, J.D., M.D., December 2009.” A restored photograph of Bill Evans playing the piano is displayed in the room.

Professor of Music and Department Chair Michael Marissen says: “Our concert manager, Geoff Peterson, has taken to playing mostly Bill Evans tunes on it—to the delight of all. Our current students and several prospective students have been simply enthralled by the opportunity to play this piano.”

—Carol Brévart-Demm

Pianist Jonathan Cohen '14 executes expert improvisation on the Marks piano during the lunch hour practice period. “The piano is very smooth and clean; it doesn’t stick. Very easy to play,” Cohen says of the instrument that once served jazz great Bill Evans.



ELEFTERIOS KOSTANS



*Bounty*, 2007, mixed media on paper mounted on linen

## Composing Nature

Artist Andrea Packard '84 describes her images as being not so much about static places as they are states that are ephemeral, dynamic, and subject to change.

In a solo exhibit in March at the College's List Gallery—which Packard has directed since 1995—visitors were treated to a sampling of Packard's richly textured collage works on paper and panel, in which fragments of prints, papers, and fabric are combined with pastel, gouache, and acrylic.

Resulting from observation and an experimental collage process, the works were inspired by New England and Mid-Atlantic woods and wetlands that have been threatened or destroyed by development. Far from being literal representations of their subjects, Packard's art explores and evokes nature's power to inspire, hinting at the way natural forms, relationships, and perceptions change with the passage of time.



*Refuge*, 2008, mixed media on paper mounted on linen



Listen to Packard's talk "Toward a Quaker Aesthetic" at <http://bit.ly/andreapackard>.

"In a world dominated by mass-produced imagery, I am fascinated by art that resists memorization and rewards a searching gaze. Many of my works look more naturalistic at a distance but offer a strikingly different experience up close where the cultural resonance of the material takes precedence. I'm curious about how distinct ways of experiencing the world can co-exist," she says.

—Carol Brévert-Demm

### SOLIDARITY WITH EGYPTIANS

Before marching across the campus on Feb. 1 to demonstrate solidarity for the Egyptian people's nonviolent revolt against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, a group of about 60 students—plus several members of the faculty and staff—gathered in Parrish Hall's Shane Lounge to watch a few minutes of news on Al-Jazeera, the Arabic-language news network that broadcasts worldwide also in English.

"This is a revolt of the people against tyranny," Nidal Al-Ayasa '11, a member of the Middle Eastern Cultural Society and of Students for Peace and Justice in Palestine, told the Feb. 2 *Daily Gazette*. "Our group wanted to call attention to this struggle and demonstrate support for people dying on the streets for freedom."

Three days after the demonstration, faculty members Tariq al-Jamil, assistant professor of religion; Shane Minkin, instructor of history; and Farha Ghannam, associate professor of anthropology led a well-attended discussion and answered questions on the events in Egypt.



ELEFTERIOS KOSTANS

### SWARTHMORE "BEST VALUE" FOR THIRD STRAIGHT YEAR

When The Princeton Review's selection of 100 Best Value Colleges was published earlier this year, *USA Today* journalist Mary Beth Marklein commented in a Feb. 22 article on fluctuations in the list during the past three years, suggesting that, due to the instability of the economy, many colleges are struggling to remain affordable.

For the third straight year, however, Swarthmore held firm at the top of the list, which comprises 50 public and 50 private schools culled from 700 that were surveyed. Factors weighed were undergraduate academics, costs, and financial aid—plus the percentage of graduating seniors who borrowed from any loan program and the average dollar amount of debt those students had at graduation. Trailing Swarthmore in the private-college rankings were Duke, Princeton, Caltech, Harvard, Wesleyan University (Conn.), Williams, Vanderbilt, Wesleyan College (Ga.), and Yale.

—Carol Brévarat-Demm

### NEW PROVOST TOM STEPHENSON

James H. Hammons Professor of Chemistry Thomas Stephenson was recently appointed by President Rebecca Chopp on the recommendation of the faculty to be the next provost of the College. On July 1, he will succeed Mari S. Michener Professor of Art History Constance Hungerford, who has held the position for 10 years. Hungerford, an expert in 19th-century French painting, will return to full-time teaching.

A faculty member since 1985 and a former chair of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, Stephenson has served as associate provost for information technology at the College as well as on the Council on Educational Poli-



ELEFTHERIOS KOSTANS

Tom Stephenson joined the faculty in chemistry in 1985 and previously served as associate provost for information technology.

cy, the Promotion and Tenure Committee, the Faculty Procedures Committee (on which he will also serve as provost), and the Ad Hoc Financial Planning Committee, among others.

As principal academic officer of the College, Stephenson will be responsible for overseeing the curriculum and the faculty. All the academic departments,

the library, athletics department, and information and technology services will report to him. He will chair the Council on Educational Policy and the Curriculum Committee and work with the academic departments on appointments, promotions, and academic program budgets.

“My role will be to provide structure, encouragement, and support for faculty and the academic program, and then get out of the way,” Stephenson says. “In addition, I’m sure that the strategic planning process will result in new directions and initiatives in the academic program. Leading the efforts to implement them will be a major focus of my work over the next few years.”

—Carol Brévarat-Demm

### A POLYGLOT CAMPUS

Everyone knows that the best way to learn a foreign language is to speak it—as much as possible. And that’s exactly what approximately 200 high school students will be doing on Swarthmore’s campus this summer, when the College becomes a host site for the Middlebury-Monterey Language Academy (MMLA). The MMLA offers the four-week residential language immersion program in five other states across the country, teaching Arabic, Chinese, French, German, and Spanish. Students residing on Swarthmore’s campus will focus on Chinese, French, and Spanish.

Patricia Maloney, the College’s director of summer programs says she’s delighted to have the MMLA on campus.

“We’ve been trying for a number of years to find an academic program that matches the mission of Swarthmore—a sound, rigorous program with an excellent reputation—and we believe we’ve found that in the MMLA,” she says.

According to Maloney, approximately 70 foreign language teachers and professors from high schools and colleges, including Swarthmore, have been encouraged to apply, says Maloney. They will cover a



MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

This summer, Swarthmore will become a host site for the Middlebury-Monterey Language Institute, a residential program for high school students. The program’s pledge “No English Spoken Here” ensures full-immersion foreign language learning for four weeks.

curriculum that includes instruction in language and culture during daylong programs that run from 9 a.m. to 9:15 p.m. On arrival, the students must take a language oath promising to speak only in their target language for the duration of the program—whether participating in language classes; study halls; dining; activities such as sports, ethnic cooking, or dance classes; chess; and field trips. They must surrender their cell phones and laptops, receiving them only to contact their families at given times. Participants will live in Willetts residence hall, divided into groups according to target languages and remaining together, except for Saturday evenings, when all students gather for a social, at which dances representing the various nationalities are performed.

“This is really pretty hard-core language immersion,” says Maloney, adding that the

College stands to benefit both financially and from the presence on campus of a large group of students of the kind that could find a good match with Swarthmore, as they make their college choices.

Children of Swarthmore alumni who wish to participate in the program are eligible for a discount.

—Carol Brévarat-Demm



## SIX NAMED FULL PROFESSOR; FIVE ARE TENURED

In February, the Board of Managers approved the promotion of six faculty members from associate to full professorship: Allison Dorsey, a historian specializing in African American history, African American women, American history, and the history of food. Philip Everson, a statistician whose research data include football, basketball, and baseball results; María Luisa Guardiola, a Hispanist who specializes in 19th- and 20th-century Spanish literature; Kathleen Howard, a chemist/biochemist whose research focuses on the use of magnetic resonance spectroscopy to investigate membrane-bound molecules; Aimee Johnson, a mathematician who researches dynamical systems that arose in the study of systems of differential equations and were used to model physical phenomena; and psychologist Andrew Ward, whose research interests include self-regulation and control, negotiation and conflict resolution, and social perception.

Five faculty members were promoted from assistant to associate professor with continuous tenure: Pallabi Chakravorty, a scholar of dance whose areas of interest include Kathak dance, dance theory, and dance and anthropology; Anthony Foy, an English literature scholar specializing in black literary and cultural history; biologist Nicholas Kaplinsky, an expert on plant temperature stress responses and cell wall biosynthesis; sociologist Lee Smithey, a scholar of peace and conflict, social movements, Northern Ireland, and qualitative methods; and political scientist Dominic Tierney, a scholar of American foreign policy and international security.

—Carol Brévert-Demm

## ADIEU À UN PROFESSEUR BIEN AIME

The College community mourns the Jan. 4 death of George Moskos, professor of French and James C. Hormel Professor in Social Justice. The College has lost a dedicated and talented teacher, a scholar eager to explore new intellectual territory, and a champion of justice and equality, wrote Maurice Eldridge, vice president for College and community relations and executive assistant to the president, in a letter to the College community. Moskos was 62 and is survived by his partner, Blair Gannon.

“George was intellectually vibrant and deeply embedded in French culture. He spoke exquisite French, and people often took him for a native speaker,” says Sibelan Forrester, professor of Russian and chair of the Modern Languages and Literatures Department. Hansjakob Werlen, professor of German, adds, “I learned so much about teaching from George—the way he engaged all students in class discussions allowed them to think expansively about the readings they had just completed and about the world.”

John Hassett, Susan W. Lippincott Professor Emeritus of Modern and Classical Languages, describes George as an “incredibly gifted language teacher” with a deep commitment not only to teaching his first love—19th-century French narrative—but also to the pedagogy of language teaching. “He was always looking for new and exciting ways to teach the language.”

Moskos joined the department in 1975 after earning a B.A. at Davidson College and a Ph.D. in French with a minor in art history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. A specialist in 19th-century French literature, he often also explored themes of identity, gender, and sexuality, sometimes co-teaching with colleagues outside his discipline and taking an active role in the comparative literature and women’s studies programs.

Thompson Bradley, professor emeritus of Russian, saw Moskos’s approach to teaching literature change over the years. When, with Werlen, they both co-taught *Red Star*, a classic novel of

the Russian revolution, Bradley suggests that Moskos emerged from that experience with his own postmodern theory (a reflection of his intense scholarly interest in contemporary literary criticism), seeing in this work, unlike his two colleagues, themes of gender bending and confusion. Bradley recalls that their weekly three-hour preparation meetings were some of the best and most vital discussions about art and politics he experienced during decades at Swarthmore.

Beyond his academic role, Moskos served on the Foreign Study and Sager committees as well as on the Faculty-Staff Benefits Committee, where he was instrumental in getting the College to support same-sex partner health benefits. He was also a director of the College’s program in Grenoble.

In 1997, Moskos was appointed to the James C. Hormel Professorship in Social Justice, a chair that recognizes a professor in any academic division whose teaching and scholarship stimulate increased concern for and understanding of social justice issues, including those pertaining to sexual orientation. Carole Netter, a lecturer in French, noted that the Hormel Professorship befitted the way Moskos lived his life: “George treated everyone with respect, gentleness, intellectual openness, and from a perspective of concern for justice and equality. He was a great defender of women and sexual difference.”

The high regard for Moskos felt by so many of his colleagues across the faculty is captured by one colleague and “buddy across the hall” for more than 30 years. Marion Faber, Scheuer Family Professor Emerita of Humanities and Professor Emerita of German, describes him as an inspiring teacher, charismatic and successful, loved not only by students but also faculty, hard working, high-spirited, and admired for his flair and sense of style.

College community members celebrated Moskos’s life at a Bond Hall gathering March 25.

—Adapted from a Jan. 10 message to the College community from the President’s Office.



DENG-JENG LEE

Moskos will be remembered for his inspiring teaching and concern for justice and equality—especially concerning sexual difference.

## Women Show Strength in Basketball, Swimming

### Men's Basketball (6-19, 3-15)

Will Gates '13 put together another spectacular season to lead the Garnet during the 2010–2011 campaign. The sophomore earned Centennial Conference honorable mention honors after leading the team in scoring average (18.3), rebounding average (6.5), and three-point shooting (33.1). With 851 career points, Gates has scored more points through his sophomore season than any player in program history. He scored in double figures in 23 of the Garnet's 25 games during the 2010–2011 season, including a streak of 39 consecutive games spanning his first two seasons. Gates also scored at least 25 points in five games during the season, including a career-high-tying 31-point performance against Moravian on Nov. 30. For his efforts during the season, he was named to the Equinox Classic and NYU New Year's Classic All-Tournament teams as well as MVP of the 11th Annual Wall-O'Mahony game at Johns Hopkins, which is played in honor of Johns Hopkins alumni Glen Wall and Matt O'Mahony, both of whom died in the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001.

As a team, the young Garnet started the season strong before stumbling in Centennial Conference play. Thanks to tight victories over Widener (74-72) in the season opener and Clark University (69-66) in the Equinox Classic, Swarthmore began the year at 3-0 for the first time since the 1996–1997 season. Conference play was highlighted by a convincing 73-59 victory over Centennial Conference runner-up Dickinson and a thrilling comeback win over Ursinus, in which the Garnet stunned the Bears by rallying from down nine points with less than 90 seconds left to play.

Several first-years put together impressive rookie campaigns, lending hope to the future. Jay Kober (11.8 points per game), Jordan Federer (8.1 points per game) and Jordan Cheney (23 blocks) all showed promise during the season and will be counted on to play an even greater role in 2011–2012.



JAKE MROZEWSKI



DAVE EVANS

### Women's Basketball (15-10, 11-9)

It was a season of milestones for the women's basketball team, which finished the season at 15-10, the program's best record since the 2004–2005 campaign.

Swarthmore opened the season by winning eight of its first 10 games, capturing championships at the season-opening Swat Tip-Off Tournament and NYU Holiday Classic in the process. After struggling at the start of Centennial Conference play, the Garnet regrouped, winning three of its last four games. Thanks to a thrilling 65-60 season-ending victory at rival Haverford, the Garnet finished the season in a three-way tie for fourth place in the Centennial standings. Unfortunately, Swat missed out on a playoff spot, losing out on tiebreakers for the final two playoff spots to Ursinus and Franklin & Marshall.

Leading the way for Swarthmore throughout the season was Kathryn Stockbower '11. The senior wrapped up one of the most decorated careers in program history by breaking several national, conference, and program records. On Feb. 5 at Johns Hopkins, Stockbower recorded the 80th double-double of her career, breaking the NCAA Division III record. Just three days earlier, she became Swarthmore's all-time leading rebounder in a game against Muhlenberg. At the conclusion of the season, Stockbower found herself as Division III's all-time leader in career double-doubles (83), Swarthmore's all-time leading rebounder (1,335) and third-leading scorer (1,677) as well as the Centennial Conference's fifth-leading scorer and second-leading rebounder. For her efforts, she was

Swimmer Daniel Duncan '13 (*above left*) won four medals at the men's Centennial Conference championship. Basketball player Ryan Carmichael '11 (*above right*) helped his team to its first 3-0 season start since 1996–1997; conference play was another story.

once again named to the All-Centennial Conference First Team, becoming only the second player in Conference history to be named to the First Team all four years of her career. Stockbower was just as impressive academically, as she became the first Swarthmore student-athlete since 2005 to be named to the Academic All-America College Division First Team.

Last but not least, Ceylan Bodur '11 became the eighth player in program history to reach the 1,000-point plateau—a milestone that would not have been possible if not for a touching display of sportsmanship from Tri-Co rival Bryn Mawr. After suffering a career-ending knee injury on Jan. 29 with 999 career points, Bodur was allowed to score the 1,000th point of her career on an uncontested layup after the tipoff in the Garnet's home finale against the Owls. Adding to the aura of the game was the fact that President Rebecca Chopp and Jane McAuliff, president of Bryn Mawr College, served as honorary coaches for their respective schools to show their joint support in promoting breast cancer awareness during the Garnet's annual WBCA Pink Zone game.



Watch Ceylan Bodur '11 score her 1,000th career point at <http://bit.ly/ceylan1000>.

## Men's Swimming

### (3rd in CC Championships)

Relying on depth across the board and contributions from members of every class, the Swarthmore College men's swimming team recorded a milestone-filled dual-meet season and finished third at the Centennial Conference Championships.

Daniel Duncan '13 had a breakout sophomore year, recording the team's top times and cracking the Conference top five in three events. He led the Garnet at the Championship meet with four medals, taking silver in the 200 IM (1:57.91) and 400 IM (4:12.33), and bronze in the 200 butterfly (1:56.95) and as a member of the 400 medley relay. John Flaherty '14 and Samuel Bullard-Sisken '12 grabbed three medals apiece at the Championship meet. Flaherty earned silver in the 200 butterfly (1:56.66) and bronzes in both IM distances (1:58.29, 4:13.01), and Bullard-Sisken set a new school record on his way to a silver in the 100 backstroke (52.73) in addition to a pair of relay bronze medals. Jake Benveniste '13 accounted for Swarthmore's final individual medal, touching third in the 1650 freestyle (16:27.41); Tim Brevart '12 tied the Swarthmore record in the 50 freestyle (21.23) in a fourth-place effort and also took home a couple of bronze medals along with teammates Bullard-Sisken, Duncan, and Stan Le '14 in the 400 medley and Bullard-Sisken, Le, and David Dulaney '11 in the 200 medley relays.

Travis Pollen '12 continued his personal assault on the S9 Paralympics record books, taking down the American record in both the 50 (24.74) and 100 (54.73) freestyles at the

championships.

The dual meet season (6-2, 4-2) peaked in a decisive victory over Franklin & Marshall on Nov. 13, snapping the Diplomats' 22-meet Centennial Conference winning streak.

## Women's Swimming

### (3rd in CC Championships)

One season removed from a fifth-place finish at the CC championships, the Swarthmore women's swimming team rebounded, thanks in part to an impressive group of freshmen, to take third place this year.

During the dual-meet season, the Garnet raced to a 6-3 overall record (5-2 CC), improving dramatically on last season's 4-6 (2-5) mark. Highlights of the season included wins over rivals Dickinson and Ursinus and performances by the Class of '14, with Rebecca Teng, Erin Lowe, and Maggie Regan regularly contributing top-point totals to the Swarthmore scores. Seniors Chelsea Brett, Sarah Bedolfe, Stephanie Su, and Allison Bishop also turned in successful final seasons.

At the Centennial Conference championship meet, Regan broke out in a big way, taking gold in the 400 IM (4:39.55) and silver in the 200 breaststroke (2:26.76). She also placed fifth in the 500 freestyle (5:19.01). Teng set the school record in the 200 IM (2:11.96), earning a silver medal. Lowe touched second in the 200 butterfly (2:09.69), and Hannah Gotwals '13 nabbed bronze (2:12.82).

## Women's Indoor Track and Field

### (6th in CC Championships)

Kenyetta Givans '12 defended her gold medal in the 55 meter hurdles, crossing the finish

line in an NCAA provisional and school-record time of 8.29, while also earning a bronze medal in the 55 meter dash with a personal-best time of 7.29 to highlight the Swarthmore College women's indoor track team's performance at the Centennial Conference Championships. As a team, the women finished sixth, improving by one place on last year's result.

Swarthmore earned a total of four medals at the Championships, including Givans' double-haul, as Rebecca Hammond '13 took silver in the 800 meter dash with a time of 2:22.07 and Chelsea Hicks '14 picked up bronze in the triple jump with a jump of 10.56m, which ranks sixth in program history.

Hicks started off her collegiate career with a bang, entering Swarthmore's all-time Top 5 in both the 55 meter hurdles and the triple jump at the season-opening Jack Pyrah Invitational at Villanova.

## Men's Indoor Track and Field

### (9th in CC Championships)

Chris Mayer-Bacon '11 finished in sixth place in the 55 meter hurdles with a personal-best time of 8.56 to lead the Garnet at the Centennial Conference Championships at Haverford College. Daniel Ly '12 also performed admirably at the meet, taking sixth place in the triple jump (13 m) and eighth in the long jump (5.97m). In the relays, the Garnet's best finish came in the distance medley, as the team of Henry Ainley '12, John McMinn '13, Aidan DuMont-McCaffrey '13, and Jake Weiner '14 took sixth place with a time of 10:59.59. As a team, Swarthmore finished in ninth place at the championships. At the Boston University Valentine Invitational two weekends before the Centennial Championships, Jacob Phillips '13 turned in one of the team's best individual performances of the season, finishing the 5,000 meter run in a time of 15:10.44, ranking eighth on the College's all-time performance list and nearly 40 seconds faster than his career-best time.

—Mark Anskis

Senior women's basketball players Summer Miller-Walfish, Kathryn Stockbower, Ceylan Bodur, and Sarah Brajtford and junior Brittany Schmelz sport the pink socks their team wore in the annual WBCA Pink Zone game promoting breast cancer awareness. After defending her gold medal in the 55-meter hurdles at the CC championship, Kenyetta Givans '12 went on to a ninth-place finish at the NCAA Div. III Indoor Championships, capping one of the top individual seasons in program history. For more on Givans, see page 27.

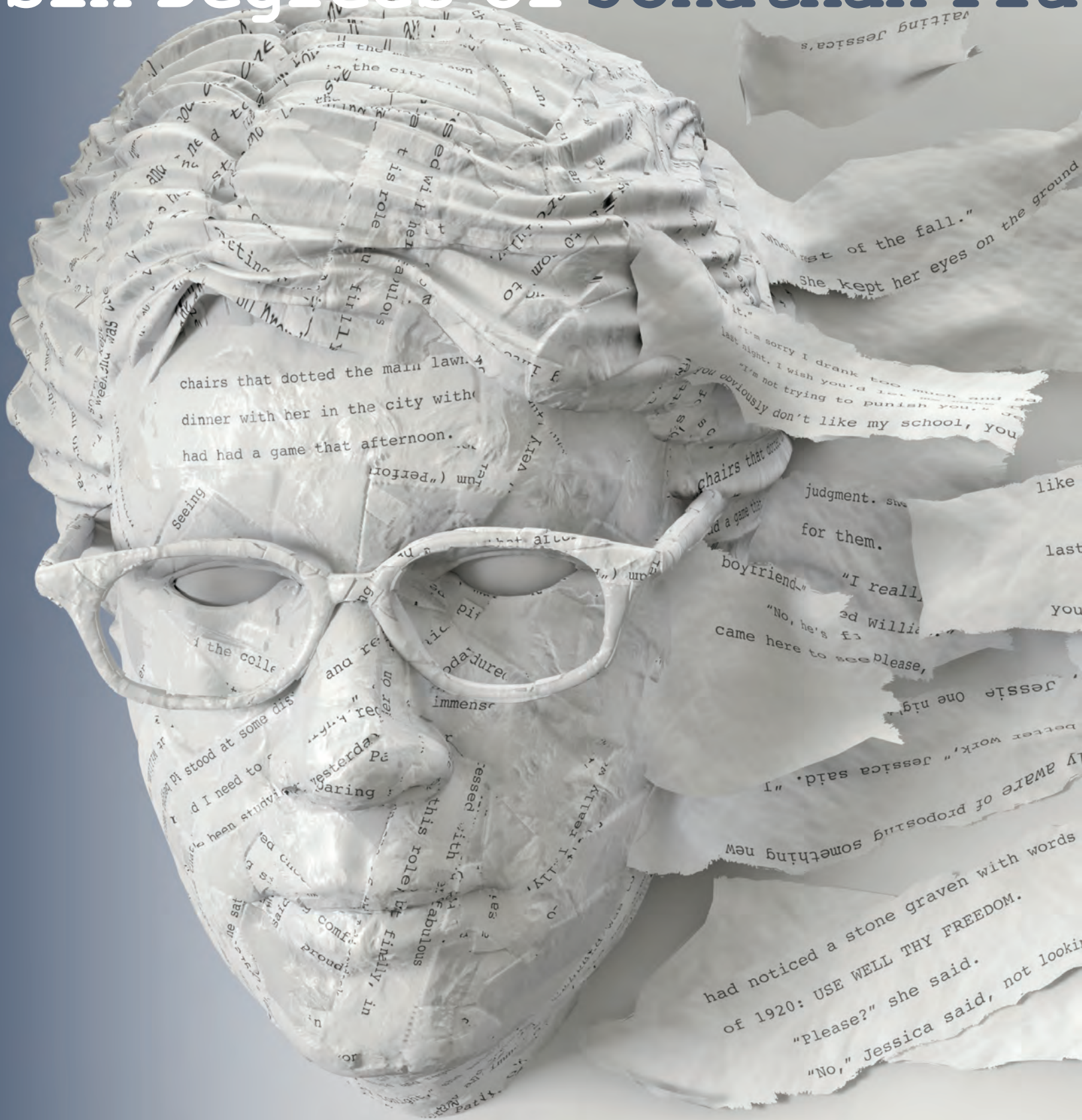


ELEFTHERIOS KOSTANS



PHIL KOONCE

# Six Degrees of Jonathan Fra



nzen

Before the  
NATIONAL BOOK AWARD,  
before OPRAH,  
before the *TIME* cover—  
before anything really,  
really big happened—  
JONATHAN FRANZEN '81  
taught fiction writing  
at Swarthmore.  
HIS STUDENTS  
REMEMBER IT WELL.

By Paul Wachter '97

I HAPPENED TO BE WALKING BY AN AIRPORT BOOKSTORE the day in September that Jonathan Franzen's fourth novel, *Freedom*, was released. It would have been impossible to miss the advance press—a photo of President Obama carrying a copy, the author on the cover of *Time*—but still I was surprised to see the book so prominently displayed. Twenty or so copies in a row, showing off the cover: "FREIHEIT."

I had just landed in Berlin.

Nearly a decade earlier, his third novel, *The Corrections*, had received an equally

warm reception from the critics and the public. And Franzen's past decade as a famous literary writer makes it easy to overlook the fact that for most of his writing life he had toiled in relative obscurity.

During this earlier period, in spring 1992 and 1994, Franzen returned to his alma mater to teach a writing workshop. He needed the money. "Those were tough times for me, financially and personally," he says. By then, he'd published two ambitious novels—*The Twenty-Seventh City* and *Strong Motion*—which received a sprinkling of

decent reviews but were not widely read. “At the time,” Franzen recently told *The Paris Review*, “I assumed the problem was not the writer but the wicked world.”

Most of the students who applied to Franzen’s workshops hadn’t read his work either. But they knew he was a professional writer, and “I don’t think many of us had met one before,” recalls Emily Chenoweth ’94, a 1992 workshop student. “And in that sense, he was exotic to a lot of us.”

Chenoweth published her well-received first novel *Hello Goodbye* in 2009. And she’s not the only fiction writer to emerge from the Franzen workshops. Adam Haslett’s [’92] short-story collection *You Are Not a Stranger Here* (2002) was a Pulitzer Prize finalist, and *Esquire* heralded his debut novel *Union Atlantic* (2010) as “the first great novel of the new century that takes the new century as its subject.” And Christopher Castellani ’94 is currently working on his third novel, following award winners *A Kiss from Maddalena* (2003) and *The Saint of Lost Things* (2005).

That each of these writers credit Franzen’s influence is perhaps unsurprising, but so too do classmates who went on to pursue careers other than fiction writing. “I’m a math education researcher, and, even in this field, I draw on what I learned from Jonathan,” says Ilana Seidel Horn ’93, a professor at Vanderbilt University. “There was a focus on narrative, the structure of a story, in the class that also applies to teaching better ways to learn math.”

I WAS SURPRISED BY HOW VIVIDLY FRANZEN remembers these classes. When I spoke to him on the phone, he rattled off the reading lists. Along with a story by his late friend David Foster Wallace—“Here and There,” which Wallace hated, Franzen says—he assigned selections by Jane Smiley, Lydia Davis, Charles Johnson, and Paula Fox, among others. (“A lot of women, I now realize,” Haslett says.)

Before 1992, Franzen hadn’t taught fiction writing, and he’d barely studied it formally.

“At Swarthmore, I took a playwriting workshop with [Professor Emeritus of Theater] Lee Devin and, during the spring of my senior year, I had two sessions with a visiting writer, Tom Farber,” he recalls. Unlike a lot of aspiring writers, Franzen never attended an M.F.A. program (though he was accepted at Brown). “I got married instead to a tough reader with great taste,” Franzen told *The*

*Paris Review*. “We had our own little round-the-clock M.F.A. program.” (Franzen and his former wife have since divorced.)

The workshop’s structure was traditional. Students turned in pages each week and took turns presenting every month or so. Castellani presented the 1992 class’s first story—“already, he was an unbelievably polished, beautiful writer,” Franzen recalls. On that first day of class, Franzen wrote two words

In *The Corrections*  
and even to a fuller  
extent in *Freedom*,  
which chronicles the  
sad dissolution of  
a marriage, Franzen  
manages to present  
these experiences—  
not directly, but,  
“like with papier-mâché,  
strip after strip,  
molding ever more  
lifelike features,  
in order to perform the  
otherwise unperformable  
personal drama.”

on the blackboard: “truth” and “beauty,” and told his students that these were the goals of fiction.

Haslett describes Franzen’s classroom manner as “serious.” “He meant what he said and didn’t suffer fools gladly.” But this seriousness was leavened by a “great relish for words and writing,” adds Kathleen Lawton-Trask ’96, a 1994 workshop student who is now a writer and high school English teacher. “People who teach fiction workshops aren’t always starry-eyed about writing, but he was.

He read our stories so closely that he often started class with a rundown of words that were not used quite correctly in stories from that week’s workshop. (I still remember him explaining to us the difference between cement and concrete.) At the same time, he was eminently supportive and sympathetic; I don’t remember those corrections ever feeling condescending.”

Which is not to say his students were deferential. “We were constantly challenging him, and I’m afraid we were a contentious bunch,” Castellani says. “At that time, English departments, and not just Swarthmore’s, were dominated by theory, and academic language had taken firm hold. So we were often battling between two modes of discourse—narrative and theory.”

Franzen invited David Foster Wallace to be the guest judge of the 1992 workshop, and Haslett’s story “1952” was declared the winner. Paula Fox judged the 1994 competition, won by Wendy Waesche Cholbi ’94, who is now a Web designer. “Her story wasn’t flashy in terms of prose, but I remember reading it with shivers and tears,” Franzen says.

Outside of class, Franzen was generous with his time. “Jonathan was a very generous responder,” says Jeff Severs, an English literature professor at the University of British Columbia. “We each handed in pages every week, and he responded with lots of questions and comments. I remember his red-ink check marks. He’d draw a 3-D check mark for really good stuff.” Franzen’s office hours were also very popular.

Of course, the more time he spent on his students, the less time there was for writing. “Jeff was turning in 20 pages a week,” Franzen says. “It was a pain in the ass, but it was also great stuff.”

“It’s a challenge most writers deal with,” says Castellani, who occasionally teaches M.F.A. courses and also directs Grub Street, a Boston-based creative writing center. “Some writers are good at striking a balance, like Dave Wallace,” who taught at Pomona College, Franzen says. “But for most, including myself, it’s a sacrifice.”

AFTER HIS 1994 STINT AT SWARTHMORE, Franzen taught only one other class, a 1997 M.F.A. workshop at Columbia. “The atmosphere at Swarthmore, working with undergraduates, was playful, but when you’re in an M.F.A. program, it’s about how to get published, how to make a career of it.”

## the students

### Christopher Castellani '94

"No good story could exist without conflict and desire, Jonathan used to say, and I still use that rubric when I examine my writing," says Christopher Castellani, author of two novels, *A Kiss from Madalena* (2003) and *The Saint of Lost Things* (2005).

"We sensed he was struggling, living fairly close to the bone. But that was by choice. He'd carved out as much room as was possible for his writing, and I admired him for it."

In 2007, Castellani returned to Swarthmore to teach a fiction workshop. "It was the very same class in the very same classroom."



### Emily Chenoweth '94

"I was a big reader by the time I came to college, but writing hadn't occurred to me," says Emily Chenoweth, who published her first novel,

*Hello Goodbye*, in 2009, chronicling a mother dying of cancer as her daughter comes into adulthood.

"I was in the English department and saw a sign for Franzen's class, but it turned out submissions were due that day at 6 p.m. So I went back to my room and wrote a story in a few hours and submitted it with a note saying as much. He let me in."

"Jonathan was a great teacher. He was encouraging, but he could also be stern. He wasn't afraid of calling people out." She also recalls that Franzen



was a stickler for 12-point Courier font.

Since *Hello Goodbye*, Chenoweth has published three novels pseudonymously for Alloy Entertainment, which produces young-adult literature such as *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* and *Gossip Girl*. She has also ghostwritten a young-adult novel for another publisher and is working on a fourth for Alloy. "That's my day job to pay the bills," Chenoweth says.

Like many other writers, Chenoweth, who received an M.F.A. from Columbia University, also teaches. "I'm teaching a workshop at Portland State," she says. "Of the 20 students in the class, I'd say that one almost certainly will be published. But I wouldn't discourage any of them from trying to make a go of it."

### Megan Cunningham '95

"I applied as a freshman, but didn't get in," says Megan Cunningham, founder of and CEO of Magnet Media, a production company based in Manhattan.

"Jonathan called me and was very kind. He encouraged me to

apply again. When he returned in 1994, I applied and was accepted into the workshop. The acceptance rate of the workshops was so competitive, and I was so moved that he was thoughtful enough to remember my freshman ambitions that I felt like I had been invited to qualify for the Olympics."

The writers Franzen exposed the class to—Don DeLillo and David Foster Wallace,—"were ones I didn't come across in my English classes, where it was mainly the classics,"



Cunningham says. "Reading more contemporary, midlist writers [not big names commercially but of high quality from a literary perspective], and constantly referencing them during our discussions, made us feel as though we were part of a larger community of writers."

"Jon was brutally honest, but he was constructive," says Cunningham, whose book of interviews *The Art of the Documentary: Ten Conversations with Leading Directors, Cinematographers, Editors, and Producers* was published by New Riders Press in 2005. "I remember one tip that's stuck with me. He said that you shouldn't have any specific, unhealthy rituals when you write. You shouldn't smoke while you write, for example. Because then, if you try to quit smoking, you'll find it increasingly challenging to write."



**Adam Haslett '92**

"Jon's greatest strength as a teacher was the seriousness he brought to the task of writing, to the idea of a life devoted to writing, and for that I've always been thankful because he treated me as a fellow writer, which allowed me to view myself as one."

"1952," was picked by

Franzen's friend David Foster Wallace as winner of the workshop's story contest. "Dave read that evening from what would later be published as *Infinite Jest*," Haslett recalls. "It was a high compliment to get the prize from him—he told me afterwards I had what they couldn't teach, words I didn't soon forget. There's no doubt that I owe some of my early confidence as a writer to Jon and the events of that semester back in '92."



**Ilana Seidel Horn '93**

When Ilana Seidel Horn came to the College, she was a classic Swarthmore student—"not knowing what to major in," Horn says. She was put off by the emphasis on postmodernism in the English department and ended

up a math major but nonetheless applied for Franzen's fiction workshop. "Most were humanities



**Kathleen Lawton-Trask '96**

"Overall, the thing I remember most about Jonathan these days is his generosity," writes Kathleen Lawton-Trask, who teaches English at Episcopal High School in Washington, D.C., and writes book reviews for *Publishers Weekly*. "Like many teachers, he was generous with his time and his encouragement. But he was also generous with his experience. He wasn't afraid to tell us about how the writing life worried him, nor about how worthwhile he found it. For that realistic portrait of a writer's life, I am enormously grateful to him."



**Jeffrey Severs '96**

"Jonathan was a very generous responder," says Jeffrey Severs, assistant professor of English literature at the University of British Columbia and self-described Pynchonian. "We each handed in pages every week, and he responded with lots of questions and comments. I remember his red-ink check marks. He'd draw a 3-D check mark for really good stuff."

A year after the workshop, Severs wrote Franzen seeking advice. Franzen replied with a "great, long letter that I really think of as an important contribution to my literary/intellectual development," Severs recalls in an e-mail. "I remember well a few lines from it in which he said the undergrad thesis idea I'd described—something having to do with race and pop culture and paranoia (I was really into Pyn-

chon at the time)—sounded safe and small-minded. He said that it seemed likely enough to earn me a Ph.D. somewhere but that I ought to be asking bigger questions.

"His suggestion was to compare *Gravity's Rainbow* to [Charles Dickens'] *Bleak House* (one of his favorites, I know—it was all over the vibe of *The Twenty-Seventh City*) in terms of coincidence and plotting. And, for a semester, I dutifully tried to compare Pynchon and Dickens. [I] sat reading *Bleak House* in Tarble and Palmer for many an hour. Finally, I figured out I'd only be able to really work on Pynchon...."

"Jon's greatest strength as a teacher was the seriousness he brought to the task of writing, to the idea of a life devoted to writing."



By then, Franzen had begun writing for *The New Yorker*, mostly nonfiction of an autobiographical bent. Many of the pieces turn up in Franzen's collection of essays *How To Be Alone* (2002) and his memoir *The Discomfort Zone* (2006). "I could earn as much money writing a piece for *The New Yorker* as I could teaching for a semester," Franzen says. "And I felt like I was learning more writing than teaching."

But Franzen stayed in touch with his former students, helping them out when he could. "He wrote a recommendation for me when I applied for an M.F.A.," Severs says. At Castellani's first public reading, Franzen introduced him.

Chenoweth recalls bumping into Franzen at parties in New York during her time as an M.F.A. student at Columbia; Horn once house-sat for Franzen's plants. And Haslett has become a close friend.

Franzen's first two novels owed much to Don DeLillo and Thomas Pynchon, whose reticulating, conspiracy-laden plots

often come at the expense of character. But *The Corrections*, which won the National Book Award, put character at the center with a close focus, in the form of interwoven novellas, on the unhappy Lambert family. And if every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way, the Lamberts' squabbles and grievances nonetheless resonated with a vast readership. (Part of the uncomfortable pleasure that comes from reading Franzen is the recognition of his characters' worst traits in oneself.)

"When your first two novels haven't found much of an audience, it makes sense to stop and try to figure out who *might* read a literary novel nowadays, and why they might be doing it," Franzen told *The Paris Review*. "I was a skinny, scared kid trying to write a big novel. The mask I donned was that of a rhetorically airtight, extremely smart, extremely knowledgeable middle-aged writer. To write about what was really going on in me with respect to my parents, with respect to my wife, with respect to my sense of self, with respect to my masculinity—there was just no way I could bring that to the surface." In *The Corrections*, and even to a fuller extent in *Freedom*, which chronicles the sad dissolution of a marriage, Franzen manages to present these experiences—not directly, but, "[l]ike with papier-mâché, strip after strip, molding ever more lifelike features, in order to perform the otherwise unperformable personal drama."

"When people ask me, 'should I pursue this as a career?' I feel it's my responsibility to be maximally discouraging," Franzen says. "It's such a long shot to make a sustainable living writing fiction."

A LARGE, GLOBAL AUDIENCE IS A RARE THING for a literary writer. For most, devoting one's life to writing means years of hardship, as it did for Franzen. "When people ask me, 'should I pursue this as a career?' I feel it's my responsibility to be maximally discouraging," he says. "It's such a long shot to make a sustainable living writing fiction."

His students recall his advice slightly differently. Franzen was never explicitly discouraging, says Lawton-Trask. "He was the first person who talked to me about my work as work, not practice—he presumed I wanted to write as well as published authors and talked to me as if I could." But he never sugarcoated the struggles of a writing life, either. On the last day of class, Lawton-Trask recalls, he brought in a box of mementos, including a quarterly statement showing a very small amount from his publisher and a hardback copy of his second novel that he'd found in a remainder bin.

It's a point Franzen illustrated again in the 1996 essay "Scavenging," in which one of his former students makes a cameo:

"Not long ago, one of my former undergraduate workshop students came to visit, and I took him on a walk in my neighborhood. Jeff is a skilled, ambitious young person, gaga over Pynchon's critique of technology and capitalism, and teetering between pursuing a Ph.D. in English and trying his hand at fiction. On our walk, as I was ranting at him, telling him that fiction is about refuge, not about social change, we passed a delicious trash pile. There was a paint and plaster-spattered wooden chair with a broken seat, and I found a scrap of two-by-four to knock the bigger clumps of plaster off. It was grubby work. Jeff said: 'This is what my life will be like if I write fiction?'"

*Paul Wachter writes in New York.*

majors, but I think Jonathan and I connected because he majored in German and also took some physics, I believe. We shared a certain nerdiness."

She also vividly remembers an encounter with David Foster Wallace, when he visited the campus to judge the workshop's fiction contest. "He clobbered me at ping pong in Tarble." Pre-graduation, she also house-sat for Franzen's plants.

# POSSIPLEX:

## Ted Nelson '59 and the Literary Machine

NELSON'S IDEAS, ONCE DISMISSED AS UTOPIAN, HAVE BECOME CENTRAL FACTS OF MODERN LIFE. BUT NONE OF THIS IS ENOUGH FOR HIM. THE COMPUTING WORLD WE KNOW IS BUT A DIM SHADOW OF WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

By Mark Bernstein '77  
Sketches by Ted Nelson '59

IN A WHARTON LOUNGE A LITTLE MORE THAN 50 YEARS AGO, a Swarthmore student named Ted Nelson tried to compose a difficult seminar paper. He was overflowing with ideas and awash in distractions, and he was intensely frustrated that these ideas could not be easily organized on paper. He wondered if the recently invented computer might play a role in solving the problem and sketched out some ideas for how a literary machine might facilitate better term papers, better libraries, and indeed a better repository for the world's documents. The pursuit of that idea changed the world.

The computer of 1958 was not a likely site for writing. Computers were scarce, expensive, and slow; even 20 years later, all of Swarthmore's administrative and academic computing needs were satisfied by a single computer with three 1-megabyte disk drives—a machine less powerful than today's smartphones.

In 1958, computers were chiefly associated with mathematical simulations for plotting artillery and with large-scale tabulation of census data. Occasionally, speculative articles and science fiction stories had envisioned intelligent and even literary machines. Alan Turing's 1950 paper on "Computing Machinery and Intelligence" imagined discussing a sonnet with a computer:

**Interrogator:** In the first line of your sonnet, which reads 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day,' would not 'a spring day' do as well or better?

**Computer:** It wouldn't scan.

**Interrogator:** How about 'a winter's day'?

That would scan all right.

**Computer:** Yes, but nobody wants to be compared to a winter's day.

Murray Leinster's science fiction short story "A Logic Named Joe" (1946) foresaw a network of preternaturally helpful computer terminals, spreading chaos in their eagerness to provide answers to awkward questions. But these were speculations about a distant future; Nelson thought his system was imminently achievable and set out to build it.

*Possiplex* is Ted Nelson's new autobiography—an account of "movies, intellect, creative control, my computer life, and the fight for civilization." It chronicles Nelson's struggle to build a world of interconnected information that would be readily available to nearly everyone, built upon a sustainable foundation of justice toward writers. That the Web we know comes close to Nelson's original vision strikes most of Nelson's colleagues as remarkable. But Nelson views this without satisfaction. It is all—he has long warned us—all wrong.

SWARTHMORE'S ASSOCIATION WITH HYPERTEXT runs deep. Nelson, who coined the term, graduated in 1959 and returned as a lecturer in 1977—where I first met him and first caught the hypertext bug. His classmate Andries van Dam '59 earned one of the first doctorates in computer science, was central to the development of computer graphics, and over the span of four decades has worked on hypertext systems for creating and reading electronic books. Five Swarthmore alumni from the 1970s started my cur-



rent employer Eastgate Systems, which has published literary hypertexts and designed hypertext writing tools since 1982. Justin Hall '98, while a freshman, started [www.links.net](http://www.links.net) and crafted what was arguably the first confessional weblog.

*Possiplex* makes it clear that Swarthmore exerted and continues to exert a strong influence on Nelson. This starts with the College's foundational belief in the equal dignity of



This copy of a sketch by Ted Nelson (inset top, in 1959, and right, in 2011) shows a “docuverse” based on “hypertext”—both coined by the computer visionary.



TECH MUSEUM OF INNOVATION

art, science, and engineering: All of Nelson’s work emphasizes their unity. The omnivorous intellectual interests (and lengthy reading lists) long characteristic of Swarthmore students are reflected in Nelson’s insistence that reading is nonsequential, that each reader must be free to follow fresh paths as spirit and understanding dictate. Where Vannevar Bush foresaw the computer as a workstation for elite scientists (assisted by a legion of “girls” working at their keyboards), Nelson insisted from the outset on “Computers for the People,” proclaiming, “You can and must understand computers now.”

AT A TIME WHEN ONLY LARGE INSTITUTIONS owned computers, Nelson wrote about *personal computing*. His vision of ubiquitous computers has become commonplace and his dream of a docuverse of interlinked literature—a global library accessible from desks and tablets and cell phones throughout the world—is now real. The implementation of these literary machines was deeply influenced by Nelson’s books, and many of the engineers and entrepreneurs who designed and built the pioneering systems saw themselves as Nelson’s followers. Nelson earned fame among his colleagues, was knighted an *Officier des Arts et des Lettres* in France in 2001, and obtained a Ph.D. from Keio University in 2002. His ideas, once dismissed as utopian, have become central facts of modern life.

None of this is enough for Nelson. The computers we use and the Web we know seem to him but dim shadows of what might have been. Personal computing has often merely simulated paper, letting people dress up their typewritten reports with chart junk and fonts. The docuverse Nelson proposed in Project Xanadu® in 1960 would have had the

Time and again, Nelson has been frustrated by investors, managers, and colleagues who do not understand or cannot quite believe his vision, and by developers who stray from his designs.

reach of the Web and yet might not suffer many of the Web's irritations and failings. Links in Xanadu would never break, and old pages would never disappear. Copyright controversies would be fewer, because Xanadu would permit easy reuse with reasonable compensation to the original creator. The contemporary Web's cacophony of advertising, its plague of link spam, its blights of piracy and plagiarism, might all have been reduced or avoided had the Xanadu approach prevailed.

*Possiplex* records two recurring struggles: Nelson's struggle to be understood, and his fight to retain "creative control." Time and again, Nelson is frustrated by investors, managers, and colleagues who do not understand or cannot quite believe his vision, and by developers who stray from his designs.

Nelson's parents, actress Celeste Holm and director Ralph Nelson, divorced soon after his birth, and Nelson was raised by his maternal grandparents. He was not close to his parents (his mother is not mentioned in this volume on advice of his attorney) but one defining experience was a rare visit, at age 13, to see his father direct the live television broadcast of a soap opera. Shortly after the show began, one of the cameras failed, and all the carefully rehearsed camera moves were suddenly useless.

"Ralph, with military composure and the ever-present cigarette, started talking on the intercom, with one eye on his script and one eye on the monitors that fed from cameras two and three. 'Camera three to the kitchen, focus on Mama... Hold it there, camera three. Switch to camera three. Camera two to the kitchen, focus on Nels. Switch to camera two.'"

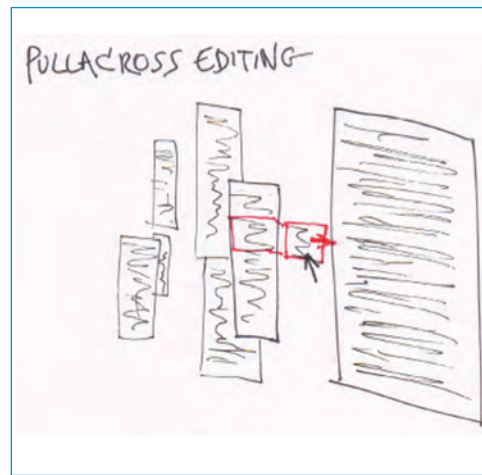
This dream of art and command stayed with Nelson and has shaped his vision of how software ought to be created. "Most software," Nelson writes, "has no director—nobody with the authority to decide and change every part—and that's why it's all so lousy." His models are Frank Lloyd Wright and Orson Welles, visionaries in command of teams dedicated to implementing the master's imagination.

Nelson loathes interfering editors, meddlesome managers, and disobedient craftspeople.

"I have almost always worked with programmers that I like and respect—I won't

mention the exceptions—and some have been deep friends. About half of them have been deeply faithful to my designs. Others, however, often want to add their own 'creative touches,' which range from annoying to disastrous."

Nelson's vision of software created by specification and implemented by subservient coders, once canonical, is now out of favor. The pleasures of improvisatory coding in the basement of Beardsley Hall, once a shameful secret among Swarthmore students, are today enshrined in Kent Beck's *Extreme Programming Explained: Embrace Change* and in the *Manifesto for Agile Software Development*,



*opment*, a collaborative effort in which Beck was one of 12 co-authors.

Artisanal software is again esteemed; in his recent book *The Design of Design*, Frederick Brooks Jr. observes that although there are many ways to develop profitable software products, the software that people truly admire is usually designed by individual auteurs or very small teams. But where Nelson expected developers to provide craft services, like riggers and gaffers, software designers more frequently implement the work themselves and communicate with their colleagues and subordinates through program code.

Time and again, Nelson seeks out an authority—Marshall McLuhan, Vannevar Bush, Bill Gates, Jack Lang—to whom he longs to explain his vision. Almost invariably, their response fails to satisfy him. Nelson recalls a party in 1961 given by John W. Campbell, the legendary science fiction editor, at which Nelson told Isaac Asimov that "soon we'll be reading and writing on computer screens."

"Yeah, *sure...*" said the great futurist. Sarcasically.

Nelson was then a graduate student in his mid-20s. Asimov, at 41, was about to abandon fiction. Campbell was a decade older, his influence had peaked nearly 20 years before, and his career was essentially over. Under these circumstances, "soon" might have meant one thing to Nelson and another to Asimov, yet that skeptical sarcasm still wounds.

NELSON HAS LONG AVOIDED EDITORS and publishers. In much of his writing, especially the influential *Computer Lib/Dream Machines* (1974), self-publication has yielded energetic, discursive, quirky books that are instantly recognizable. In *Possiplex*, Nelson again uses an assortment of running heads and typographic gestures to represent myriad intermingled threads of his intellectual life. This self-edited book is sometimes rough, but small errors and infelicities cause but a trifling distraction. Nelson has always viewed writing as a living thing—malleable and fluid; loose ends and missing antecedents can be corrected in later editions.

Though Nelson calls this volume an autobiography, it might be better to view it as a guide to his papers. Those papers, scattered in warehouses across the country, are voluminous, for Nelson was an inveterate taker of notes. He took notes in conferences, he took notes during coffee breaks. No discussion at dinner was too casual to memorialize, no late-night beer was unaccompanied by pen and clipboard. In later years, Nelson's tape recorder and video camera supplemented the record, and an interview with Nelson meant two tape recorders on the table: one for the reporter and one for Nelson's files. This legendary trove of notes is so unwieldy that Nelson himself has not used it in composing this volume, but *Possiplex* will be a uniquely valuable guide for Nelson's biographers. If only we had built Xanadu, Nelson reminds us, those notes would be online and not in boxes, each note would be accessible for use, revision, and reuse, and we could easily trace who had used each excerpt. At 73, Nelson continues to work to build Xanadu. In a turbulent age that urgently needs better literary machines, each step toward that goal matters. ♡

# A BALANCING ACT

HOW DO STUDENTS ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN BALANCE WHILE DEVELOPING THEIR INTELLECTUAL AND PERSONAL POTENTIAL?

FOR MANY, IT INVOLVES ACTIVE AND INTENTIONAL MEMBERSHIP IN COMMUNITY—BOTH ON AND OFF CAMPUS.

DAVID OPOKU '12 CREDITS THE LANG CENTER for Civic and Social Responsibility with helping bring his dream of starting a library in Ghana to fruition.

Sable Mensah '11 is proudest of the literary magazine she produced with students she tutored in Chester, Pa.

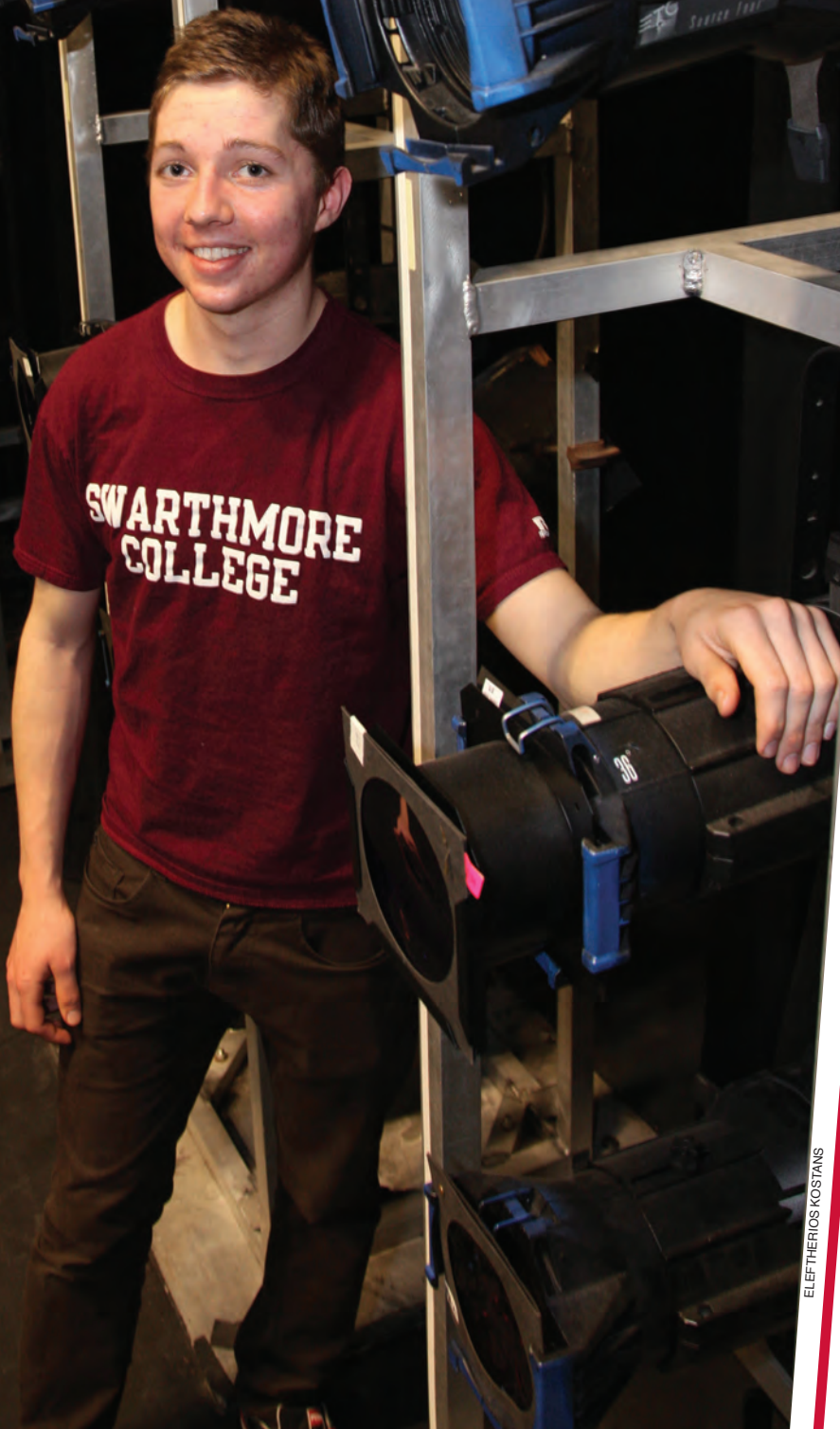
Charles Tse '13 says the opportunities he's had to meet with alumni in the finance industry will help him prepare for his future career.

And highlights of Shelly Wen and Morgan Bartz's first year on campus include putting together ambitious events that wouldn't have taken place had it not been for their decision to make them happen.

No matter their class year, major, or background, Swarthmore students are driven by their shared passion for fully developing and exploring their academic interests. They are also equally motivated to fitting—make that cramming—as many opportunities and extracurricular activities into their lives at Swarthmore as they possibly can. While some pursuits are purely for fun, others are, perhaps not surprisingly, intimately tied to their intellectual pursuits and achieving their future goals.

"I feel like I'm getting a better sense of where the line between happily busy and overwhelmed busy is, for me," says Alex Cannon. "Each week seems to drag, but looking back—whoa, my freshman year is almost over. It's freaky. And it makes me want to make the most of my time."

ELEFTHERIOS KOSTANS



How do they do it? How do they keep their energy up in the face of Swarthmore's daunting workload? How do they achieve—and maintain—balance while developing their intellectual and personal potential? How do they establish and build on their shared experiences in a community that is diverse in so many ways? And, in an environment that so highly prizes intellectual rigor, how are they getting the skills they need to prepare them for fulfilling lives and to take leadership roles in the world?

These are among the questions being asked at Swarthmore this year as the College continues its year-long strategic planning process and engages alumni, faculty, students, and staff in conversation about its mission, traditions, present strengths, and future challenges.

Within that context, members of the working group on the Evolving Mission, Values, and Goals of the College have been delving deeply into the quality and characteristics of students' lives, both in and out of the classroom.

"It's very clear to us that the power of a liberal arts education lies in students being fully immersed in an incredible learning laboratory," says Dean of Students Elizabeth Braun, the group's co-convenor. "At Swarthmore, students learn a style of leadership that is grounded in community, Quaker values, and civic engagement. It's a core part of our

Theater major Eva Amessé (right, with Nell Bang-Jensen '12) in Edward Albee's *Three Tall Women*. The acting honors thesis play is just one of Amessé's many "roles" at Swarthmore. She's also a writing associate, resident assistant, and senior class vice president.



JUNE XIE '11

identity and, in many ways, our work is to lift up those positive aspects of life here and build on them."

Three common themes have emerged from the group's in-depth conversations and those of others across campus, and beyond: the need to provide outlets for achieving greater balance and resilience; opportunities to develop leadership and life skills, and the means to affirm and enhance a sense of community.

"The aspects of the Swarthmore experience that we want to reinforce," says working group chair Koof Kalkstein '78, "will be informed by—and will validate—the core mission of the residential liberal arts college."

### ACHIEVING BALANCE

Making the transition to Swarthmore from high school can be intimidating for many students, even though the change is almost always a welcome one. For Haydil Henriquez '14 from the Bronx, coming to Swarthmore was a relief after being with peers who didn't take academics seriously. "Half of my senior class didn't graduate," she laments. "The change in social atmosphere here was profound. People care about grades. They're hardworking and super diligent."

Yet Henriquez struggled. "To be honest, I found myself silencing myself in class," she says. "I was afraid to sound dumb. But there's a huge support system." Establishing a bond with her academic adviser, Assistant Dean Rafael Zapata, she says, has been critical. "I see him weekly, and he's more like my life adviser," she admits. "Enlace and SASS [cultural groups for Latino and African American students, respectively] also did a great

job of welcoming the entire class, telling us there's a place for each of us here."

Another key facet of the academic experience that smoothes the transition to Swarthmore is a first semester in which students need not worry about grades—courses are ungraded and counted as either "credit" or "no credit."

"I can't stress enough how important that was for me," says Alex Cannon '14 from Essex, Conn., who found himself last fall in two plays that were performed on back-to-back weekends. "Given the rehearsal hours needed for each one, my schoolwork suffered."

The takeaway? "Doing two plays at once is probably not the best idea in the future," he says, smiling. "Without pass/fail, I would have learned the same lesson, but at a much higher cost."

Despite an increased focus this semester on his studies and a conscious decision to cut back on his extracurricular activities, Charles Tse still made time to attend a campus business mixer hosted by Alumni Council member Rob Steelman '92, senior credit analyst at Commercial Industrial Finance Corporation. Tse, an honors economics major and math minor from Hong Kong, regularly seeks opportunities to meet with alumni, especially those in the financial industry. This year, he spent time with research analyst Julian Harper '08 at the campus Lax Conference on Entrepreneurship as well as with Deutsche Bank's Karan Madan '91 during an externship in New York City during winter break.

"My time at Deutsche Bank was fabulous and definitely got me more exposure to the industry," says Tse, who also interned at the Hong Kong Monetary Authority last summer. "I mainly shadowed his analysts in sales, trading, and structuring, but just being in the environment benefited me. And I remember thinking, 'Wow, I'm on Wall Street. It's the American dream.'"

In response to student interest, campus efforts are underway to provide additional opportunities to promote greater balance in their lives, including Pilates classes, nutrition workshops, and yoga, qui gong, and aerobics sessions. These and other programs are planned by Worth Health Center nurse practitioner Suzie Long and students on the Swat Wellness Awareness Team (SWAT).

"The energy and effort that I have invested in promoting health and wellness among my fellow students ultimately stems from my interest in medicine and my sincere desire to help improve people's quality of life," says Zheng Zheng '11, an honors biology major and English literature minor from Wynnewood, Pa., who has been involved with SWAT since its founding in fall 2009.

“When I applied to Swarthmore, I thought, ‘I’ll focus on my academics, run track, and join SOCA (Students of Caribbean Ancestry)—that was it,” says Kenyetta Givans ’12 (center). “But all these amazing opportunities came up. And I realized that if I used my time well, then I could do it.”



PHILIP KOONCE '12

Learning the value of time management and of balancing commitments is perhaps one of the biggest lessons first-year students are introduced to once on campus. Given their propensity to become involved in every group and activity they find interesting, it can be a steep learning curve. Of course, not every activity has to, or even should, inform or reflect academic interests. Some are just for fun.

“I think it’s important for SWAT to provide these healthful opportunities and wellness programs to promote relaxation and stress-reduction among Swatties, and to really give students the opportunity to attend to their overall sense of well-being.”

Learning the value of time management and of balancing commitments is perhaps one of the biggest lessons first-year students are introduced to on campus. Given their propensity to become involved in every group and activity they find interesting, it can be a steep learning curve. Often, hard choices are impossible to escape.

“It was awesome coming here, knowing I wouldn’t have to give up lacrosse,” says Morgan Bartz, a potential cognitive science and film and media studies major from Bethel, Conn. Ultimately, she passed on the team’s training trip to Colorado Springs during spring break in order to accompany her documentary filmmaking practicum to the Dominican Republic.

“Even taking the [film] class, I had to decide to be late for practice once a week,” she admits. “It’s a learning experience to juggle both, and in the future I probably will schedule things differently. For now, the class wins out.”

Upperclassmen confirm Bartz’s suspicions

that, with better planning, things do improve.

“As a freshman, I did everything—and you learn you can’t do that,” says Eva Amessé ’11, a theater major from Staten Island whose “roles” on campus also include resident assistant, writing associate, and senior class vice president. “I couldn’t continue in the College Chorus or Rhythm n Motion, which I adored. But they just didn’t fit in my schedule. I think the biggest challenge we all face is knowing when we’ve taken on too much.”

“In life, that’s also true,” agrees Camilia Kamoun ’11, an Islamic studies special major and pre-med student from Wynnwood, Pa., who played key roles in establishing the Global Health Forum and the Middle Eastern Cultural Society. “It’s another skill you learn. My choices of where to spend my time are based on my future goals. I hope to engage with these issues throughout my life.”

Establishing those close connections between their academic and extracurricular lives is especially meaningful for students

and often helps sustain them. Spring is the favorite time of year for Judy Diep ’13, a chemistry major from Brooklyn, because of all the events planned for Asian and Pacific Islander American (APIA) Month organized by the Swarthmore Asian Organization (SAO).

“SAO is a great resource that provides motivation to work harder in your classes,” says Diep, a co-president of the group. “When you have an organization that excites you, the energy and pride you invest in it starts spreading to everything you do.”

Diep also credits an SAO-sponsored panel of women faculty members last fall with helping her in class. “They talked about speaking in public and how they dealt with self-silencing,” she says. “That helped me reflect more on the ways I can approach speaking up in my classes, as well as when I share my opinions and ideas in my extracurricular activities.”

Of course, not every activity has to, or even should, inform or reflect academic interests. Some are just for fun. Ben DeGolia ’11, an honors philosophy and political science major from Palo Alto, Calif., has played guitar for years, a practice he continues both in the Swarthmore Mariachi Band and informally with hallmates in Wharton. When they

can get together in the dorm, the threesome—two guitars and a fiddle—plays mostly folk and a little bluegrass.

“Guitar, exercise, meditation—they are all sources of stress relief,” says DeGolia, who transferred to Swarthmore as a junior. “It’s a paradox: The more stressed you feel, the more inclined you feel you should be in McCabe. But in general, Swarthmore students are better than we tend to think at balancing work with extracurricular activities that help them de-stress.”

Still, the pull to combine the two is strong. Shelly Wen, an SAO member from Mesa, Ariz., played violin in the orchestra last fall, but decided this semester to form a trio with a couple of friends—for credit.

“We really wanted outside criticism from a qualified coach in order to be better,” she says. “So we approached the music department and are now part of the Fetter Chamber Music Program. But I still see it as extracurricular, sort of like how I see my work in SAO as academic. There isn’t a clear one or the other.”

The academic experience of many students—between 40 and 45 percent—includes a semester or more of study abroad, coordinated by the College’s Off-Campus Study Office. On their return, they are often rejuvenated and loaded with fresh perspectives—both on life in general and on how to approach life on campus.

Sable Mensah, a black studies major and history minor from the Bronx who studied in Brazil, acknowledges that she was overextended as a sophomore, most notably for combining her most academically rigorous semester to date with her work in a Swarthmore Foundation-supported literary magazine project pursued through the Dare 2 Soar tutoring program in Chester.

“It was incredibly rewarding but intense, and it consumed a lot of energy and emotion,” she says. “I was at class, then in Chester, then at class. Constantly moving between the wealth and resources of Swarthmore and the lack thereof in Chester had a profound impact on me.”

By the time she returned from Brazil, Mensah had a better understanding of what she wanted from the College. “I’m really interested

in building a relationship with the frosh and mentoring them so they can learn what I know now,” she says.

Kenyetta Givans ’12, a biology major from Conshocken, Pa., also returned from her experience abroad—a field study program in a remote section of Australia’s subtropical rainforest—with a renewed outlook.

“This semester is the most relaxed I’ve been,” she says. “I’ve adopted the Queensland lifestyle. I used to stress before every exam, but I realize now that’s counterproductive. Going abroad and coming back helped me reassess how I prepare. I’m doing more than I’ve ever done, but without stressing.”

All of that activity, however, still can leave precious little time to socialize and hang out with friends. So perhaps it is no surprise that, with their highly developed time management skills, students often find themselves planning their “free” time.

“Rhythm n Motion is a really great way for me to forget everything,” says David Opoku, a biology major with a minor in computer science from Ghana who dances with the group every week. “In the studio, I just allow my body to move and relax. It’s my ‘organized’ fun.

“People understand it’s healthy to balance everything,” he adds. “I don’t know how they do it, or how *I* do it, but somehow we get it done. Academics or having fun—whatever it is, it’s always driven by passion.”

## LEARNING LEADERSHIP

For generations, Swarthmore alumni have assumed leadership roles in society, fulfilling a raw potential that likely already existed when they arrived at college. Opportunities to develop those skills exist in numerous venues across campus, sometimes in not such obvious places.

For Opoku, who is close to bringing to fruition his dream of starting a library in

Ben DeGolia ’11 (*center*), who transferred to Swarthmore as a junior, says his campus experience has exceeded his expectations. “I had ideas of it being a rigorous, great place, and assumed academics would rule,” he says. “But I definitely did not expect it to be so balanced. It’s just really important to the faculty and administration for the students to have a rounded experience.”



STUART WATSON



**Editor's note:** This article is the second in a series that will highlight four areas of inquiry in the strategic planning process. Conversations around these topics, which are intended to be as wide-ranging and inclusive as possible, will culminate in a draft planning document in summer 2011. After this draft is presented to the Board of Managers in September, it will again be the subject of community discussions. It is expected that a final draft will be presented to the Board in December.

All members of the Swarthmore community are encouraged to participate. The College's strategic planning website contains questions, documents, links to resources, and updates on the thinking of the various working groups charged with creating the plan. The site also presents many interactive opportunities to contribute to the thinking going on at the College. Find it all at <http://sp.swarthmore.edu>.

Ghana, this is especially true. Opoku credits applying for—and not getting—support from the Lang Center for helping him learn this lesson. “When I didn’t get the Lang Opportunity Scholarship or Davis Project for Peace grant, I felt boxed in and wanted to give up,” he admits. “But it’s not really about me getting a grant. It’s about helping other people. So finding other ways got my hopes up again.”

Instead, Opoku started a group—African Development on Organized Reading Education—that recently received its charter from Student Council, making it eligible for Student Budget Committee (SBC) funding. “The plan is to hold book drives every year, expand to other colleges, and have a conference for students interested in African development to tackle these issues,” he says eagerly. “It’s slow going, but ideas are becoming more solid, with more potential than I thought of.” After a successful campuswide book drive and raising money for the shipping, Opoku plans to send his 1,000-plus books to a school in Techinan, Ghana, in May.

According to authors Steven Koblack and Stephen Graubard in their book on the subject, the residential liberal arts college is a distinctively American invention. And although fewer than five percent of the baccalaureate degrees granted in the United

States each year come from institutions like Swarthmore, a disproportionate number of liberal-arts graduates find their way into the ranks of America’s political, professional, economic, social, artistic, and intellectual leaders.

Is it something in the water? Or do residential liberal arts colleges, by creating full-time communities of learning, educate the whole person in ways that help them grow not just intellectually but as human beings? From its founding, Swarthmore has been a residential college where men and women live and study together—a radical idea in the 1860s, but one that has stood the test of time.

“It just happens to us,” says Chris Geissler ’13, an honors linguistics and religion major from Maple Shade, N.J., who as a member of the fencing team handled logistics for the largest collegiate fencing tournament in the world when Swarthmore hosted the USACFC National Championships his freshman year. “Taking something and running with it seems to be something we’re good at,” he says. “The culture here—so intellectual, while also socially aware—is one in which we

**“We help students find their own definitions of leadership,” says Dean Braun. “One way we think about it is sort of non-traditional—collaborative in many ways, non-hierarchical, and group-based.”**

see, look for, and find connections with other people. And as we chug along, there’s often some point when we run into a situation where we can choose to take action—and we often do.”

As a member of the environmental group Earthlust, Bartz says she mostly just observed last semester. “But then I saw the documentary *Gasland* [about hydrofracking gas drilling],” she says. “I was so angered by the blatant disregard for the environment after seeing it, I agreed to plan an event that brought the director to campus.” An attempt had been made the year prior to have director Josh Fox visit, but it never panned out.

After two months of planning, Bartz arranged for multiple campus screenings leading up to his March visit this year, during which he discussed his film and met with students.

“I’m definitely not an expert on Marcellus Shale drilling and hydrofracking,” Bartz says. “But I’m passionate about learning as much as I can on the subject, and I want other students to learn about it as well.”

## COLLABORATION AND TRUST

Leadership takes many forms in a residential college—and many natural leaders gravitate to campus jobs designed to help their fellow students. Three such positions—resident assistants (RAs), student academic mentors (SAMs), and counseling advisers (CAs)—may seem quite different but, during orientation, work together in teams.

“This approach not only benefits the new students, but gives the RA, SAM, and CA a chance to learn from each other and their unique leadership styles,” explains Assistant Dean for Residential Life Rachel Head. “At the same time, we also encourage leaders to become followers, depending on the issues being dealt with.”

Additional positions in which students directly serve each other are found all over campus and are also known by their acronyms. As a science associate (SA), Givans attends every intro Bio 2 lecture and meets regularly with the professor to discuss his goals for the given week. She also meets with fellow SAs to talk about effective ways to teach. “It’s not about ‘telling’ students what to know,” she says, “but working on how they can come up with the answers themselves.”

Eva Amessé does similar work as a writing associate (WA), working with students in one-on-one conferences. “Writing a paper doesn’t have to be something scary you do by yourself in your room,” says Amessé, who has also worked as the program’s outreach coordinator. “It’s okay to ask for help.”

For Amessé, theater provides another opportunity to use her leadership skills, also within a collaborative model. Each fall, senior theater majors must be involved in a production with limited involvement from the faculty. It’s known as Senior Company and by design is different every year.

“We were five actors, so we collectively directed by doing a lot of table work and

Will Hopkins '11 believes there is value in a return to how the College historically institutionalized its Quaker heritage: "A reconstituted Collection keeps popping up in my mind as a way for the campus to come together and reflect on how we can be stronger as a community."

assigning scenes to each person to develop," says Amessé of her class's decision to produce Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. "In the beginning, we weren't sure we could do it successfully, but we drew on everyone's strengths and talents—music, movement—and spent a lot of time solidifying our common vision. And it's one of the productions I'm most proud of. We decided what to put on, how to spend the budget—it exemplifies Swarthmore's commitment to doing things nontraditionally and letting students lead."

Similar leadership and skill-building opportunities for students abound—whether in working closely with their faculty mentors, presenting their research at campus poster

sessions or national conferences, or in allocating funding for groups through SBC or the Social Affairs Committee (SAC). At their core is trust.

"We help students find their own definitions of leadership," says Dean Braun. "One way we think about it is sort of non-traditional—collaborative in many ways, non-hierarchical, and group-based."

That approach fosters an environment in which all students have the opportunity to pursue leadership roles in well-established programs—or create new ones. After Shelly Wen and a friend noticed they had both stayed on campus during fall break, they thought "it would be cool" to do "something special" during spring break.

As a result, they planned a science outreach project and, with a grant from the Swarthmore Foundation, conducted a series of experiments with children at a Dare 2 Soar site in Chester. "We heard later from people there that students would ask, 'When is science time going to start?'" she says. "This was the first time I coordinated something that had never been done before. I created the template, and it was really great."

Even when the template exists, as SAO co-president Kevin Li '13 has found, help from the administration can play a much-appreciated role. "Dean Braun is coming to APIA events this month and is talking about how

to build leadership among clubs on campus," he says. "It's also hard to find funding at other schools, but we're well funded. Here, they let students decide where the money goes."

For Bartz, who had never organized a major event at Swarthmore before, successfully bringing *Gasland's* Josh Fox to campus helped expand her thinking about the role she imagines playing here in the future.

"Now I know I can have an impact and can have a say in helping different groups on campus," she says. "I feel like his visit and the *Gasland* screenings could be the beginning of something. There's no group yet on campus that deals with hydrofracking, but who knows? The whole point of the event is to be a catalyst for something." [An anti-fracking group has since formed and now meets weekly.]

## LIVING IN COMMUNITY

For many students, the desire to seek leadership positions is directly tied to their decision to actively and deliberately contribute to the community, both on campus and off. It's their way of giving back.

Li, an honors economics and computer science major from Columbia, Md., puts it plainly. "I care a lot about the SAO community and I want it to succeed," he says. "If I don't do my part, it won't. We are a well-oiled machine in some ways and other groups come to us for event planning advice, or help in how to run board meetings. So I'm driven to keep it that way."

For Lang Center intern David Opoku, having a bird's eye view of the projects his peers are involved in is a perk of the job.

"As an intern, I get to learn what other students are doing in Chester, Philadelphia, and all over the world," he says. "There are so many opportunities to take lessons from class and try them out. It doesn't always have to be successful, but it gives you the confidence to try."

Camilia Kamoun's work with Global Health Forum is one such project. As a fresh-

David Opoku '12 enjoys his work at Cornell Library, not just for the views of the woods it provides, but for the chance to learn how to manage such an important campus space. "Students close the library at night," he says. "The librarians train us well and that sense of responsibility is really great. I've gained the skill of taking charge of a building—it's a really good skill."



JUNEXIE '11

man, she helped successfully apply for the Project Pericles grant, administered by the Lang Center, that the group needed in order to expand. Reflecting on her last four years with the group, she sees the cyclical nature of the work and how it pays off.

“We made an impact,” she says, “not just in collecting insecticide-treated bed nets in Uganda and distributing them, but also in preparing ourselves to be effective agents for change in the global health field. I came in and learned a lot. Now, as new members jump in, it’s exciting to see them reach new levels of understanding.”

Amessé is also in the position of seeing her work as a WA come full circle. “Three of my freshmen are applying to be WAs next year, and they’re texting me about the process,” she says excitedly. “It’s all about passing the torch and being encouraging. It’s the reason I wanted to be a WA—because I had great conferences. So if I can inspire others, it will sustain the community.”

Community, of course, takes on many forms, applies to many spaces, and is fostered in many ways. That is perhaps most literally true in residential life.

“I love how the halls are organized at Swarthmore,” says Li, who will be an RA in Willets next year. “They’re close, with all classes represented, and the RAs are really the glue that holds them together. I like event planning and for people to have fun with something I planned. So I’m really excited and looking forward to making sure my hall is cohesive.”

Kenyetta Givans is also a “rising” RA and will live in Wharton this fall. “I really want to help freshmen make that transition into college,” she says. “It was really helpful to me when I was a frosh. And I was surprised—there’s no distinction between the classes here. You could be in a class with seniors, eat with them, it doesn’t matter. I learned a lot from the upperclassmen I met.”

Sometimes, though, those cross-class conversations can be challenging, as Morgan Bartz found out on her trip to the Dominican Republic. Travelling with a number of seniors, she had to learn to adapt.

“People in the documentary class represent a lot of majors—soc/anth, poli sci, econ—and each one brings a different lens,” she says. “When we talked about state formation of the Dominican Republic, each

brought in outside information. When I’m a senior, I hope I can bring whatever I decide to major in into the conversation.”

For Sable Mensah, who has made that transition, feeling comfortable in seminar is a hard-earned accomplishment. “I spent three and a half years getting to know my own voice,” she says. “You also still need to make sure you’re comfortable with pushback and to be cautious and real. But it’s nice to say something with no disclaimers. It’s taken me a while to get there.”

Additional community-building opportunities have been proposed in the conversations prompted by the strategic planning process. “My RA wants to bring Collection back, and it could be of use to enhance the sense of community on campus,” says Sam Sellers ’11, a political science major and public policy minor from Bainbridge Island, Wash. “If done the right way, it would slow people down and get them to appreciate the amazing, diverse community we have. That awareness is often lost when students are busy doing what they do.”

Indeed, Sellers’ RA is Will Hopkins ’11, an honors psychology and English literature major from Newark, Del., and self-described “somewhat-lapsed Quaker” who believes there is value in a return to how the College historically institutionalized its Quaker heritage.

“Quakerism has a lot to offer that doesn’t require you to affiliate,” says Hopkins, who last fall helped rekindle interest in a student-led weekly meeting. “A reconstituted Collection keeps popping up in my mind as a way for the campus to come together and reflect on how we can be stronger as a community. As a tool to encourage contempla-

Haydil Henriquez ’14 recently performed at an open mic sponsored by a new spoken word collective, OASIS (Our Art Spoken in Soul), she helped co-found. The group’s board equally distributes work among its members.

tion and to promote discourse that is face-to-face, reasoned, and civil, it would be useful.”

As much as community is deliberately fostered among students, both by the administration and by the students themselves, it’s clear to students that the Swarthmore community also extends well beyond campus. The more they interact with alumni, the more they see how real those bonds are.

Ben DeGolia experienced this first-hand when working last Alumni Weekend. “Talking to alums, you definitely feel there’s something you share,” he says. Chris Geissler sees it when giving admissions tours to alumni who bring their kids. “There’s definitely a sense,” he says, “of ‘we are of the same stock,’ we are ‘of Swarthmore.’”

Recent alums often also provide much-appreciated perspective. “My friends tell me the madness of Swat does end, but don’t run out the door, you will miss things,” says Mensah, who externed this winter with Elizabeth Vogel ’07, a New York City middle school teacher. “Talking to her and seeing how her Swat sensibilities are balanced with her lived experience as a teacher in the landscape of educational reform—it’s an inspiration to me.” ❖

*Alisa Giardinelli is associate director of news and information at the College and a longtime contributor to the Bulletin.*



JUNE XIE '11

# The Janitor and the Judge



USING EMPATHY AND INTELLECT TO MAKE HUMANE AND RIGHT DECISIONS IS THE ESSENCE OF PRACTICAL WISDOM.

By Barry Schwartz and Kenneth Sharpe  
Illustrations by Meredith Leich '08

When, in spring 2003, Dorwin P. Cartwright Professor of Social Theory and Social Action Barry Schwartz and William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of Political Science Kenneth Sharpe announced that they would be teaching a new course titled *Practical Wisdom*, students clamored to enroll. The course's goal was to help the students learn to navigate everyday problems and dilemmas by making "right" decisions based on the use of good judgment and values rather than sterile sets of rules and conventions that typically disregard the individual, the particular, or the discrete. The course, which, Schwartz and Sharpe say, took "three years to plan and a lifetime to arrive at," was an immediate hit and still is. A book was planned.

Last year, Schwartz and Sharpe, friends and colleagues for more than three decades, published *Practical Wisdom: The Right Way to Do the Right Thing* (Riverhead Books, 2010). Starting from the premise that human beings are born with the capacity to be wise, they share their thoughts on the importance of developing the kind of wise decision-making skills that evolve from a combination of experience, empathy, and intellect and their value every day in all walks of life. An excerpt follows.

## WHAT WISDOM IS

Luke (we don't know his last name) works as a custodian in a major teaching hospital. In an interview with social scientists interested in studying how people structure their work, Luke reported an incident in which he cleaned a comatose young patient's room—twice. He had already done it once, but the patient's father, who had been keeping a vigil for months, hadn't seen Luke do it and had snapped at him. So Luke did it again. Graciously. Why? Here is how he explained it:

**Luke:** I kind of knew the situation about his son. His son had been here for a long time and ... from what I hear, his son had got into a fight and he was paralyzed. That's why he got there, and he was in a coma, and he wasn't coming out of the coma ... and I heard how he got that way. He had got into a fight with a black guy and the black guy really, well, you know, because he was here. Well ... I went and cleaned his room. His father would stay here every day, all day, but he smoked cigarettes. So, he had went out to smoke a cigarette and after I cleaned the room, he came back up to the room. I ran into him in the hall, and he just freaked out—telling me I didn't do it. I didn't clean the room and all this stuff. And at first, I got on the defensive, and I was going to argue with him. But I don't know. Something caught me and I said, "I'm sorry. I'll go clean the room."

**Interviewer:** And you cleaned it again?

**Luke:** Yeah, I cleaned it so that he could see me clean it ... I can understand how he could be. It was like six months that his son was here. He'd be a little frustrated, and so I cleaned it again. But I wasn't angry with him. I guess I could understand.

At first glance, the need for wisdom is not built into Luke's work as a custodian. Indeed, look at his job description:

Operate carpet shampooing and upholstery cleaning equipment ~ Operate mechanical cleaning and scrubbing equipment ~ Strip and wax floor surfaces ~ Maintain entrance area by performing such duties as sweeping, salting, and shoveling ~ Clean grounds and area by performing such duties as picking up paper or trash ~ Unplug commodes, urinals, and sink drains without dismantling the fixture ~ Wet mop floors and stairways ~ Operate vacuum cleaning equipment ~ Clean and wax furniture, cases, fixtures, and furnishings ~ Clean mirrors, interior side of exterior glass, and both sides of interior glass ~ Clean toilet rooms and fixtures ~ Stock restroom supplies ~ Dust venetian blinds while standing on floor or stool ~ Clean patient bedside equipment ~ Make beds and change linen ~ Collect and transport waste materials to central location ~ Wet mop small areas of floor or stairs to clean up such items as spilled liquid or food ~ Replace burned-out incandescent lightbulbs ~ Move and arrange furniture and furnishings ~ Collect and transport soiled linen to central location

Luke's job description says nothing about responsibility or care for



patients. He has a long list of duties, but not a single item on it even mentions another human being. From this description, Luke could be working in a shoe factory or a mortuary instead of a hospital.

If Luke were doing *this* job, it would have been reasonable for him to have simply explained to the father that he'd already cleaned the room and, perhaps, to have brought in his supervisor to mediate if the father remained angry. Luke might have ignored the man and just gone about his business. He might have gotten angry himself.

But Luke was doing a different job. That's what a team of research psychologists found when they conducted in-depth interviews with Luke and other hospital custodians about their jobs at a major midwestern academic hospital. The researchers had asked the custodians to talk about their jobs, and the custodians began to tell them stories about what they did. Luke's stories told them that his "official" duties were only one part of his *real* job, and that another, central, part of his job was to make the patients and their families feel comfortable, to cheer them up when they were down, to encourage them and divert them from their pain, to give them a willing ear if they felt like talking. Luke aimed to do something different from mere custodial work.

What Luke aimed at would have grabbed Aristotle's attention. Aristotle laid great stress on the importance of the aims—the *telos*—of practices like medical care. The aims of the practice—promoting health, curing illness, relieving suffering—need to be embodied in the institution where that practice takes place. Hospitals need to make promoting health their primary aim; it's the soul of the organization. The practitioners—the hospital staff—need to understand

that aim and be encouraged to make it their aim too. To make wise choices at work, these practitioners need to aim at caring for the patients; they need to be motivated by this aim, as Luke was. Aristotle would have talked about the importance of practitioners desiring the right thing if they were to do their work well. Aiming at the right thing doesn't tell them exactly how to do it—that takes practical skill, not just will. But knowing what to aim at frames and guides their choices—it enables them to choose wisely.

The amazing thing the researchers discovered about Luke and many of his coworkers was that they understood and internalized these aims in spite of their official job description, not because of it. The job they were actually doing was one they had crafted for themselves in light of the aims of medical care. Mike, another custodian, told the researchers how he stopped mopping the hallway floor because Mr. Jones, recovering from major surgery, was out of his bed getting a little much-needed exercise by walking slowly up and down the hall. Charlayne told them about how she ignored her supervisor's admonitions and refrained from vacuuming the visitors' lounge while some family members, who were there all day, every day, happened to be napping. These custodians crafted their jobs with the central purpose of the hospital in mind. They were not generic custodians; they were *hospital* custodians. They saw themselves as playing an important role in an institution whose aim was to see to the care and welfare of patients. So when Luke was confronted by the angry father and he had to decide what to do, he could not look it up in his official job description, because the rules that defined his job said nothing about situations like this. What guided him was the aim of the job he had crafted.

## JUDGMENT DAY

"Michael's case appeared routine," explained Judge Lois Forer. When he was brought before the Criminal Division of Philadelphia's Court of Common Pleas, he was "a typical offender: young, black, and male, a high-school dropout without a job. . . . And the trial itself was, in the busy life of a judge, a run-of-the-mill event." The year before, Michael had held up a taxi driver while brandishing a gun. He took \$50. Michael was caught and tried. "There was no doubt that



MICHAEL  
DROPPED OUT  
OF SCHOOL TO  
MARRY HIS  
PREGNANT  
GIRLFRIEND.

HE LATER OBTAINED HIS  
HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA



HE WAS WORKING  
STEADILY AND  
EARNING ENOUGH  
TO SEND HIS  
DAUGHTER TO  
PAROCHIAL SCHOOL.



BUT THEN HE LOST HIS JOB.



HE HAD MORE THAN A FEW DRINKS,  
AND THEN ROBBED A TAXI.



Michael was guilty," said Forer. She needed to mete out punishment. She turned to the state's sentencing guidelines. They recommended a minimum sentence of 24 months. The law seemed clear. Until Forer looked at the particular circumstances. The gun that Michael brandished, Forer explained, was a toy gun.

Further, this was his first offense: Although he had dropped out of school to marry his pregnant girl friend, Michael later obtained a high school equivalency diploma. He had been steadily employed, earning enough to send his daughter to parochial school—a considerable sacrifice for him and his wife. Shortly before the holdup, Michael had lost his job. Despondent because he could not support his family, he went out on a Saturday night, had more than a few drinks, and then robbed the taxi.

Judge Forer thought that the 24-month sentence was disproportionate. But the sentencing guidelines allow a judge to deviate from the prescribed sentence if she writes an opinion explaining the reasons. "I decided to deviate from the guidelines," she explained, sentencing Michael to 11½ months in the county jail and permitting him to work outside the prison during the day to support his family:

"I also imposed a sentence of two years probation following his imprisonment conditioned upon repayment of the \$50. My rationale for the lesser penalty, outlined in my lengthy opinion, was that this was a first offense, no one was harmed, Michael acted under the pressures of unemployment and need, and he seemed truly contrite. He had never committed a violent act and posed no danger to the public. A sentence of close to a year seemed adequate to convince Michael of the seriousness of his crime."

LUKE'S CHOICE OF HOW TO CONFRONT THE ANGRY FATHER and Forer's choice of the appropriate punishment for Michael couldn't seem more different. Forer's work as a judge demands that she interpret general rules in particular circumstances. She needs to know when and how to make an exception. She needs to know how to craft a punishment to fit a person and the circumstances. Wisdom is at the heart of what she does, if it is to be done well. It's what we need, and what we expect, in judges—the

ability to exercise judgment. And judicial wisdom is profoundly practical. Forer could not do her work well without it. And neither could Luke.

Forer was committed to finding a just punishment for Michael, but there were competing aims—all legitimate ones—that she had to sort out and balance. It was right that Michael receive a punishment that fit the crime and that the community be protected from any danger he might pose. But it was also right that Michael be rehabilitated so that he would not commit another offense upon release. And it was important that Michael's sentence do minimal harm to his wife and children, and to his chances of being reintegrated into the community. For Lois Forer, judging was a balancing act. She had to balance retribution, deterrence, and rehabilitation. She had to balance justice and mercy.

And when the angry father confronted him, Luke also had to sort out conflicting aims. There were other legitimate things he might have chosen to do. Be honest: tell the father he had cleaned the room already. Be courageous: stand up to the father's anger and refuse the unfair demand to clean the room again. But Luke had to determine how to balance these competing aims in this circumstance.

ARISTOTLE KNEW THAT FIGURING OUT WHAT TO DO in situations like the ones faced by Luke and Judge Forer demanded more than just knowledge of "the facts." It demanded more than knowledge of the law and the rules and the job description. It demanded more than knowing how to deduce the right thing to do from a set of abstract principles about truth or justice or freedom or goodness. There was no general rule or principle to which Forer or Luke could turn to balance or choose among several good aims that were in conflict. To do this kind of balancing and choosing, Luke and Forer needed wisdom. They needed practical moral skill.

Aristotle emphasized two capacities that were particularly important for such practical skill—the ability to *deliberate* about such choices and the ability to perceive what was morally relevant in a particular circumstance. Good deliberation and discernment were at the heart of practical wisdom. Forer articulates how she deliberated about

Michael's case. A good judge needs to do this all the time in publicly defending her decisions, and in Michael's case the law demanded that she explain why she was deviating from the recommended sentence.

Luke's deliberation took place in radically different circumstances—in a situation in which we largely expect neither wisdom nor nuanced accountability—but it is equally important, if not more important, to consider both how he deliberated and how he talked about his decision. He figured out that the confrontation with the father was not one that should be framed in terms of honesty and integrity, nor as a defense of Luke's rights. Although Luke was tempted to react to the father's demands as an issue of injustice, he quickly saw that something else was at stake—helping to comfort and heal the sick and injured. So Luke framed the issue as one of how to care for and sustain the relationship of *this* father and *this* son at this particular trying moment in their lives. Justice and fairness could wait for another day.

And Luke's deliberation went further. He also had to figure out what courses of action were possible in this situation. Should he calmly explain to the father that he recognized the father's pain and understood? Should he offer to sit down and discuss the situation? Luke chose not to make an issue of it, not to fuel the father's anger. He decided that the best and most practical way to handle the situation was to clean the room again and to let the father think he'd accomplished something for his son. Luke had the skill to respond generously and with good grace.

When we think about deliberative skills, the first image that often comes to mind is a process in which we lay out the options, weigh the pros and cons, and then pick what seems best. All of us have deliberated this way. Courses in business and management schools often teach this method as the model of good decision making. This kind of decision making can be particularly useful when we are faced with new or tough problems and have the time to ponder them. But Luke's behavior makes us think about other kinds of deliberative skills.

Luke did not lay out conflicting aims or weigh the pros and cons of all the options.



What was important for Luke was how to frame the situation. The unreasonableness of the request and the father's anger may have tempted Luke to frame the situation as one about honesty, rights, or justice, but instead he framed it in light of the job as he had crafted it, the way he saw the purpose of being a hospital custodian. And Luke's ability to do this was enabled by a capacity he had for good storytelling. Luke could tell himself, and the interviewer, a narrative about this patient who "had got into a fight" and about an upset father who had been visiting him, caring for him, for months. This story, and the frame it provided, enabled Luke to discern what to do. Luke wasn't laying out options. And he wasn't simply deducing what to do from some general principle of proper behavior (like "be kind to patients' families"). The story Luke told explained how the father came to be yelling at Luke to clean the room again, why the anger made sense, and why it was forgivable. And *this* story helped Luke figure out his role in the evolving narrative. Our ability to frame situations well and tell good stories is critical to practical moral skill. So, too, is the ability to use analogies and metaphors to draw on our

past experiences. Luke knew what to do not because he had done exactly the same thing before, but because he could draw on previous experiences that were something like the current situation. He knew what the consequences had been of actions he had taken in these past cases. He wasn't just repeating what he'd always done; he was crafting something new from what had or had not worked in the past.

This may seem like making a lot of Luke's instant decision, but Judge Forer used the same deliberative skills. To interpret the law in Michael's case she needed more than the facts, more than the legal guidelines, and more than the ability to make logical deductions. She needed to create an accurate narrative that made sense of Michael's actions and his intentions in light of his character and circumstances—his stable family and work history, the job crisis and the depression he was going through, the nature of the crime and choice of weapon, the harm done—all this to judge the seriousness of his crime and the severity of his punishment. She understood Michael by drawing on her past experience, by interpreting the similarities and differences he shared with other criminals she had judged.

Aristotle tells us that "in matters concerning action and questions of what is beneficial, the agent must consider on each different occasion what the situation demands, just as in medicine and in navigation." Figuring out what is appropriate in a particular situation rests on *moral perception*. "A man of practical wisdom," argued Aristotle, must "take cognizance of particulars." Particular facts are the "starting points" for our knowledge of "the goal of action" and, to deliberate and choose well, "one must have perception of particular facts." Every day in court, Judge Forer had to sort through a deluge of information about the lives of the defendants and the nature of their misdeeds. To determine motives, to parcel out responsibility, to understand how this crime was different from or similar to others, to determine the future danger to the community—these tasks demanded an ability to pick what was significant out of a lot of background noise. These tasks demanded an ability to see the nuance—the gray—of a particular situation, and not simply the black-and-white of the legal and the illegal.

Luke, too, was faced daily with patients who were upset, confused, disoriented, troubled; who were experiencing multiple and contradictory emotions. When he was confronted with choices about how to care for such people, just like judges, doctors, lawyers, therapists, or teachers, Luke had to sort through a welter of information and figure out which things were the most important to deal with in the moment. A critical part of the context that Luke had to perceive was what the father was thinking and feeling. If Luke had been unable to discern this, he wouldn't have had a clue about what the problem was, what the options were, or what the consequences of his response to the father might be. Luke had to imagine how arguing with the father would affect the man's feelings of anger and frustration, and his ability to remain hopeful and to maintain his vigil day after day. Moral imagination—the ability to see how various options will play themselves out and the ability to evaluate them—is thus critical to



FOR FORER, JUDGING WAS A BALANCING ACT. SHE HAD TO BALANCE RETRIBUTION, DETERRENCE, AND REHABILITATION. SHE HAD TO BALANCE JUSTICE AND MERCY.

perception. It represents, philosopher John Dewey explained, "the capacity to concretely perceive what is before us in light of what could be."

Not surprisingly, then, empathy—the capacity to imagine what someone else is thinking and feeling—is critical for the perception that practical wisdom demands. Such empathy involves both cognitive skill—the ability to perceive the situation as it is perceived by another—and emotional skill—the capacity to understand what another person is feeling. Luke had to put himself in the shoes of the father even though he knew the father was wrong. Luke could not have provided the narrative he did without this capacity for getting himself into the heart of the father. And the same was true of Judge Forer. To find the right sentence, she needed the empathy to put herself in Michael's shoes and to imagine the likely consequences of letting Michael work outside of prison during the day. She asked herself: Was this an irrational crime? Was there wanton cruelty? Is this a hostile person? Can this person control himself?

Emotion is critical to moral perception in another way. It is a signaling device. The emotion of the father—"he just freaked out"—signaled to Luke that something was wrong. With that kind of anger, the signal was not subtle, but often it is. Reading the facial expressions, the body language, the tone of voice of another alerts us that something is wrong and that we need to make choices about how to respond. Our own feelings of anger, guilt, compassion, or shame signal us to reflect, to pay special attention to what is happening. This may sound obvious, but all too often the rules and incentives that govern our lives are all about removing emotion from our decision making—about not trusting the signal we're sending ourselves. Luke recognized his own frustration and rising anger as well as the father's and was alerted to consider whether this confrontation was about



Authors Schwartz and Sharpe will deliver a talk titled "Practical Wisdom: The Right Way to Do the Right Thing" on Alumni Weekend. Their talk is one of three faculty lectures that weekend. For more information, visit <http://bit.ly/alumniweekend2011>.



Luke or about the father and his situation.

There is a long history of suspicion that emotion is the enemy of good reasoning and sound judgment, and rightly so. Emotions can often control us instead of the reverse. “The devil made me do it.” Emotions can prejudice us toward people we love, and against those we don’t. Emotions can be unstable and therefore unreliable as guides. Emotions are sometimes too particular: we can feel so passionately about something that happened to us, or about this wronged patient or that ill-fed child, that our judgment is clouded about “what is just” or “what is fair” in general. And emotions almost got the better of Luke. For a moment, he felt angry at the injustice of the father’s demand. But emotion also served Luke well. He felt compassion for the father: “It was like six months that his son was here. He’d be a little frustrated, and so I cleaned it again. But I wasn’t angry with him.” So emotion was critical in guiding Luke to do the right thing. Luke’s emotions were not random—unstable and uneducated. He was compassionate about the right things and angry about the right things. And he had the self-control—the emotion-regulating skills—to choose rightly. Emotions properly trained and modulated, Aristotle told his readers, are essential to being practically wise: We can experience fear, confidence, desire, anger, pity, and generally any kind of pleasure and pain either too much or too little, and in either case not properly. But to experience all this at the right time, toward the right objects, toward the right people, for the right reason, and in the right manner—that is the median and the best course, the course that is a mark of virtue.

Sizing up the situation, figuring what’s relevant in *this* particular case and *these* particular circumstances, imagining what someone else is thinking and feeling, recognizing the options and imagining the consequences—all these skills are part of being perceptive. It is this perception that enables us to recognize the uniqueness of a particular situation. Such perception is “a process of loving conversation between rules and concrete responses, general conceptions and unique cases, in which the general articulates the particular and is in turn further articulated by it.”

Practical wisdom demands more than the skill to be perceptive about others. It also demands the capacity to perceive oneself—to assess what our own motives are, to admit our failures, to figure out what has worked or not and why. We get a glimpse of the importance of such self-reflection in Luke. “At first, I got on the defensive, and I was going to argue with him. But I don’t know. Something caught me and I said, ‘I’m sorry. I’ll go clean the room.’” Such self-reflection is not always so easy when, like Luke, we feel we’ve been wronged. And it’s also difficult when we’ve been wrong—thoughtless, careless, too self-interested. Being able to criticize our own certainties is often a painful struggle, demanding some courage as we try to stand back and impartially judge ourselves and our own responsibility. For Luke to be a good hospital custodian, and Forer a good judge, they needed the ability to recognize their mistakes so they could do better next time.

LUKE AND JUDGE FORER HELP US UNDERSTAND some of the key characteristics of practical wisdom. To summarize:

1. A wise person knows the proper aims of the activity she is engaged in. She wants to do the right thing to achieve these aims—wants to meet the needs of the people she is serving.

2. A wise person knows how to improvise, balancing conflicting aims and interpreting rules and principles in light of the particularities of each context.

3. A wise person is perceptive, knows how to read a social context, and knows how to move beyond the black-and-white of rules and see the gray in a situation.

4. A wise person knows how to take on the perspective of another—to see the situation as the other person does and thus to understand how the other person feels. This perspective-taking is what enables a wise person to feel empathy for others and to make decisions that serve the client’s (student’s, patient’s, friend’s) needs.

5. A wise person knows how to make emotion an ally of reason, to rely on emotion to signal what a situation calls for, and to inform judgment without distorting it. He can feel, intuit, or “just know” what the right thing to do is, enabling him to act quickly when timing matters. His emotions and intuitions are well educated.

6. A wise person is an experienced person. Practical wisdom is a craft and craftsmen are trained by having the right experiences. People learn how to be brave, said Aristotle, by doing brave things. So, too, with honesty, justice, loyalty, caring, listening, and counseling. ❖

*Reprinted from Practical Wisdom by Barry Schwartz and Kenneth Sharpe by arrangement with Riverhead Books, a member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc. Copyright © 2010 by Barry Schwartz and Kenneth Sharpe.*



“I RAN INTO HIM IN THE HALL AND HE JUST FREAKED OUT—TELLING ME I DIDN’T DO IT.”

# connections



COURTESY OF LISA LEE

The 22 travelers on Swarthmore's **Alumni College Abroad journey to India** in March visited the Taj Mahal (above) and the Red Fort complex of Agra on the banks of the sacred Yamuna River and explored many other sites such as the Jama Masjid, the expansive Mughal period open-air Friday Mosque in old Delhi; Akbar's Fatepur Sikri, a 16th-century city of red sandstone built in a mixture of Hindu and Muslim styles; the Hawa Mahal or "Palace of the Winds" in Jaipur; the Chandela Temple Complex in Khajuraho; and Sarnath, the birthplace of Buddhism. They spent a memorable evening and dawn on a boat rowing past the bathing ghats and temples that line the shore of the holy Ganga river in Varanasi. They rode elephants to Amer Fort in Jaipur and camels to a Meena village in rural Rajasthan; saw a Bengal tiger in the Ranthambore Tiger Preserve, a 512-square-mile natural preserve and the former hunting grounds of the Maharajah of Jaipur; and heard a sitar performance by master Benarsi musician Deobrat Mishra. Faculty tour guide Steven Hopkins, professor of religion, gave presentations on Hindu, Buddhist, and Sufi traditions, including readings from Sanskrit, Pali, and Urdu poetry and examples of *qawwali*, the ecstatic songs of Sufi saints. Participants arrived home with a tremendous appreciation of the ancient and contemporary wonder that is India.



Want to join a future Alumni College Abroad? Check out upcoming trips at <http://bitly/alumnicollege>.

## GARNET SAGES ACTIVITIES

The Garnet Sages have planned several events this year. John Alston, associate professor of music and director of the Chester Children's Chorus, was the guest speaker at a lunch on April 16, as part of the College's Arts Weekend. Following lunch, the Sages had the option to see a senior art exhibit; enjoy a concert; or listen to *Los Angeles Times* film critic Kenneth Turan '67 talk about how "Swarthmore Made Me: The Secret Life of a Critic" and how his experience at Swarthmore shaped his career as a critic.

Future events include a tri-college visit to tour the Beth Sholom Synagogue in Elkins Park, Pa., the only synagogue designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, followed by lunch; in June, a tour of Hillwood Estate in Washington D.C., the former home of Marjorie Merriweather Post; and in September, a day at Auburn Heights in Yorklyn Del., home to the largest single collection of Stanley Steamers in the world.

ASK ME ANYTHING. I'M A GARNET SAGE.

## RECENT EVENTS:

**Atlanta:** At an Atlanta Connection "Swarthmore Cares" event on March 12, Swarthmore alumni gathered at MedShare International to help collect surplus medical supplies and equipment from hospitals, medical distribution companies, and individuals in order to redistribute them to qualified healthcare facilities in the developing world. Afterwards, the group headed to the Brickstore in Decatur for some food and drink.

**Los Angeles:** Thirty alumni and friends attended the West Coast premiere of *Borromeo Rings* by composer James Matheson '92 at the Walt Disney Concert Hall. A reception with Matheson followed the concert—and the Swarthmore group was the last to leave the hall.

**New York:** Many thanks to those who attended yet another successful Alumni Variety Show at the Nuyorican Poets Cafe. More than 100 alumni and friends attended the event.

Rob Steelman '92, who started the Swarthmore Business Network on LinkedIn,



**New York Variety Show:** Back row: Luis Rodriguez '09, Humzah Soofi '10, John Boucard '10, Omar Ramadan '08, Kinei Braithwaite '08, Twan Claiborne '08, and Philippe Celestin '10. Front row: Taleah Kennedy '10 and NYC Connection co-chair Lily Ng '08.



**Swarthmore Victorious:** Philly Connection Chair Jim Moskowitz '88 (left) led a Swarthmore team to victory over Williams and Amherst—at *Quizzo*. Jay Dahlke '84 (far right) was joined by Allison Eck, a Bryn Mawrter who joined forces with the Swarthmore team.

organized a get-together on March 2 at the Wheeltapper Pub in the Fitzpatrick Hotel. Fifty-two people attended, and many reported back to Rob that they had a terrific time networking and socializing.

**Philadelphia:** Swarthmore versus Williams versus Amherst—but not in *U.S. News & World Report!* Billed by Philadelphia Connection Chair Jim Moskowitz '88 as a chance to

“defend the honor of your alma mater, put your storehouse of arcane and sometimes useful information to good use, and have a great evening,” a few dozen Swarthmore alumni answered the challenge and were successful. The game was *Quizzo* and the opponents were Philadelphia-area alumni from Williams and Amherst. It was a close match, but Swarthmore was ultimately victorious and everyone had a great time.

## ALUMNI COUNCIL WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

The following alumni will join the Alumni Council in fall 2011 for a three-year term:

### Zone A

**Sarah Mooers '88**  
Amler, Pa.

Associate director of quality systems  
Merck & Co., Inc.

**Kevin Wilson '92**  
Gettysburg, Pa.

Associate professor,  
Gettysburg College

### Zone B

**Nicole O'Dell Odum '88**  
Bellport, N.Y.  
Journalist, Medi-i

**John Randolph II '97**  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Executive vice president  
of real estate  
Sciame Development Inc.

### Zone C

**G. Demetrios Karis '74**  
Still River, Mass.

Research psychologist  
Verizon Communications

**Anne McGuire '80**  
Cambridge, Mass.

Dept. of Human  
Evolutionary Biology  
Harvard University

### Zone D

**Juan Gelpi '84**

Virginia Beach, Va.  
Surgeon, Coastal Surgical  
Specialists

**Rakhee Goyal '93**  
Olney, Md.

Executive director  
Women's Learning  
Partnership

### Zone E

**Thomas Scholz '81**

Iowa City, Iowa  
Professor of pediatrics  
University of Iowa

**Cynthia Hunter Spann '75**

Dallas, Texas  
Program director  
Integrated Minority  
AIDS Network

### Zone F

**Janet Erlick '88**

Fort Lauderdale, Fla.  
Executive artistic director  
Fort Lauderdale Children's  
Theatre

**Mark Shapiro '88**

Miami, Fla.  
Partner  
Akerman Senterfitt

### Zone G

**Kennette Banks '06**

Oakland, Calif.  
Program associate  
First Graduate, San Francisco

**Walter Luh '99**

Sunnyvale, Calif.  
Co-founder and CEO  
Anasca Mobile

On March 28, Congressman Rush Holt (D-N.J.) presented a Swarthmore perspective on Capitol Hill. Holt, who taught physics at the College in the 1980s and researched fusion power at the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory in the 1990s, has been a member of the House of Representatives since 1998. Recently, he became the first human to beat the Watson computer in a *Jeopardy* match.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Philadelphia:** Chocolate Night Goes to Catalonia, when Chocolate Night returns for a fourth time on Thursday, May 5. As an educational as well as confectionery evening celebrating that dark delicacy, the scholar for the evening will be Professor of Spanish María Luisa Guardiola, who will talk about the important role that chocolate plays in the culture and rituals of her native Catalonia. Then, master chocolatier Chris Curtain will share insights into the process of making different types of chocolate from raw ingredients. As appetites peak, the evening will end with participants sampling from a potluck of chocolate desserts that each has brought (They need not be homemade, but they must contain chocolate!).

Behind the scenes at the American Philosophical Society. One of Philadelphia's little-known treasures, the American Philosophical Society was founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1743 with the aim to “improve the common stock of knowledge . . . for the benefit of mankind.” Its extensive collections focus on early American history and the history of science. On March 18, head of conservation Anne Downey and conservation intern Lisa Nelson '06 will lead us on a behind-the-scenes tour of their conservation lab and show us some of the treasures held by the Society, including the journals of Lewis and Clark. The curator of the museum's new exhibition *Of Elephants and Roses: Encounters with French Natural History, 1790-1830* will then lead us on a tour of the exhibit.

**Pittsburgh:** Connection chair Barbara Sieck Taylor '75 gathered a group for a casual happy hour at the Walnut Grill on Jan. 16. Originally planned for Jan. 15, the event had to be rescheduled (happily) due to a Pittsburgh Steelers playoff game. Barbara reported that the event was fun and well-attended and that the Steelers won!

# class notes

A BLOOMING BEVY OF VIOLET AND WHITE CROCUSES WELCOME SPRING 1982 TO CAMPUS. PHOTO BY STEVEN GOLDBLATT '67

MISSING THE SEMINAR EXPERIENCE? DISCUSS TOPICS OF INTEREST AT [OLC.SWARTHMORE.EDU](http://OLC.SWARTHMORE.EDU) >>> WONDER WHAT YOUR

## BOOKS

**Courtney Bender '91** and Pamela E. Klassen (editors), *After Pluralism: Reimagining Religious Engagement*, Columbia University Press, 2010. This multidisciplinary, scholarly essay collection investigates the meaning of religious diversity in a variety of settings, examining its effect on legal decisions and political and social interactions.

**Debra R. Comer '82** and Gina Vega (editors), *Moral Courage in Organizations: Doing the Right Thing at Work*, M.E. Sharpe, 2010. Through a compilation of essays, the authors examine the factors in the workplace environment that influence ethical behavior and also guide the reader on how to foster moral courage through organizational change.

**Michael Dorsch '90**, *French Sculpture Following the Franco-Prussian War, 1870-80: Realist Allegories and the Commemoration of Defeat*, Ashgate, 2010. The author explores how French sculptors interpreted the history of war and defeat in France during the second half of the 19th century. He also investigates shifts in gender roles during this period and the manner in which military defeat in

France affected gender relations.

**John Fischer '81**, *Cheese*, Delmar Cengage Learning, 2011. Compiled by an associate professor in table service at the Culinary Institute of America (CIA), this book, which is part of the CIA's Kitchen Pro series, serves as a guide to the identification, classification, and use of different types of cheese. In addition to practical culinary instruction, this guide also provides a history of cheese making and consumption.

**Muriel R. Gillick '72**, *Once They Had a Country: Two Teenage Refugees in the Second World War*, The University of Alabama Press, 2010. The author captures the story of her parents, Hans and Ilse, as they flee for safety as teenage Jewish refugees during World War II. Backed up by rigorous historical research, the book reconstructs the human narrative of the refugee experience.

**Christopher GoGwilt '83**, *The Passage of Literature: Genealogies of Modernism in Conrad, Rhys, & Pramoedya*, Oxford University Press,

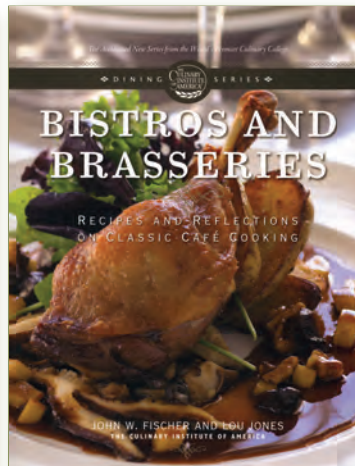
2011. This is a comparative study of three diverse modernisms—English, Creole, and Indonesian—as represented by authors seldom compared to each other. Joseph Conrad, Jean Rhys, and Pramoedya Ananta Toer all wrote about the colonial condition but did so in widely separated times and places.

I.A. Il'in (author) and **Philip Grier '64** (editor and translator), *The Philosophy of Hegel as a Doctrine of the Concreteness of God and Humanity*, Northwestern University Press, 2011. According to Grier, this book is “regarded as one of the major early 20th-century commentaries on Hegel.” Prior to this translation, the complete work has only been available in Russian.

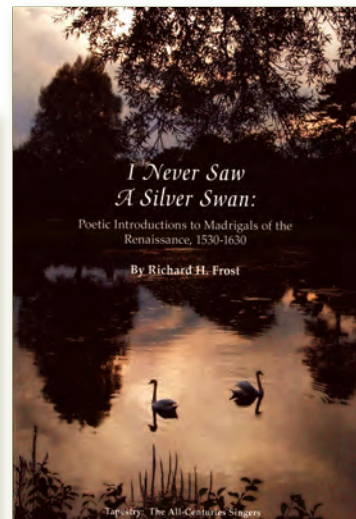
**Jacob Howland '80**, *Plato and the Talmud*, Cambridge University Press, 2011. Exploring the relationship between Athens and Jerusalem in light of the Talmud and the Platonic Dialogues, this work adds to the small but growing body of work in the secular academy in which a basic knowledge of



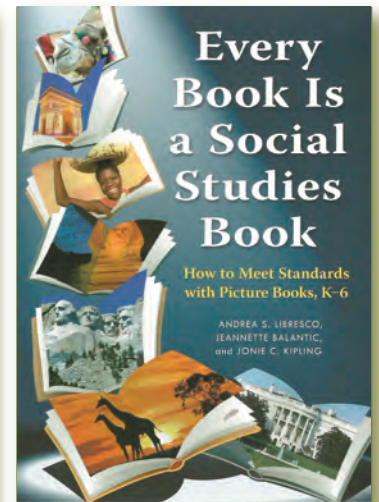
**Carolyn Burke '61**, *No Regrets: The Life of Edith Piaf*, Alfred A. Knopf, 2011. The author traces the life story of iconic French singer Edith Piaf, beginning with her childhood on the streets of Paris and continuing through her rise to international fame.



**John Fischer '81** and Lou Jones, *Bistros and Brasseries: Recipes and Reflections on Classic Café Cooking*, The Culinary Institute of America, 2008. The authors embark on a tour of French and French-inspired bistro cuisine, combining recipes with instructive cultural and culinary histories. The book includes full-color photographs and useful cooking techniques and tips.



**Richard H. Frost '51**, *I Never Saw A Silver Swan: Poetic Introductions to Madrigals of the Renaissance, 1530-1630*, Tapestry: The All-Centuries Singers, 2009. The author, an emeritus history professor and “bard” for the chamber choral group Tapestry in Clinton, New York, has penned an extensive set of introductory poems intended to be read aloud at madrigal performances. These verses serve to maintain variety and interest during madrigal concerts.



Jeannette Balantic, **Andrea Libresco '80**, and Jonie C. Kipling, *Every Book Is a Social Studies Book: How to Meet Standards with Picture Books K-6*, Libraries Unlimited, 2011. The author provides a guide for teachers and educators to incorporate social studies into almost every subject, a task that has grown in importance since the No Child Left Behind Law has led many school districts to cut social studies from the curriculum.

# READ. LISTEN. PLAY.

the great rabbinic corpus of the first millennium of the common era is fundamental to teaching and scholarship in the humanities.

**David Patton '86**, *Out of the East: From PDS to Left Party in Unified Germany*, SUNY Press, 2011. The author chronicles the history and transformations of the Communist party in East Germany from the collapse of the Berlin Wall through the era of democracy.

**David Schaps '67**, *The Invention of Coinage and the Monetization of Ancient Greece*, University of Michigan Press, 2004. The author traces the importance of the appearance of coinage in ancient Greek society and the new themes, paradoxes, social classes, and processes that came along with it.

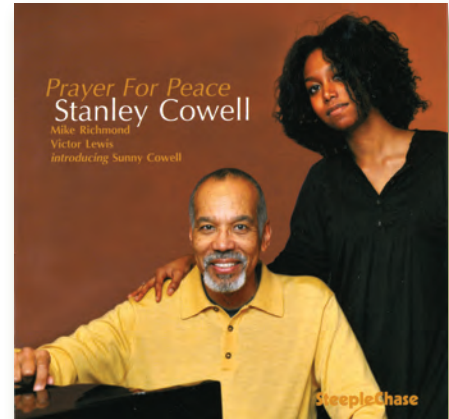
**Lillian and Donald Stokes '69**, *The Stokes Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, Little, Brown, and Company, 2010. This field guide includes more than 854 species of North American birds, along with 3,400 color photos, a CD with more than 600 bird sounds, tips for

identifying all types of birds in a variety of environments, and countless facts about the different species.

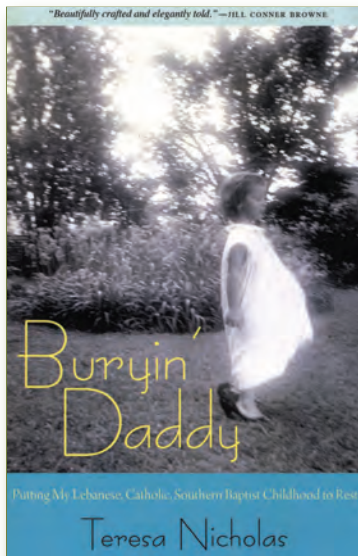
**Michael Westgate '61**, *Gale Force: Gale Cincotta: The Battles for Disclosure and Community Reinvestment*, Harvard Bookstore, 2011. The author captures the legacy of Gale Cincotta, an activist and organizer who led the attack on community disinvestment, predatory lending, and redlining and contributed to the passage of the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) and the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA)—measures that greatly contributed to diminishing housing discrimination in the United States.

## OTHER MEDIA

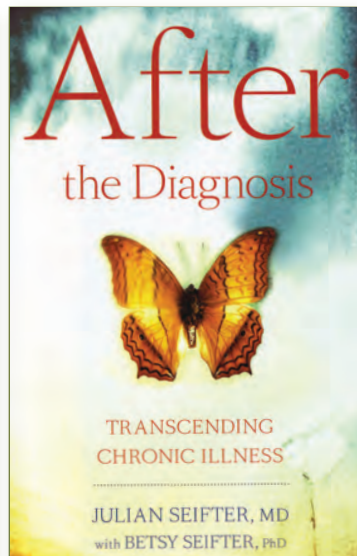
Stanley Cowell and **Sunny Cowell '10** (The Stanley Cowell Quartet), *Prayer for Peace*, Steeplechase, 2010. Sunny Cowell and her father Stanley's jazz album includes vocals, piano, bass, drums, and viola. The album marks Stanley's return to the recording studio after a decade-long break.



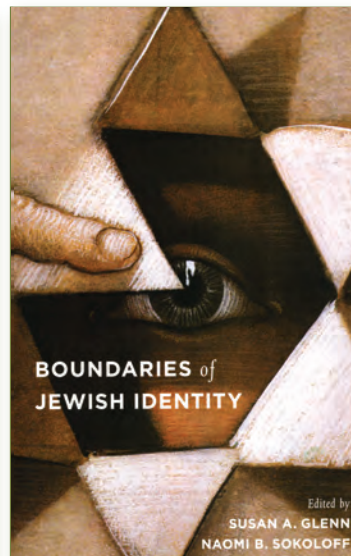
**Lynn West Salvo '71**, *Product Parfait: A Deliciously Fun Multiplication Game*, Didax, Inc., 2010. This card game works backwards—aimed at children from 3 to 5 years old, players start with the product in order to figure out its factors—to teach multiplication facts in a unique and fun way. The game developed out of the creator's dissertation.



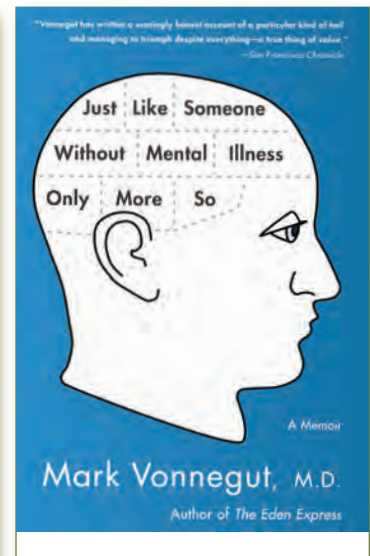
**Teresa Nicholas '76**, *Buryin' Daddy: Putting My Lebanese, Catholic, Southern Baptist Childhood to Rest*, University Press of Mississippi, 2011. A descendant of immigrants and sharecroppers, the author, now a successful New York City career woman, recounts how she embraces her roots and reconciles with her family when she returns to her former Mississippi home upon the sudden death of her father.



**Julian and Betsy Seifter '69**, *After the Diagnosis: Transcending Chronic Illness*, Simon & Schuster, 2010. This book addresses the everyday challenges and emotional toll of managing a chronic illness today. The authors emphasize that patients are more than their illness and provide strategies not only for coping with illness but also for thriving under and living with illness.



Susan A. Glenn and **Naomi B. Sokoloff '75** (editors), *Boundaries of Jewish Identity*, University of Washington Press, 2010. This interdisciplinary collection of essays examines the question, "Who and what is Jewish?" The writings probe this complex issue through the lenses of law, anthropology, history, sociology, literature, and popular culture.



**Mark Vonnegut '69**, *Just Like Someone Without Mental Illness Only More So: A Memoir*, Delacorte Press, 2010. More than 30 years after the publication of his memoir *The Eden Express*, the author continues his compelling story—of a life fraught with the trials of coping with bipolar disorder while attending Harvard Medical School, at age 28 and after 19 rejections; then running a pediatric practice—with honesty and humor.

# Alumni Profile



PHOTO COURTESY OF NEIL HESKEL '74

## A Pillar in the Rubble

AT HAITI CLINIC, NEIL HESKEL '74 AND KEVIN BROWNGOEHL '78 PROVIDE FREE MEDICAL CARE TO STRUGGLING RESIDENTS OF PORT-AU-PRINCE.

Early last year, Kevin Browngoehl, a Philadelphia-area pediatrician, was preparing for his first medical mission abroad. He'd recently met Neil Heskell at a Swarthmore Alumni Council meeting, and the two struck up a conversation about a free clinic that Heskell (*pictured above right in scrubs*) directs in Haiti. Impressed, Browngoehl volunteered to help. He booked a plane ticket to Port-au-Prince for February. Then, on Jan. 12, a massive earthquake hit Haiti's capital.

Suddenly, the world's attention shifted to Haiti, if only for a short time. A country already struggling to climb out of poverty became fodder for nightly news reports of spectacular suffering. Organizations like Heskell's Haiti Clinic, with boots already on the ground, took the natural disaster as a new opportunity for service. "I was receiving e-mails from all over the world asking how people could help," says Heskell, a Florida-based dermatologist. "We became a conduit to get food and medication down there. It really became a big job."

Browngoehl's trip was delayed by the earthquake, but only briefly. When he did touch down in Haiti, he was humbled by the everyday need that he saw at the clinic. "It's just a nonstop flood of people," he says. "Then at some point, they cut off the line, and hundreds more people are sent home." Many of the serious cases he saw stemmed from common problems left untreated for far too long.

"Haiti Clinic is not a disaster relief project," Browngoehl clarifies. "It's a way for the residents of the worst slum in Haiti to get medical care. A lot of these people have never seen a doctor."

The earthquake may have exacerbated Haiti's poverty problem, but extreme privation is nothing new for the residents of Cité Soleil, the Port-au-Prince

**"It may seem on the surface that a lot of organizations and communities have different conditions and goals. But I think that the deeper goals are similar: justice, sustainability, and a more humane world."**

neighborhood served by Haiti Clinic. Even before the disaster, residents lacked water, electricity, and basic sanitation. Those factors complicate the project of running a clinic in such an underserved area, but they were not enough to discourage Browngoehl. Since joining Haiti Clinic just over a year ago, he's taken on considerable responsibility, leading a health education outreach project and an acute malnutrition program for children.

"It's very exhausting and very rewarding at the same time," he says. "When I get on the plane to go home, it's an unbelievable experience to sit in a comfortable seat and have someone bring you food that you can eat without being afraid of it. You realize that your problems, though they seem important to you, are actually quite inconsequential."

Browngoehl credits his time at Swarthmore for getting him hooked on volunteering. "It left me with a lot of intellectual curiosity," he says. "It showed me that life was more than a straight and narrow career. Service was a part of what you were going to do with your life." Heskell echoes this sentiment, recalling an undergraduate ethics seminar with longtime Professor of Philosophy Hans Oberdiek as a key juncture in his formation as a young doctor-to-be.

Both doctors hope to encourage other service-minded alumni to get involved with Haiti Clinic. "The trips are usually four days—go on Friday morning, go back Monday," Heskell says. "We take care of transportation, housing, food, and security. You don't have to reinvent the wheel. You can spend your time doing what you're good at." He adds that volunteers need not be doctors. Browngoehl's co-leader of the health education project, for instance, is a high school administrator from Philadelphia.

None of the Americans involved in Haiti Clinic draw a salary. Recently, Haiti Clinic has begun to add a Haitian staff, training doctors and nurse practitioners to run the clinic in between volunteer visits. Heskell's long-term vision is a clinic run by Haitians, augmented by periodic assistance from abroad.

In these trying post-earthquake circumstances, however, Heskell remains the glue that holds Haiti Clinic together. "He provides a lot of inspiration just by his example," Browngoehl says. "This particular organization attracts people who are a lot of fun to work with. We have some humor, which is good—you need humor. It's actually a very light and uplifting spirit on clinic days. A lot of people smiling, happy, even in the face of all this suffering."

If Heskell's optimism has helped him attract and keep more recent volunteers like Browngoehl, he says it's all part of the job description. Amid so much devastation and poverty, and in the wake of a major natural disaster, a doctor has to focus on the small successes—the pregnant mother saved from cholera-related dehydration, or the child who receives medicines his family could not otherwise afford.

"You have to be hopeful," Heskell says. "There is a lot of work to do, but we've shown that some work can bear fruit, because our clinic has borne fruit. That's a very optimistic thing."

—Mike Agresta

# 28 Years Untouched

ON SORTING THROUGH MY COLLEGE PAPERS

By Noah Efron '82



YANAI RUBAJA

**AFTER GRADUATION IN MAY 1982**, I rented a U-Haul, filled it with my stuff, and unloaded the cartons in my parents' basement. Weeks later, I flew to Jerusalem to play in a rock-and-roll band and study Arabic—and from there to Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, and Ethiopia on a Watson Fellowship. At the end of the Watson year, I returned to the States to hire a shipper to move my cartons and guitars to the kibbutz in Israel where I'd decided to live.

Not long after the shipping container

arrived, I was drafted into the Israeli Army. After I was discharged, my new wife Susan and I took off to motor across America on our honeymoon. By the time we came back, we'd decided to quit the kibbutz for Tel Aviv, where I was to start graduate studies and she medical school. Only days after finishing my dissertation—and a day before Susan finished her internship—we had our daughter Dara.

Soon, we moved to Boston for four years of postdoc fellowships for me and residency

"It wasn't long before the sensual enchantment of these old things gave way to nostalgia—and then to thoughts about how they help make sense of my life," says Efron.

for Susan. Three weeks before we returned to Israel, our son Micha was born. And so it was that two big cartons, hastily packed during Senior Week at Swarthmore in 1982, remained untouched until late 2010 when, fulfilling a very old promise to Susan, I resolved to sort through their contents. I found myself slicing through the browned,



The life that I live now—  
what I think, teach, and write  
and what I hope  
to accomplish—was all in  
those cartons.



YANAI RUBAJA

brittle packing tape I'd bought in the campus bookstore in Parrish Hall basement and confronting all that I had saved from seven semesters of Swarthmore.

MY FIRST IMPRESSIONS WERE SENSUAL. The physicality of the papers—their very *stuff*—was familiar and foreign at once. My senior thesis had been typed on the campus main-frame computer and printed on great swaths of green and white striped tractor paper, of which some untrimmed pages remained. Carbon copies of each of my honors exams—what I had used to prepare in the brief interregnum between the written and oral portions of the test—were neatly stapled stacks of thin yellow paper covered with blue type. Old photocopies were slightly oily, slimy, and curled. On some, the type had turned sepia, the words barely legible. A good many academic essays were typescripts. Some were reproduced in blue mimeograph. I found dozens of seminar papers, many poorly typed—some carbon copies, some photocopied. Several were written in long-hand. There were syllabi that reached 25 pages with annotations for the assignments and detailed questions “to keep in mind while reading.” Among the papers were dozens of notes, reminders, and announcements, folded in half, with my name written on the back above the letters “CM,” which only after puzzled minutes I remembered stood for “campus mail.”

Soon the sensual enchantments of these old things gave way to nostalgia. As I sat on the bedroom floor and read copies of seminar papers by people I recognized as one-time friends—and some I recognized as people who had never quite been friends. I was pricked by memories of familiar turns of phrase and attitude at once smart and smart-ass.

Craig Tyle '82, a congenial cynic who devoted much of his senior year to writing a radio soap opera of thick and intricate intrigue and after Swarthmore went to Harvard Law and became a stunningly successful finance genius, titled his paper on Herbert Dreyfus' *What Computers Can't Do*, “What Dreyfus Can't Do,” referring to the great artificial intelligence pioneer gamely as “Mr. Dreyfus” throughout his rattling critique. Reading those four typed pages from Oct. 21, 1981, the crispness of Tyle's intelligence—always just this side of mocking but filled

with bonhomie—is alive and brisk and inviting.

Such pangs of nostalgia were followed by an odd shock of recognition. In a spiral notebook marked “FILM,” I discovered a scribbled quotation of T. Kaori Kitao, the art historian who taught us about movies: “In a way, even bad movies today are good; there's a level of artistry and technical excellence in every film that makes it to a movie theater.” Only days ago, camped before our TV playing a DVD, I had plagiarized this idea, offering it to my 11-year-old son as homespun wisdom.

There was more. I found that the first six weeks of Rich Schuldenfrei's syllabus for philosophy of science was very nearly the same as the first month and a half of a syllabus I later wrote for a graduate seminar in science studies that I now teach. I also found a photocopy of the same chapter of Robert Merton's 1933 dissertation on the Protestant origins of modern science that I had taught the week before. In a roundtable at a think tank I'm helping to get off the ground—just last Thursday—I cited a paper called “Operant Psychology as Factory Psychology” by Barry Schwartz, Rich Schuldenfrei, and Hugh Lacey. Asked for the reference, I admitted I had no idea how to find the essay. A copy of it was at the top of the second carton. And reading over my own hastily composed hon-

ors exams, filled with typos and hatched with cross-outs, I came across sentences that, through some alchemy, had reappeared in papers I'd written only recently.

Taken on their own, these coincidences are uncanny, but they also point toward something deeper. Alongside family, my time is stretched now between teaching the history and philosophy of science, launching the think tank, serving on city council, and my *havura*, or egalitarian worship community. The life that I live now—what I think, teach, and write and what I hope to accomplish—was all in those cartons. Some of what I found in the papers I had written or read 28 years ago I could now see as a crude anticipation of what I think and do today. But much of it was neither crude nor mere anticipation. Much of it was fully formed back then, or at least no less fully formed than what I am capable of today.

I know I was not a blank tablet when I arrived at college. The case can be made that all Swarthmore did was help me become a better-realized version of who I was always destined to be—and that the intervening years have done much the same. Looked at from that angle, perhaps the sharp sense of recognition that comes from sorting through my college papers is to be expected. There is something to this, but as I unpacked those cartons, I saw that this is not a full explanation.

The whole story must acknowledge that the tens of thousands of pages of books and essays that I read as an undergraduate and the hundreds of honors papers written by kids like me, and the thousands of hours of lectures I heard, and the tens of thousands of hours of talk—idle and intense—all these, it turns out, are what I've been using, magpie-like, to make sense of my life, to *make* my life, ever since. There's content to my character—and a lot of it, it turns out, was in two cartons that sat for 28 years untouched. ♡

*Noah Efron teaches in the graduate program in science, technology, and society at Bar Ilan University in Israel. He is a contributor to Counterbalance, a nonprofit educational organization working to promote public understanding of science and how the sciences relate to ethical and religious concerns. His book about religion in Israel, Trembling with Fear, is forthcoming from Basic Books.*

# Alumni Profile



VANESSA LENZ

## Like a Frying Pan to the Head

KENDALL CORNELL '86 AND HER CLOWN TROUPE RAISE SPIRITS AND CONSCIOUSNESS ABOUT WOMEN'S BEHAVIOR.

Some women use surgery to change their appearance as they struggle with society's expectations of how it thinks they should look or behave. As creator and director of the all-female clown troupe *Clowns Ex Machina*, Kendall Cornell often just uses a red foam rubber nose. In fact, she finds amusement in playing off those expectations to create theatrical clown stories most audience members never see coming.

Working with the female clowns is "phenomenal," says Cornell, from her West Village apartment in New York City. "The minute the women come on stage, the audience is blown over. The clowns have such a life force, and the women are all different sizes. We don't see women like that much. Usually, women are portrayed as caricatures. But this is raw vitality on stage. We arrive for a performance ready to have fun with the audience. Together, the troupe has an impact that is very strong."

Cornell's clowns are reminiscent of the comedic styles of Lucille Ball, Danny Kaye, and Guilietta Masina. Through research, Cornell has found that female characters don't translate to the formulaic male comedy situations. But, she says, if you take away the men and the scenarios and it's just the women, there are many more possibilities.

The troupe's name, *Clowns Ex Machina*, is a play on the Greek theatrical term *deus ex machina*, which means a person, thing, or event that appears unexpectedly and impacts the storyline in an often larger-than-life or magical way. Cornell's motivation for creating the ensemble in 2006 is similar. She

"I went to see a physical comedy workshop being taught by David Shiner. Seeing the workshop was like a frying pan to the head. I said, 'I have to do this! I don't know what *this* is, but I have to figure it out!'"

wants the pieces she creates to have an unexpected impact on audiences' expectations of women.

A recent example of this was performances of fairytales and Gothic romances with a twist, such as *Cinderella*. In this piece, Cinderella is primarily in love with shoes that don't fit her, says Cornell. "She rejects each man who cannot get the shoe on her foot with a series of shoe puns and moves onto the next destined-to-fail suitor. In the end, she chops her own toes off," Cornell says. "This piece is more about vanity."

Cornell (*center in photo*) encourages her troupe to lose their inhibitions and find the funny in all emotions through improvisation, comic timing, imagination, and a variety of other skills. She offers the same principles to participants in her two-day, all-women clown workshops, which are open to the general public.

The moment in 1993 when Cornell realized that clowning was her calling is etched clearly in her psyche.

"I went to see a physical comedy workshop being taught by David Shiner, who was then on Broadway doing a show with Bill Irwin called *Fool Moon*. It was a silent comedy show except for music and was a huge Tony Award-winning hit. Seeing the workshop was like a frying pan to the head. I said, 'I have to do this! I don't know what *this* is, but I have to figure it out!' I even started to cry. It was like a culmination of what I had been working toward," she says.

Soon after her revelation, and throughout the 1990s, Cornell spent time studying clowning in Europe with Philippe Gaulier, considered the Western world's foremost clown teacher. She also taught clowning and modern dance in Europe and New York. She continues to take acting and dance classes to keep in shape for performing, and knits to relieve stress.

Cornell says her current troupe of 11 women, ranging in age from 30 to mid-50s, spends a lot of time laughing in rehearsals but the work is often emotional and exhausting. "You have to practice having a light spirit, being resilient and bouncing back, because clowns always bounce back. To be a great clown means to be a great actor," Cornell says.

The numbers Cornell creates for herself and her troupe have an evocative sense. "People are transported. There's a sophistication to what I'm doing," she says. "It's funny, and you can laugh, but there are a lot of layers and intellect."

In addition to the ensemble shows, in 2006, Cornell created a "clown extravaganza" for a one-night *Cirque du Soleil* event. The troupe has often performed at La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club, in New York City, and will do so again in 2012.

Her Quaker heritage also informs her work. "I don't know whether Quakers approve of clowns, but I sometimes consider how clowning relates to the space of silent worship," Cornell says. "The space that a clown steps out of is a deep void. It's similar to a Quaker meeting where, when you have something you want to say, it comes out of silence—to be shared with others. There's a way a clown comes onto a stage and from that emptiness creates something to share."

—Audree Penner

# Alumni Profile



COURTESY OF ALLISON MARSH

## From Rowdy Youngster to Public Historian

BECAUSE OF IMPROMPTU STOPS DURING CHILDHOOD ROAD TRIPS, ALLISON MARSH '98 IS NOW A PUBLIC HISTORIAN.

Allison Marsh '98 stumbled upon industrial America while playing in the backseat of her family's station wagon during road trips. To quell the rowdy youngster and her sisters, their father would stop the car to visit factory sites and public monuments along the highway.

"We'd all pile out of the car, and my dad would knock on the door and say, 'We need a tour,'" Marsh chuckles. "That's how we toured all sorts of bizarre places like the tunnels of the Pennsylvania Turnpike."

Little did Marsh know that these impromptu pit stops would dictate much of her future career as a professor of public history at the University of South Carolina (USC). An expert on 20th-century technology, Marsh's research specializes in the cultural and industrial significance of factory tours in American history. Marsh, a double major in engineering and history, also teaches modern U.S. history and the history of science and technology to undergraduates and supervises the museum studies program for graduate students.

Marsh's research explores a broad spectrum of industrial and public facilities that offer regularly scheduled tours. She has studied their rise, which began in the 1880s, visiting factories in multiple industries such as food, automobile, and mail-order catalogues, in addition to dams, canals, and mines. "What I'm very interested in is a factory where you go out onto the factory floor and see people working," says Marsh (*left in photo with colleague Gabi Kuenzli, preparing to tour the silver mines of Cerra Rico in Potosi, Bolivia*).

Growing up in Richmond, Va., Marsh was no stranger to industrial manufacturing and the mass production that spread through the state capital during her childhood.

"A big second-grade field trip in my elementary school was the Philip Morris cigarette factory," Marsh recalls. "I can't imagine that happening now."

A couple decades later, an older Marsh found herself researching court documents in the archives of tobacco companies under litigation. "It was a goldmine," she says. "The tobacco companies documented their factory tours as marketing tools."

"We'd all pile out of the car, and my dad would knock on the door and say, 'We need a tour,'" Marsh chuckles. "That's how we toured all sorts of bizarre places like the tunnels of the Pennsylvania Turnpike."

"They had different tours marketed to different age groups," added Marsh. "With schoolchildren, the tours were about tobacco as a crop, about the economy, about how things were made, without actually talking about cigarettes themselves."

Not surprisingly, her research has revealed that industrial tourism ties into the reputation building and management in which companies have engaged historically. "The tours are not particularly eye-opening, because companies are so conscious of their image and of potential hazards that the tours are sanitized," she explains. "The purpose of the tours on behalf of the company has always been to sell their image."

"Aside from the technical question, what my final work comes out as is a history of public relations and advertising," Marsh concludes about the crisscrossing of professional fields that emerged in her research.

A passionate globetrotter in her leisure time, Marsh has set foot on six continents and dipped her toes in all four oceans (still trying to get to Antarctica), finding that wanderlust has expanded her mindset beyond American borders and culturally enriched her research projects. On a recent vacation in Bolivia to visit a colleague, she toured the local mines for a current book project.

"Because Bolivia doesn't have the regulations that the United States has, I wanted to see what the working conditions were there," Marsh says. "They were horrendous and really quite remarkable. I was having tremendous difficulty breathing. For a while there, I feared a little bit for my safety."

According to Marsh, outsourcing labor to poor, regulation-lax countries has thoroughly impacted the socio-cultural dynamics of factory production. "The further that we get away from these types of working environments, the more disconnected we are from where our products come from."

"But I'd be careful not to overstate that, because we forget how much of our country is actually involved in this labor force," she adds, citing a tiny steel-rolling mill located just down her street in Cayce, S.C. "There are a lot of people out there still making things in small factories."

When Marsh is not conducting research or continent-hopping, she tries to invoke the liberal arts experience in her 100-person lectures at USC, a large state university. Swarthmore has informed her teaching style to emphasize critical thinking and thoughtful dialogue in class.

"I ask open-ended questions and offer creative assignments and discussions," she says. "I expect everyone to learn through voicing their positions, challenging others and their responses."

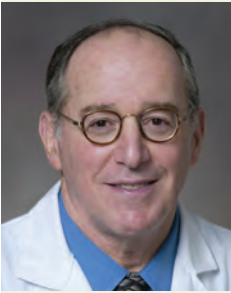
"Students either love me or hate me," she chuckles, explaining that her end-of-the-year evaluations are often "bipolar." According to Marsh, her students often remark that her lecture was the first one that made them think. "You either get the students who have their eyes opened to a broader world or those people who are fighting against that night and day," she says.

Marsh is currently working on a book titled *The Ultimate Vacation: Watching Other People Work*, a history of factory tours in America from 1890–1940 that aggregates all of her research. In addition, she is conceptualizing a museum exhibit in support of the book, which is slated to open in January 2012.

—Maki Somosot '12

# Alumni Achievements

## Frederick Keller '64



COURTESY OF OHSU SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

has received two international awards for his contributions to interventional radiology—the CIRSE (Cardiovascular and Interventional Society of Europe) Gold Medal, awarded to individuals who have devoted their talents and energy to the advancement and quality of medicine, patient care, and interventional radiology, and the 2010 International Cooperative Award from the Chinese Society for Interventional Radiology for his contributions to the field in China. A physician and professor at Oregon Health and Science University (OSHU), Keller, who also serves as director of the Dotter Interventional Institute, Cook Professor of Interventional Therapy, professor of surgery, and chair of diagnostic radiology, is only the second American physician to be honored with the Gold Medal by CIRSE. Keller’s students, residents of both the radiology and internal medicine departments, have named him outstanding teacher and best radiology discussant, and he has been recognized for his clinical expertise in interventional treatment. Past honors

have included the Gold Medal of the Society of Interventional Radiology; distinguished fellow of CIRSE; an endowed chair, the Frederick S. Keller Chair of Interventional Radiology, established in his honor at OHSU; honorary professor at the Third Beijing University School of Medicine; and professor titular of the faculty of medicine, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

## Johanna Schmitt '74

was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences last fall, in recognition of her cutting-edge research and scholarship. A Brown University professor of biology and environmental studies, Schmitt is also director of the Environmental Change Initiative and the Stephen T. Olney Professor of Natural History. According to Dean of Faculty Rajiv Vohra, “[Johanna’s] work, which bridges physiology, genetics, and evolutionary ecology, is truly unique, extremely ambitious, and worthy of national recognition.” Schmitt, who joined the Brown faculty in 1982, studies how plants change over time in response to their environment. She and her research group use the model plant *Arabidopsis thaliana*—a member of the mustard family—to study how genetic variation in sensitivity to environmental cues such as day length and temperature affects reproductive success in different regions and climates. A fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and member of the National Academy of Science, Schmitt received a Humboldt Research Award in 2007. She is also president of the Society for the Study of Evolution and past president of the American Society of Naturalists.



COURTESY OF BROWN UNIVERSITY

## Amy Sinden '84



JOSEPH LABOLITO, TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

has been recognized for an environmental article that she co-authored with David M. Driesen in 2009. The piece “The Missing Instrument: Dirty Input Limits” was chosen as one of the top five environmental law articles by a national panel of law professors and environmental scholars. The article originally appeared in the *Harvard Environmental Law Review* and was reprinted in the 2009–2010 edition of the *Land Use and Environmental Law Review*, an anthology representing the most insightful thinking on a wide range of current and emerging issues relating to environmental and land use regulation. In addition to environmental law, Sinden, a Temple law professor, has taught, lectured, and written in the areas of natural resources law, regulatory design, cost-benefit analysis, human rights, and climate change. “The Missing Instrument” argues for placing regulatory limits on the inputs that constitute the root causes of pollution, in addition to/instead of the polluting outputs themselves. Previously, Sinden served as senior

counsel for Citizens for Pennsylvania Future and associate attorney for EarthJustice Legal Defense Fund in Seattle. In 2006, she received the Friel/Scanlon Prize for Outstanding Scholarship.

# Alumni Achievements

## Dawn Porter's ['88],



HELGA SCHAEFER/HCCREATIVES

first documentary, *Gideon's Army*—a film about new public defenders working in the Deep South under the auspices of the Southern Public Defender Training Center and founder Jonathan Rapping—has been selected for the Tribeca All Access producing program. Only five documentary projects were chosen for the yearlong Tribeca Film Institute program, which includes an initial grant and mentorship by a member of the Producers Guild of America. To date, Porter, a Georgetown University-educated attorney turned filmmaker, has financed the film with a six-figure Ford Foundation grant. *Gideon's Army* has also been selected for two other competitions—Hot Docs at the Toronto doc Festival and The Good Pitch, part of the Sundance Doc Institute. Owner of Trilogy Films, Porter is also producing a film about the Mississippi Sovereignty Commission and efforts to stop the civil rights movement for the Smithsonian Channel and recently directed and produced a biography of Chef Alexandra Guarnaschelli for the Cooking Channel.

She became interested in documentary filmmaking at A&E Television, where she says, “I worked on other people’s films until I received the Ford grant, allowing me to work on my own project. It’s a dream come true!”

## Rebecca Henderson Wynne '86

was selected last summer for the University of Oregon (UO) High School Teacher Award. The award is given in appreciation of the fine teaching that has prepared students for the university. A science teacher at Catlin Gabel High School in Portland, Ore., since 1998, Wynne was nominated for the award by 2010 Catlin Gabel graduate Becky Coulterpark. “I am delighted by Becky Wynne’s dedication to excellent teaching,” says UO biology professor Karen Sprague. “I am especially gratified to those who’ve introduced students to the chemical and physical underpinnings of biology.” In addition to chemistry, Wynne has also taught physics, biology, and—despite being the daughter of two Cornell mathematicians (both members of the Swarthmore Class of '61) and having emphatically told her mother, “I will never become a math teacher.”—math. Previously, she worked at Lakeside School in Seattle, Oregon Health Sciences University, and Oregon Museum of Science and Industry.



A.I.S.A. PHOTOGRAPHY INC.

## Dan Rothenberg '95, Quinn Bauriedel '94, and Dito van Reigersberg '94



JASON FRANK ROTHENBERG

have been named recipients of the USA Knight Fellowship, which includes a \$50,000 grant from United States Artists (USA) and an additional \$5,000 to engage local residents by conducting workshops, talks, or other events. The three men are the co-artistic directors of the Pig Iron Theatre Company, which they founded in 1995. Based in Philadelphia, the company has won two OBIE Awards and has been lauded by *The New York Times* as “one of the few groups successfully taking theater in new directions.” The company is dedicated to forging original, ensemble-created performance works. Together, they have created 25 works in a variety of styles, including black comedies, melodramas, gallery installations, clown shows, and simulated economic environments. Pig Iron has toured festivals and theaters in England, Scotland, Poland, Lithuania, Brazil, Peru, Ireland, Italy, Romania, and Germany and has collaborated with such luminaries as director Joseph Chaikin, composer Cynthia Hopkins, and designer Anna Kiraly. In October, the company will open the Pig Iron School for Advanced Performance Training, a two-year program to train physical-theater actors, with Bauriedel serving as the school director. Following graduation with degrees

in theater studies, Bauriedel (*right*) and Rothenberg (*left*) studied theater in Paris at Ecole Jacques Lecoq, while van Reigersburg (*center*) studied at the Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre in New York and at the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance.

# Alumni Achievements

## Miriam Pérez '06

has been honored by the National Women's Health Network (NWHN) with its Barbara Seaman Award for Activism in Women's Health. The award recognizes an unwavering insistence on listening to women, a dogged determination to see abuses correctly, and bridge building between generations. "I'm flattered to be honored by an organization whose mission has been to serve as a watchdog for women's health," says Pérez, whose work in founding *Radical Doula.com* was cited specifically by the NWHN. An editor with *Feministing.com*, Pérez is also an organizer and advocate for Latina women, most recently in her role as the e-communications manager for the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health. In 2010, she was chosen as a Lambda Literary Foundation Emerging LGBT Voice in Nonfiction. She is also the recipient of a 2009 Young Woman of Achievement Award from the Women's Information Network. Her writing has appeared in *Bitch Magazine*, *The Nation*, and *The American Prospect* as well as the anthologies *Click: When We Knew We Were Feminists* (2010) and *Yes Means Yes: Visions of Female Sexual Power and A World Without Rape* (2008).



EMILY GOODSTEIN

# Not Self

DONALD SWEARER ON BUDDHISM,  
RELIGION, AND COMPASSION.

*Interview conducted and edited by Jeffrey Lott.*

BEFORE HE RETIRED FROM THE SWARTHMORE FACULTY, Don Swearer would stop by my Parrish Hall office to tell me about his travels. His research in Thai Buddhism took him—and his wife and longtime editor Nancy Swearer—to Thailand as frequently as they could manage, particularly to the northern city of Chiang Mai. So when I visited Southeast Asia with my son earlier this year, we flew to Chiang Mai instead of Bangkok because Don and Nancy were there. Before we left, I crammed a bit, reading two of his



JEFFREY LOTT

Donald Swearer at Wat Umong, Chiang Mai, Thailand, February 2011, where he was studying Buddhist economics and Thailand's sufficiency economy on a senior Fulbright research grant.

books; touring Buddhist temples with Don Swearer is like a little seminar in Theravada Buddhism, and you have to be prepared.

Swearer, 76, the Charles and Harriet Cox McDowell Professor Emeritus of Religion, retired a second time last June as director of the Center for the Study of World Religions at the Harvard Divinity School. Always a popular teacher at Swarthmore, Swearer is widely known for his scholarship—especially his books and translations that illuminate Buddhism's impact in Southeast Asia.

He first went to Thailand in 1957, after a rocky first year at the Yale Divinity School, where he had gone to study for the Presbyterian ministry after graduating from Princeton. His first encounter with Buddhism came that summer, while teaching English at Bangkok Christian College. He returned to Yale and completed a B.D. and a master's in

JOSEPH LOTT



sacred theology but decided on a career in teaching rather than parish ministry. Swearer was already teaching at Oberlin College when he completed a Ph.D. at Princeton in 1967. Today, after 34 years at Swarthmore (1970–2004) and many sabbaticals and summer visits, he is fluent in Thai language, religion, and culture.

I interviewed Don amid the trees and birds of Wat Umong, a “forest” monastery at the edge of Chiang Mai associated with Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, the influential 20th-century monk whose modern interpretations of Buddhism have been a steady Swearer interest. In the 1930s, Buddhadasa (d. 1993) established Suan Mokkh, a forest monastery in southern Thailand, which became a center for socially engaged Buddhism—a “pristine” form of Buddhism that he said was meant to “drag humanity out from under the power of materialism.” When I spoke again with



JEFFREY LOTT

Trees draped with saffron robes—“ordained” by the Wat Umong monks to give them sacred status.

Swearer after his return to the United States this spring, he was preparing to move to Claremont, Calif., where he anticipates more opportunities for him and Nancy to enjoy their family and community. Yet the pull of scholarship and the classroom hasn’t abated. He’s considering graduate teaching opportunities and, with characteristic zeal, wants to finish an ongoing study of Christian identity in Buddhist Thailand and a translation of a chronicle of a major northern Thai monastic lineage.

I began by asking him a favorite question. He replied, of course, by reframing my question and giving a surprisingly frank answer.

*Tell me about a long-held theory or belief that you no longer hold.*

I might ask, “Which fundamental ideas that you once held has your study of Buddhism radically transformed?” To go right to the heart of it, our conventional understanding of the Christian God as a Ground of Being who created the world—something fundamental to Biblical faith—has been fundamentally challenged and altered. Buddhism offers a very different way of understanding the nature of the world, of notions regarding ultimate reality and transcendence which, in my case, served to transform my understanding of Christian theology.

*What elements of Buddhism have you adopted in your personal or spiritual life?*

I studied meditation with teachers in Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Japan, then brought two of them to Oberlin to work with my students during a January term practicum. That led to a book, *Secrets of a Lotus: Studies in Buddhist Meditation*. My work on Buddhadasa has led to an empathetic worldview—a word I use instead of philosophy—that embraces the Buddhist critique of selfishness and self-centeredness, emphasizing compassion and generosity. These virtues are highlighted in Buddhism, but they are universal. This teaching—often translated as “not self”—is difficult for westerners to grasp because it’s seen as being negative and world denying. A better way of thinking of it is “to uncenter the self.” That’s very much linked with the interconnectedness of all things—a fundamental principle of Buddhist thought.

*You’ve been working on a project called *Buddhist Economics and Thailand’s Sufficiency Economy*. What does “sufficiency” mean in this context?*

It’s usually parsed in Thai as “having enough to live and to eat.” Sufficiency has been promoted throughout the long history of Thailand’s current king [who has reigned since 1946]. “Sufficiency” acknowledges the importance of strong, diverse local economies, especially in agriculture as a counter to mono-agricultural crops that are subject to the vagaries of the global market.

*How does Buddhism relate to sufficiency?*

Sufficiency is the inverse of excess—especially excess driven by accumulation or greed—

and that’s linked to Buddhist concepts of non-attachment and interdependence. The monastic orders themselves provide an example by living simply in community—and King Rama IV was a monk for 27 years before he became king. This is not to say that sufficiency economics has not been critiqued as a way for urban elites to keep the rural poor in their place. But the examples in my research—a community, a farmer, a business, a school—have embraced the philosophy of sufficiency, and I think Buddhism has something to do with that.

*What are some common elements of all religious traditions?*

Religions envisage human existence in a broad framework. Despite how they vary across the horizontal dimension in ways that they frame this or define that, there’s a vertical dimension that engages notions that can’t be empirically verified. That’s where god language comes in, for example, but it’s more universal in engaging notions like infinity or transcendence. Those ideas are particularly distinctive to the religious worldview.

*Does such a worldview require belief in something that defies empirical understanding?*

Buddhism doesn’t have a god concept the way Christianity does. Many Buddhists will tell you that unlike Christianity, which depends on faith, theirs is a rational religion.

*What’s the future of Buddhism?*

Max Weber, who looked at world religions through the lens of Protestant materialism, saw Buddhism as other-worldly mysticism—all about being a monk in a monastery. But modern, socially engaged Buddhism as envisioned by Buddhadasa, Thich Nhat Hanh, and the Dalai Lama addresses worldly problems. These Buddhists care about the environment; they work to end human trafficking; they seek economic justice. This is not uncommon among all religious traditions today, but more people of all faiths are taking on global problems from their religions’ perspectives. If Buddhism—or Christianity for that matter—is to remain relevant in the modern world, it has to engage the world with values of selflessness and compassion.

*“Not self,” right?*

Not self. Exactly. ☸



Come home to Swarthmore.



Reminisce, reconnect,  
and make new friends.



# ALUMNI WEEKEND 2011 JUNE 3-5

This year's Alumni Weekend will include:

- Performance by the legendary Doc Watson with David Holt, sponsored by Swarthmore Folk
- Collection speaker June Rothman Scott '61
- Reading and performance of selections from *Messiah*, conducted by John Alston

For more information and to register online: <http://bit.ly/alumniweekend2011>