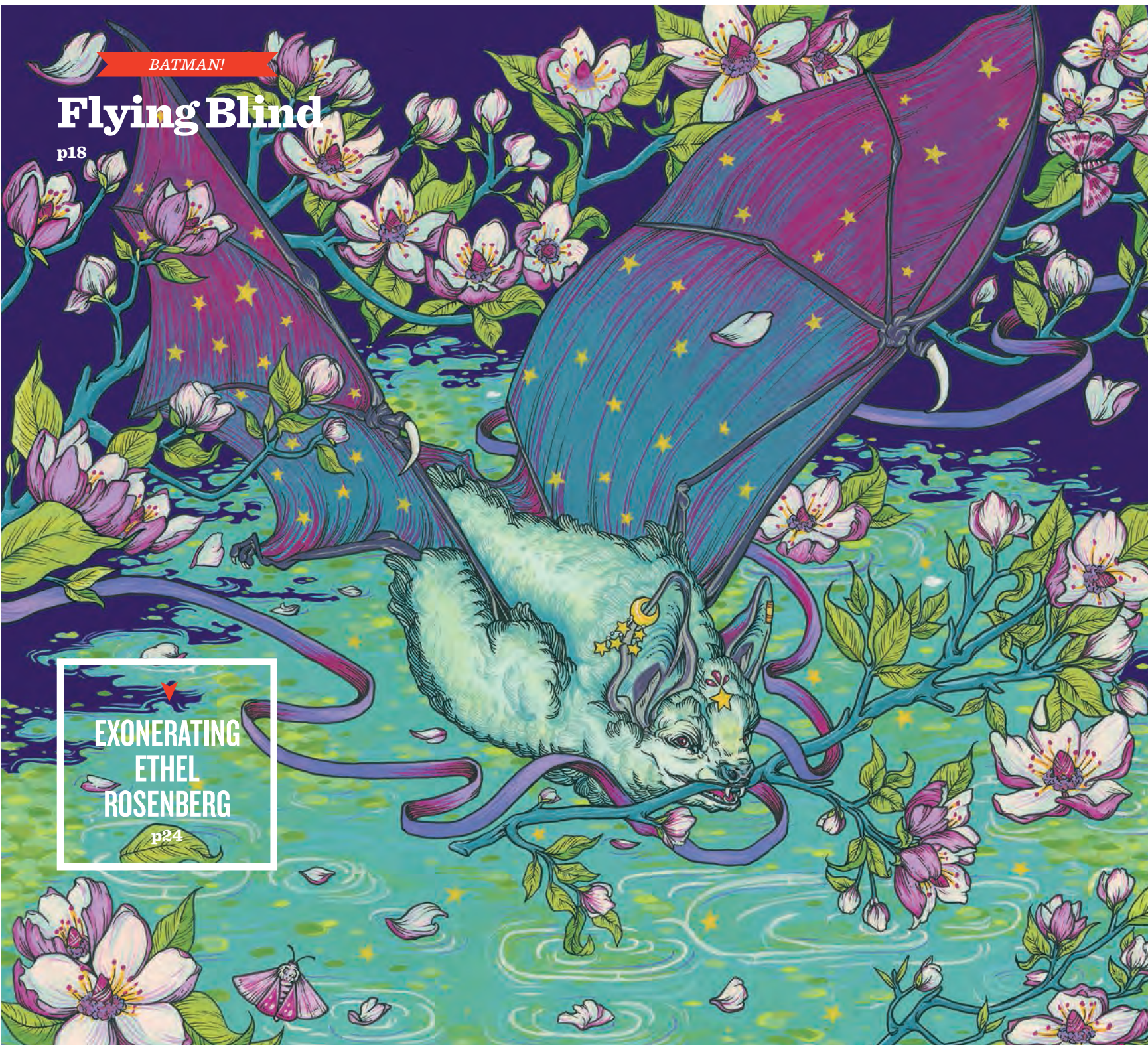
WINTER 2016

swarthmore

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE BULLETIN

ISSUE II
VOLUME CXIII



BATMAN!

Flying Blind

p18

EXONERATING ETHEL ROSENBERG

p24

A NEW VIEW

34

American Family, American Dream

A Smithsonian exhibit honoring the legacy of Denise Dennis ’72 and Darryl Gore ’79’s family includes artifacts such as their great-great grandfather Henry W. Dennis’s glasses, ca. 1860-82.

ALFRED B. FOR, COURTESY OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

WEB EXCLUSIVES

BULLETIN.SWARTHMORE.EDU

PEN PALS
Watch video of professors Tomoko Sakomura, Logan Grider, and Alexandra Gueydan-Turek demonstrating their expertise with and love of fountain pens.

IN STYLE
Read Miles Skorpen ’09’s account of the Alumni Council meeting and professional clothing drive they held for students.

GREEN EGGS AND ACTIVISM
Author Ann Berlak ’59 shares some of her favorite socially conscious children’s books.

#VALSMITH15
Explore the fun and far-reaching full range of social media responses to President Valerie Smith’s inauguration.

MASTERPIECE THEATER
Watch Thom Collins ’88 deliver his 2015 Garnet Weekend McCabe Lecture, “Somewhere Better Than This Place: The Art Museum and Alternative Social Experience.”

ON THE COVER
Illustration by Erica Williams

EDITOR'S COLUMN

THE SPINNINGS OF SPIDERS

LAURENCE KESTERSON

by
JONATHAN RIGGS
Editor

REMEMBER *Charlotte's Web*? That eloquent arachnid came to mind as I searched for the best words with which to introduce myself.

"Some pig" was tempting—and perhaps accurate—but Charlotte's "Salutations!" seems best. Not just for this occasion, but for the tone I hope to set for our magazine: hopeful, intelligent, whimsical, exuberant, kind.

So: Salutations, Swarthmore! I am honored to be your new *Bulletin* editor.

We'll have a long time to get to know each other—and I'm really looking forward to that—but first, I want to reintroduce you to our team. They might be new to me, but they shouldn't be new to you, and I want to ensure they receive their due.

A purple-penned copy editor extraordinaire, Carrie Compton is our acting associate editor and class notes editor. As passionate about social justice as she is about pursuing a story, Carrie wrote the powerful "Correcting the Record."

A country boy with big-city talent, Larry Kesterson is our staff photographer/videographer. His impressive work runs throughout our website and magazine, including "The Poetry of Pen and Ink" feature and video.

A thoughtful, artistic marvel, Phil Stern '84 is our designer. His care and creativity are on full display in every page of this publication, particularly in "American Family, American Dream."

An intellectually curious organizational dynamo, Michelle Crumsho is our administrative/editorial assistant. Her technical expertise, enthusiasm, and Excel wizardry keep our magazine moving gracefully forward.

As for me, I'm a longtime writer and editor hailing from Dartmouth (by way of the University of Southern California, by way of the University of Kentucky). Before I left New England, I interviewed Don Mitchell '69 for "Flying Blind," which was the best introduction imaginable to my new role and my new life.

I'm delighted to make my Swarthmore debut with this issue, which we've spun in honor of Charlotte and others like her (and I daresay you): selfless dreamers who use their gifts to change the world.

Swarthmore, I'm finding out every day, is full of such spinners, whom even the most remarkable spider would be proud to call friend. Read all about them in this issue—and every one after.

Gratefully,

Jonathan Riggs

P.S. I'd love to hear from you!
jriggs2@swarthmore.edu

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE BULLETIN

Editor
Jonathan Riggs

Acting Associate Editor and Class Notes Editor
Carrie Compton

Designer
Phillip Stern '84

Photographer
Laurence Kesterson

Editorial Assistant
Aaron Jackson '16

Administrative/Editorial Assistant
Michelle Crumsho

Editor Emerita
Maralyn Orbison Gillespie '49

Website: bulletin.swarthmore.edu
Email: bulletin@swarthmore.edu
Telephone: 610-328-8435
Facebook: www.facebook.com/SwarthmoreBulletin

We welcome letters on subjects covered in the magazine. We reserve the right to edit letters for length, clarity, and style. Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editors or the official views or policies of the College.

Send letters and story ideas to
bulletin@swarthmore.edu

Send address changes to
alumnirecords@swarthmore.edu

The Swarthmore College Bulletin (ISSN 0888-2126), of which this is volume CXIII, number II, is published in October, January, April, and July by Swarthmore College, 500 College Ave., Swarthmore, PA 19081-1390. Periodicals postage paid at Philadelphia, PA and additional mailing offices. Permit No. 0530-620. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Swarthmore College Bulletin*, 500 College Ave., Swarthmore, PA 19081-1390.

Printed with agri-based inks.
Please recycle after reading.

FSC www.fsc.org MIX Paper from responsible sources FSC® C110194

printed with eco-friendly H-UV inks

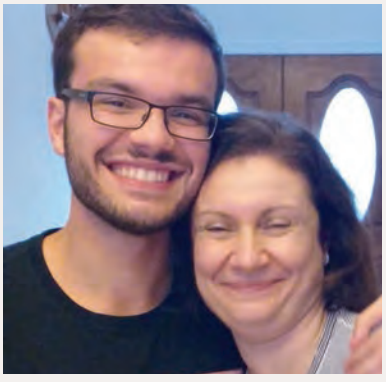
REMEMBERING FRIENDS

MEG SPENCER

ANNETTE NEWMAN

"Meg was dedicated, energetic, and passionate in helping students, maintaining and developing a vital collection of resources, and creating a welcoming atmosphere in Cornell Science Library. She made Valentine's Day cards, cooked lemon chicken soup for sick friends, remembered birthdays, gave us a laugh with her unique sense of humor, and cared deeply about us and our families. We were lucky to call her our friend."
—TERRY HEINRICHS, Cornell Science Library and PAM HARRIS, McCabe Library

ANTHONY CHIARENZA '18



COURTESY OF THE CHIARENZA FAMILY

"Anthony brought great joy into the lives of his many friends and acquaintances. He was a remarkable young man and a humble, deeply cherished member of this community who brought light and warmth to everyone he knew. His ability and willingness to love profoundly and fully transformed friends into family. His spirit will continue to inspire us all. His loss is immeasurable."
—VALERIE SMITH, President

+ READ THE FULL TRIBUTES
bulletin.swarthmore.edu

Kindness of 'Strangers'

About 15 years ago, I traveled to Boston for a surprise visit with my two daughters and young granddaughter. After climbing off the bus, I began searching for the right "T" train to take to their hotel. A gentleman, seeing my confusion, said that he was going in the same direction and would show me the way. At some point, I realized that he was Michael Dukakis '55, former governor of Massachusetts, but even more important to me, a graduate of Swarthmore College! Our shared "T" ride was much too short. I will always remember this "happening"—meeting someone from Swarthmore whose life seemed filled with integrity, courage, and compassion. Are there more of us?
—JANE TOTAH DAVIS '50, Sorrento, Maine

FYI RE: LBJ

I read with great interest the latest *Bulletin*, especially the gripping stories of the participants in the civil rights movement in Mississippi in the '60s. However, there is an error in the article about the heroic Mimi Feingold Real '63.

Lyndon Johnson's motive behind the Civil Rights Act of 1964 cannot have been the disappearance of Cheney, Goodman, and Schwerner. Johnson signed the legislation almost exactly at the time the three disappeared. I was working with SNCC at that time in Columbus, Miss, and we were almost simultaneously handing out copies of *The New York Times* front-page summary of the Act and looking for the three CORE workers.

Perhaps the author meant that their disappearance was a motive for his pushing the Voting Rights Act of 1965.
—PAUL MARCUS '55, New York, N.Y.

[redacted]

DECK THE MAIDEN FAIR

I enjoyed the article on large-scale campus art, and I was glad to know such works are taking their place on campus.

The title of the article, "Art and Nature Thus Allied," was taken from W. S. Gilbert's song for the operetta *Mikado*, its first line being "Braid the raven hair."

I think Gilbert deserves a footnote for that milestone in English poetry: "Art and nature, thus allied, go to make a pretty bride."
—DAVID DUNCAN '69, Rushville, Ill.

NEW BEGINNING

Love the new *Bulletin*. Staunch and gray gives way to style and color. Your presentation of President Valerie Smith is a wonderful way to introduce our new leader and teacher to your loyal alumni. Thank you, and keep up the good work.
—JOE CHARNY '50, Pittsburgh, Pa.

+ WRITE TO US
bulletin@swarthmore.edu

PETER ARKLE

COMMUNITY VOICES

GRIEF AND GRATITUDE

Despite our losses, we should never lose sight of one another

by
LYNNE STEUERLE SCHOFIELD
'99
Professor

AS YOU MAY know, the end of 2015 wasn't easy for the Swarthmore community. We had a difficult few months where three of our beloved members died unexpectedly—Professor Alan Berkowitz in July, Cornell Science Librarian Meg Spencer in September, and sophomore Anthony Chiarenza '18 in October. Even now, with time to reflect, so much loss so quickly has me, perhaps like you, wondering what we should make of it all.

I am no stranger to loss. My mom died when I was only 24. And yet when I think of her now, I focus less on my own loss, and much more on my children's in never knowing her. It is inconceivable to me that the two most important women in my life—my mother and my daughter—have never met and never will. I often wonder, too, how my mother's unique perspectives and wisdom would have influenced my son.

But what I realize now is that my children are really quite lucky. Because of my mom's death, my children have four women who play the role of grandmother rather than the two they would otherwise have had. These women—my maternal aunt, my mother's best friend, my stepmother, and my mother-in-law—have all carved unique places in the space my mother left behind.

None of them has tried to fill her shoes—they are too enormous to fill, despite the fact that she stood only 5 feet 3 inches. Rather, these women have quietly and lovingly provided my children—and us all—with pieces of themselves and pieces of my mother in countless ways. In the wake of grief, I find myself incredibly grateful for their presence.

It may seem strange to talk about gratitude in the face of grief, but I think we should.

Cicero once said, "Gratitude is not only the greatest of the virtues but the parent of all others." And in arguing that "[We] cannot be mindful without being grateful," Brother David Steindl-Rast associates gratitude with the very attitude toward others and toward learning and life that we here at Swarthmore hope to foster.

Gratitude and grief can be closely linked. Professors Lawrence Calhoun and Richard Tedeschi of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte termed the phrase "post-traumatic growth" to refer to "the positive psychological change experienced as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life circumstances." They find that individuals often appreciate their good fortunes not in spite of but because of their trauma and loss.

My hope is that our community can do the same. As difficult as it is to be grateful in the face of so many tragedies, I urge us all to focus on the many ways, small and large, where we can respond to our grief with compassion and generosity. After all, even those who have suffered most attain more post-traumatic growth if they have strong networks and supports—a lesson for any community, family, nation, or campus.

Ultimately, it is up to us as a community to find ways to honor those whom we have lost. Maybe we can follow the example of the wise, warm women in my life and try to lovingly occupy the spaces Alan, Meg, and Anthony left behind. Although we can never fill their shoes—their shoes, like my mom's, are unique and theirs alone—we can be grateful for them and good to one another.

LYNNE STEUERLE SCHOFIELD '99 is an associate professor of statistics.

"It may seem strange to talk about gratitude in the face of grief, but I think we should."

LAURENCE KESTERSON

REWIND: ON MAKING CONNECTIONS

A liberal arts worldview draws us—and everything—closer

by
BETSY KREUTER RYMES '87

DURING MY FIRST semester at Swarthmore, I took an English literature course called Ruin and Rebegetting—a theme that might also describe my experience as a writer in that course.

My first paper came back covered with voluminous red notes, which my professor generously spent an eternity going over with me in her office. While her critique was pointed, she never criticized any of my ideas or suggested I lower my ambitions. Miraculously, I left that extended critique feeling like my perspective mattered.

When our next assignment came up, an essay on Melville's *Moby-Dick*, I mulled over ideas for a few days, then made a serendipitous connection: I would compare Ahab and his quest with an essay I had just read in *The New York Times*.

In that essay, a woman wrote about solitude, describing her experience living in a cabin alone for a year, cut off from her social circle. When I mentioned this to a friend, he scoffed: "You can't compare great literature to an everyday *New York Times* column!" But I was convinced. I had read something contemporary that made *Moby-Dick* meaningful to me, and I knew I could communicate that connection to at least one careful reader.

It worked. This time, the professor used her red pen only for praise.

So began my career of connection-making at Swarthmore. In my Renaissance Epic seminar, I connected the theme of "The Fall of Man" to a May Sarton poem, "The Beautiful Pauses," told from the perspective of a hotel window overlooking busy city streets.

When I spent a summer working on a ranch in Wyoming, I wrote a column for the local newspaper, *The Douglas Budget*, connecting the challenges faced by ranchers who choose to "rough it" in a world of convenience to being a Swarthmore student choosing to spend weekends in the library.

Drawing these unexpected connections was more than just a creative exercise—it helped me decide my career path and see the world in a different way. This became even clearer after I took a literary theory seminar at Swarthmore and realized that the difference between "literary" and "everyday" language was a social construct, not an objective distinction. When I moved to Los Angeles after graduation, I carried that idea with me.

By day, I taught English as a second language to junior high school students; by night I taught it to adults. I went on to graduate school and wrote a dissertation on the stories told by high-school dropouts. Making connections between the lives I studied in Los Angeles and what I learned in my liberal arts education at Swarthmore helped me realize that there was value and joy in analyzing the everyday conversations of teenagers as carefully as one might a Shakespearean soliloquy.

Today, I research language in classrooms and teach about talk in schools. I am a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, but I also work with teachers at Strath Haven High School, just steps away from Swarthmore. We have been introducing concepts from the fields of sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology to encourage students to make connections between the complex, layered communication among peers and the language they are learning to interpret in literature.

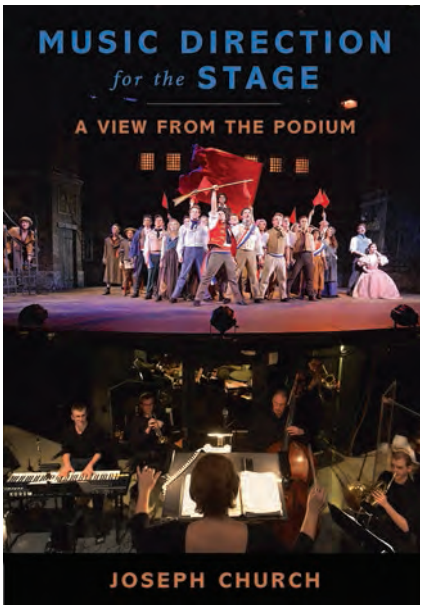
Language, for me, makes all connections—even the most unexpected—possible. I'm fortunate to have gone to a school that recognized this, and that allowed me to develop the courage, knowledge, and skill to make creative connections between disparate worlds and ways of thinking. And every day since, I work to pass along that ability and insight to empower students and teachers to do the same. $

Betsy Kreuter Rymes '87 is an associate professor in educational linguistics at the University of Pennsylvania. Visit her blog: citizensociolinguistics.com

BOOK REVIEW

WE ARE THE MUSIC MAKERS

by **Andrew Hauze '04**



WHETHER IT'S AN elementary school opening night or the longest-running Broadway blockbuster, a Tony Award-winner or a train wreck, anyone who's attempted to produce a musical knows how complex and sometimes messy the process can be. Joseph Church '78 knows better than most.

His breadth of experience—from a Swarthmore student production of *West Side Story* in Clothier Hall to the original production of *The Lion King* on Broadway—makes him the perfect authority to pen *Music Direction for the Stage: A View from the Podium* (Oxford University Press), a comprehensive, generous primer that inspired me from start to finish.

Reading Church's work feels like settling in for a long, intimate conversation about the lessons he's learned, the disasters he's survived, and the triumphant premieres he's led.

Perhaps the most precious passages are those in which Church delves into the realities of a musician's life. I have never seen our varied, unpredictable work so thoroughly described. Both musicians and music lovers will be grateful that Church has given us such a vivid picture of the romance—and reality—of musical living.

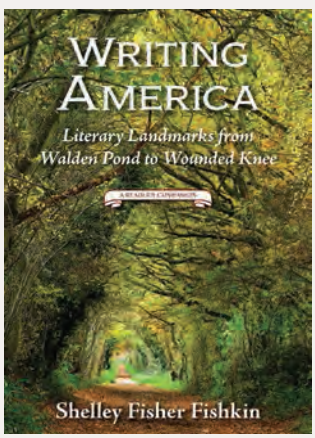
This book need not only appeal to musicians. While much of it is about putting on a show, Church's passion, work ethic, and broad liberal arts mentality will inspire anyone interested in the arts.

Whether you're involved in musical theater, or just appreciate what it takes to bring it to life, Church has much to offer, including setting professional and personal standards we all would do well to model.

After all, according to Church, a music director must be humble, proficient, and collaborative—rare traits to find in equal measure in almost anyone, let alone those of us who fancy ourselves conductors!

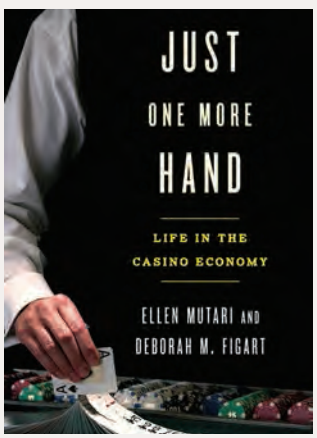
ANDREW HAUZE '04 is a lecturer in the department of music and dance.

HOT TYPE: NEW BOOKS BY SWARTHMORE GRADUATES



➤ **Shelley Fisher Fishkin '71**
Writing America: Literary Landmarks from Walden Pond to Wounded Knee
Rutgers University Press

"Places, like works of literature, are open to multiple interpretations," states Fishkin in this guide to the physical places and imaginative terrains of many of America's greatest authors. Through the prism of more than 150 National Register historic sites, this eclectic, essential work honors authors' voices both mainstream and underrepresented. Thought- and even tear-provoking, *Writing America* will leave you in awe of the writers whose worlds and words comprise our country's canon. Lovers of American lit, commence salivating.



➤ **Ellen Mutari '78 and Deborah M. Figart**
Just One More Hand: Life in the Casino Economy
Rowman & Littlefield

Inspired by a simple question—"Could you build a life working in Atlantic City's booming casinos?"—Mutari and Figart investigate the complex answer's very human face. Underpinning their analyses with real-life experiences of casino housekeepers and cocktail waitresses, pit bosses and poker dealers, they find the gaming industry—and the economic footing of its employees—in flux, an apt lens for a new economic order. "Our study participants are living in a casino economy," they write. "But, increasingly, so are the rest of us."

AUTHOR Q&A

WRITING A JUST AND JOYFUL WORLD: ANN BERLAK '59

Ann Berlak '59 believes in literature that empowers readers of all ages to think about inequality and activism. Her new children's book, *Joelito's Big Decision/La gran decisión de Joelito* (Hard Ball Press), is the bilingual tale of a fourth-grader who discovers how the low wages his favorite restaurant pays its workers is impacting his friends' families.

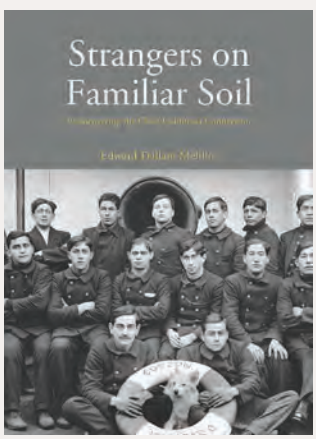
LYDIA DANILLER

Why did you write this book?
Children are yearning to discuss political and social justice, but there is vast silence in schools about issues such as why people are poor, how the rich get rich, whether the vast inequalities we see around us exist everywhere, or whether anyone can do anything to create more justice. This is my first attempt to write a book for children that is captivating, beautiful, and could be used to spark these conversations.

How have children's reactions been?
There have been many inspiring moments, but also some discouraging ones, too. In response to the question about how people get so rich, one fourth-grader asked, "If I grow up, join the Army, offer to give my life for my country, and don't get killed, is that a good way to get rich?" The teacher and I made eye contact—the classroom should be a place to discuss more important things than "college- and career-readiness."

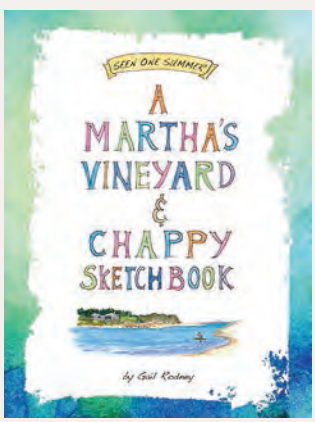
What is the book's ultimate takeaway for kids, teachers, and parents?
I hope they will begin connecting the dots between private troubles and public issues. When students read and talk about *Joelito* and books like it, I want them to understand how unjust conditions affect their and others' lives, and instead of "blaming the victim," to empathize and think about possibilities for social action.

+ READ THE FULL INTERVIEW with Ann Berlak '59 and her picks for socially conscious kids' books: bulletin.swarthmore.edu



➤ **Edward Dallam Melillo '97**
Strangers on Familiar Soil: Rediscovering the Chile-California Connection
Yale University Press

Beginning with a potato—brought from Chile and introduced to California by a French expedition in 1786—and ending with the 2008 visit of Chilean President Michelle Bachelet to the Golden State, Melillo explores the reciprocal relationship that shaped both places and their people. He draws on a remarkable array of source material, including maritime bills of lading, letters from gold prospectors, and notarized debt peonage contracts. Ultimately and most intriguingly, the author concludes, "California and Chile appear quintessentially American in its broadest sense."



➤ **Gail Rodney '68**
A Martha's Vineyard & Chappy Sketchbook
Vineyard Stories

"I did not suspect in 1975 that I was marrying Chappaquiddick," writes Rodney in the introduction to this watercolor valentine to island life. Her love is evident in every delicate, wry line of this charming sketchbook, which evokes the squiggly warmth of Roz Chast. Accompanying portraits of snapping turtles and used-bookshop browsers are testimonials from 28 Vineyarders about what makes this area so magical. Our favorite? "It's still a beautiful place to share with a good dog."

GLOBAL THINKING

THE INTERNATIONALIST

Marcia Grant '60 takes a global view of liberal arts

by **Michael Agresta**

MARCIA GRANT '60, H'07
Educator, administrator

ONE OF THE REASONS Marcia Grant '60 applied to Swarthmore was the Peaslee scholarship, which allowed students to spend a junior semester abroad in Peru. Not only did she get into Swarthmore, but she got the Peaslee—not to mention the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of her maternal grandfather, who had gone on an expedition to Iquitos in the 1920s.

This experience opened the world to Grant. Invited to Cuba as part of the National Student Association in the summer of 1959, she and other youths met with Fidel Castro and witnessed the dawn of the Cuban Revolution.

"I missed my junior honors exams because of the Cuba trip," she says, "but Swarthmore allowed me to write an article for the *Bulletin* about my experience there."

Learning how to innovate while absorbing a different model for learning through the liberal arts, Grant credits Swarthmore's honors program for giving her structure and direction. After graduation, Grant spent the summer as an Operation Crossroads Africa volunteer in Cameroon. She went on to earn a master's degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and a Ph.D. in African politics from the London School of Economics.

Swarthmore, however, was never far away, and her experiences here and at Oberlin College—where she taught African, Latin American, and international politics—came in handy in 1999, when Grant was invited to serve as the founding dean of Saudi Arabia's first liberal arts college for women.

"When I was asked by Princess Lolowah al-Faisal to start a university," Grant says, "I was surprised to find a liberal arts university in my head already, an architecture that was established at Swarthmore."

The result was Effat University in Jeddah, which has changed the landscape of higher education for Saudi women. Unlike the coed national university, where women must sit in separate rooms from their male classmates and professors, the all-female Effat aims for an atmosphere of conversation and collegiality, including the first-ever college sports program for women in Saudi Arabia.

More recently, Grant's international expertise in establishing liberal arts colleges in developing nations brought her first to the Aga Khan University in Karachi, Pakistan, then to Ashesi University near Accra, Ghana, where she is now provost.

"Liberal arts education is of such interest to the rest of the world at the very time it is under attack in the United States," says Grant.

Ashesi is an institution with deep Swarthmore ties. Founder Patrick Awuah '89 was a scholarship student from Ghana who worked at Microsoft after graduation. He then returned to Ghana with the dream of building a world-class liberal arts university—and opened Ashesi in 2002.

"I thoroughly believe in Patrick's vision to transform Africa by educating ethical and entrepreneurial leaders," Grant says. "This is possible using the liberal arts model that we experienced at Swarthmore."

As a resident of Ghana and France (where she set up her home base in 2001 after leaving Saudi Arabia), Grant continues to cross-pollinate ideas internationally. In October, Grant traveled with the president of Ghana, John Mahama, to sign accords between French and Ghanaian universities. She also hired Nathalie N'Guesson, a Franco-Ivoirian, to teach French at Ashesi so that its students will be able to move freely between Anglophone and Francophone Africa.

"Sometimes the most creative academic work I've done," she says, "is simply taking an idea from one context and planting it in another." $

+ READ Marcia Grant's address to Swarthmore's Class of 2007: bit.ly/GrantAddress

"[We can] transform Africa by educating ethical and entrepreneurial leaders."

common good

ON THE WEB

RE-VISION
Lang Scholar Fatima Boozarjomehri '17 brings sustainable eyewear to Afghan refugees in Iran.
+ SEE
bit.ly/SwatRe-vision

BRIDGE OF SPIES
Emeritus Professor Frederic Pryor recounts his time as a prisoner in East Germany, dramatized in a feature film.
+ DISCOVER
bit.ly/PryorRecounts

SWARTHMORE FROM ABOVE
Enjoy stunning autumn views of our most iconic spaces.
+ FLY
bit.ly/AboveSwarthmore

NAKED HEART
On Veterans Day, Emeritus Professor Harold Pagliaro discussed how his memoir helped him come to terms with his military experience during World War II.
+ READ
bit.ly/NakedHeart

LAURENCE KESTERSON

YOU'RE INVITED

Join Our Conversation

Meet Valerie Smith, 15th president of Swarthmore College

***by* Randall Frame**

"WHAT HAVE BEEN your biggest surprises on the job so far?"

"What's your favorite book?"

These were the kinds of questions asked by the 200 alumni and parents attending the New York City stop of "Changing Lives, Changing the World: A Conversation with President Valerie Smith." She's already visited New Haven, Conn.; Los Angeles; and San Francisco, with more stops around the country—and world—to come.

+ FOR DATES AND CITIES
swarthmore.edu/conversations-with-val

BEN EWEN-CAMPEN

1

DEA / G. NIMATALLAH / GETTY IMAGES

2

Ren-whaa?

In 1919, the last year of his life, Pierre-August Renoir shared his thoughts on art.

"For me, a painting," said the leading French impressionist, "should be something to cherish, joyous and pretty; yes, pretty!"

He failed on all counts, according to picketers outside Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Making headlines around the world, the Renoir Sucks at Painting (RSAP) movement counts three '06 grads among their ranks—Harvard scientists Ben Ewen-Campen, Arpiar Saunders, and John Tuthill—carrying signs like "Treacle Harms Society" and chanting rhymes like "Put some fingers on those hands! Give us work by Paul Gauguin!"

Whether you consider these protests tongue-in-cheek trollery or an artistic *cri de coeur*, they've drawn reactions from prominent critics, countless Internet commenters, and even Renoir's great-great-granddaughter, Genevieve.

That's mind-boggling and thrilling, Ewen-Campen, Saunders, and Tuthill say, especially since the protest literally took 20 minutes during a lunch break from their respective labs.

"I've received emails from art academics and artists who were stumped about how to get people to care and think about issues of the art establishment," Saunders says. "Sometimes it's easier to drop the hammer as outsiders, especially when it—or Google image search—unveils a simple, undeniable truth."

"Everyone should proudly enjoy whatever art they love, and always remember that the idea of hierarchy in art is totally made up. Don't get me wrong—criticism, scholarship, theory, and curation done well are art forms," Ewen-Campen says. "But they're certainly not the definitive rulebooks for what is 'good' and what is 'bad.' If you believe that, say, the best part of Renoir's career was when he stopped painting, you don't need anyone else's permission to feel that way. Especially in this case, because it is correct."

—JONATHAN RIGGS

1. When Arpy Saunders '06 (left) isn't protesting alongside fellow scientists like Fenna Krienen, he's winning prestigious biology postdoctoral honors like the Helen Hay Whitney Foundation research fellowship.

2. *Portrait of Genevieve Bernheim de Villiers* by Pierre-Auguste Renoir: Masterpiece or "sharpie-eyed mutant Cthulhu"? You decide.

"When your great-great-grandfather paints anything worth $78.1 million ... then you can criticize."

—Genevieve Renoir, in response to protestors

Advocating Diversity

IT WAS AN EMBARRASSMENT of riches when the inauguration weekend of President Valerie Smith serendipitously corresponded with the 2015 Consortium for Faculty Diversity (CFD). (Both were historic occasions, since Swarthmore, a founding member institution of CFD, had never hosted the annual meeting.)

"I thought this was an awesome coincidence, actually," laughs Sunka Simon, the consortium organizer and associate provost for faculty development. "What better opportunity for our fellows who want to know how to succeed in academia than to see someone with a career path like Val's?"

Happily, Simon was right, as the consortium and inauguration echoed each other, kicking off with a Friday evening welcome address from President Smith. In fact, CFD's mission, of increasing the diversity of students, faculty, and curricular offerings at liberal arts colleges, dovetailed with one of the major themes of Smith's inaugural address.

"When we commit to diversifying our institutions, we improve our institutions as well," Smith said.

Attendees agreed, with this year's event drawing more CFD fellows than ever before. Ultimately, this event serves as a planning and networking conference for early-in-their-career academics by connecting them with small liberal arts colleges.

In addition, CFD attendees spent Saturday in two panel discussions—"From Fellow to Faculty" and "Liberal Arts Colleges and Diversity in Institutional Culture, Teaching, and Research"—then a lunch discussion, to which Swarthmore's nine Mellon Mays fellows were invited.

Afterward, attendees adjourned to a series of workshops on campus visits and offer negotiations, mock interviews, getting published, and the first 10 years of career development. The day wrapped up with dinner at the Justice Roberts Library one block from Philadelphia City Hall.

Despite the effort inherent in coordinating a complicated event during the same weekend as an even larger and more complicated event, it was well worth it, according to Simon.

"The way it all came together sent a very strong message that diversity is important both to Swarthmore and to Val," she says. "It made our mission come alive."

SADIE RITTMAN '16

PUG LIFE: Alumni Council sponsored a series of events for students, including a professional clothing drive and a "pet your stress away" party, around the November 2015 meeting.

+ READ ALL ABOUT IT: bulletin.swarthmore.edu

BRYN MAWR SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Maria Mitchell: comet-discoverer, professor, equal-rights crusader

'THE MATHEMATICIANS OF SWARTHMORE ARE NOT ALL CONFINED TO ONE SEX'

In 1871, a friend of Swarthmore College donated a portrait of mathematician and astronomer David Rittenhouse to hang in the boys' parlor.

President Edward Magill accepted the gift, saying that the "noble example of this self-taught mathematician should inspire our boys with renewed zeal in their mathematical studies."

President Magill continued, "But it must be remembered that the mathematicians of Swarthmore are not all confined to one sex." If the boys could be inspired by example, he reasoned, then the girls also needed a companion portrait of "our distinguished fellow country-woman," astronomer Maria Mitchell of Vassar College.

It should be noted that, at this time, math was taught by Susan J. Cunningham, who served from the College's opening in 1869 until 1902.

Presumably, the portraits of Rittenhouse and Mitchell burned in the Parrish Hall fire in the early 1880s, but President Magill's message lives on.

—CHRISTOPHER DENSMORE

#VALSMITH15

photos by **Dan Z. Johnson**

Despite the rain, Valerie Smith's smile shone during her inauguration as Swarthmore's 15th president.

With 81 colleges and universities represented, friends, family, parents, faculty, staff, students, and alumni united for the weekend's various celebrations, including the inaugural ceremony Saturday, Oct. 3, 2015. Marked by several impromptu standing ovations, the event proved just how eager the Swarthmore community was to welcome its new leader, who returned the affection with warmth and an inspiring vision for the College.

From the outpouring of excitement and support sparked by Smith's ascension, we've excerpted a handful of our favorite Twitter tributes to #ValSmith15.

White House Af-Am Ed
@AfAmEducation
Congratulations Dr. Valerie Smith on being installed 15th president!

Avril Nibbs
Somerville '93
@SomerEmpress
How full a moment this is for us! Not overdue as much as it is timely. #ValSmith15

Will Hopkins '11
@willjhopkins
Looking forward to seeing what #ValSmith15 brings to @swarthmore. The community needs new, strong engagement and listening.

Rowan Ricardo Phillips '96
@RowanRicardo
As a @SwatAlum I wish I could have been there for President Smith's inauguration. Congrats to @swarthmore for a truly great get. #ValSmith15

Khadijah White '04
@khadastrophic
Sitting in my house clapping like a fool. President Smith is speaking on live stream of @swarthmore's inauguration!

Kelvin Sauls
@jabulani1125
Processing into Fieldhouse @swarthmore #ValSmith15 walks in tradition of transforming lives with LOVE as guide.

Louis Lainé '16
@Blckintellect
Val Smith's swag/sense of style is on another level. Like, my God! #ValSmith15

+ FOR COMPLETE COVERAGE of the inauguration and to read all of the event's tweets, go to bit.ly/SmithInauguration

1

"I hope that each of you will take a moment to consider what story the campus tells you. I hope that you, too, will be inspired by this place and that it unlocks in all of us what we need to soar."

—Valerie Smith, 15th President of Swarthmore College

3

4

1. Community members and institutional delegates gather to celebrate. **2.** President Valerie Smith processes. **3.** The Chester Children's Chorus performs. **4.** Retired educators Will and Josephine Smith watch their daughter's inauguration.

Worthy Goals

by **Roy Greim '14**

For the first 725 minutes of the season, no one scored on the Swarthmore College women's soccer team. They opened with eight consecutive shutouts—the last squad across all three NCAA divisions to allow a goal in 2015.

Under the direction of longtime head coach Todd Anckaitis, Swarthmore made its deepest run in the NCAA Division III Tournament; set program single-season records with 18 wins, 83 goals, and 16 shutouts; and achieved its highest national ranking ever, reaching 10th in the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) poll.

The Garnet's success is not surprising. The Swarthmore women's team qualified for last year's NCAA Tournament as the Centennial Conference champion and has posted 10 consecutive winning seasons.

"We walked onto that field from the first day of preseason knowing what our amazing team is capable of and wanting to prove it," says senior captain Reba Magier '16.

"We all knew our team was going to be talented during the spring," adds senior captain Amanda Bosworth '16. "We had a large number of returners and a skilled freshman class."

That talent was on display in a 3-0 win over Rowan University Sept. 10. Rowan was one of the final 16 teams in the NCAA Tournament after beating Lynchburg, the 2014 national champion.

The program matched on-field success with its 11th straight NSCAA Team Academic Award, which recognizes teams that average a GPA of 3.0 or higher during the academic year. The women's soccer team embodies the Division III mission by emphasizing both sides of the student-athlete equation.

"Our entire team understands that we are here to get an education and we are choosing to play competitive soccer at the same time," says senior captain Emily Gale '16. "This is something we are very proud of and will continue to work towards."

+ MEET THE CAPTAIN: bit.ly.EmilyGale16

LAURENCE KESTERSON

ORRY DUBOIS

Swarthmore volleyball got its first ECAC title with a 3-1 win over No. 25 Carnegie Mellon Nov. 14.

FIELD HOCKEY
Erin Gluck '16 named to All-Centennial Conference Second Team after scoring 16 goals this season.

MEN'S SOCCER
Reached the Centennial Conference tournament for the third time in four seasons.

WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY
Tess Wei '17 and Indy Reid-Shaw '17 earned All-Region honors; the team was fifth at the NCAA Mideast Regional meet.

MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY
Corey Branch '17, Mike McConville '16, and Paul Green '16 placed in the top 35 of the regional meet, earning All-Region honors.

MEN'S SWIMMING
Took its first national ranking, placing 24th in the CSCAA Top 25 poll Nov. 11.

LEARNING CURVE

FROM PLIÉS TO POLITICS

In the dance of life and career, Margaret Nordstrom '70 is leading

***by* Elizabeth Redden '05**

LAURENCE KESTERSON

MARGARET NORDSTROM '70 jokes that the 20 years she spent teaching children ballet proved to be good preparation for her second career in politics.

"You can't say, 'Go away, darling, you have no talent,'" she says. "You have to work with anyone who comes through the door and get the best out of them."

Nordstrom, a political science major at Swarthmore, originally planned to be a professor.

"I got my master's at Rutgers and was working on my doctorate when I decided I just didn't want to be there anymore," she says. "I floated around, did a whole bunch of other things, got married. I had danced my entire life, and I went back seriously to dancing, and eventually I was asked to teach."

Even as she taught dance, Nordstrom grew concerned about increasing suburbanization in the Highlands region in northwestern New Jersey where she lived. So when she was asked to run for office, she did.

A self-described Rockefeller Republican, Nordstrom spent 12 years on the governing committee for Washington Township, including six as mayor. She is particularly proud of negotiating the purchase of development rights to preserve a 740-acre farm.

In 1999, she ran for county government, winning a seat as a freeholder—New Jersey's term for a county commissioner—for Morris County until 2012. Today, Nordstrom is executive director of the Highlands Council, a governmental body charged with implementing the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act of 2004.

This latest chapter in her political life has served as a reminder that, for Nordstrom, growth occurs as gracefully as if it were choreographed.

"I've reinvented myself every 15, 20 years or so," she says, "and it's worked out very well." $

"I've reinvented myself every 15, 20 years or so."

Wiley Archibald '10 holds a days-old Antarctic fur seal pup (note the umbilical cord). Photo was taken by Mike Goebel (NOAA) pursuant to National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) permit # 16472-02.

LIBERAL ARTS LIVES

SOUTH POLE SCIENTIST

Wiley Archibald '10 works to protect Antarctica and its animals

***by* Matt Zencey '79**

WILEY ARCHIBALD '10
PINNIPED TECHNICIAN

Hundreds of miles away from civilization, Wiley Archibald '10 starts his day shoveling endless amounts of snow in howling winds. He slogs through rain and boot-sucking mud, wrestles with slippery animals who often want to bite him, and sifts through poop.

And he loves it.

He should—ever since getting a B.A. in biology from Swarthmore and then an M.S. from Humboldt State—studying and caring for marine mammals has been his dream.

Today, Archibald is a pinniped technician who spent the last North American winter in Antarctica and returned this fall for another five-month stay. (Pinniped refers to fin-footed marine mammals such as seals, sea lions, and walruses.)

From a seasonal base in the South Shetland Islands, off the Antarctic Peninsula, Archibald studies the four kinds of seals found there, while his colleagues examine three kinds of penguins, although there is a lot of crossover.

As you can imagine, working in Antarctica isn't easy, and not just because he's busy seven days a week, eight to 12 hours a day.

"The distance is tough. You can't just call or Skype home any time you want," Archibald says. "I had to miss the wedding of one of my best friends."

It's hard to complain, though, with constant reminders of what's at stake, whether it's walking outside and seeing a penguin staring at you, or finding baby seals playing at your doorstep.

Archibald's fieldwork is part of federal research into how climate change and commercial fishing in Antarctic waters are affecting key species in the region.

"Hopefully, our work here informs people on what is happening to this ecosystem and allows managers to make decisions that will one day protect all the species here, and throughout the Antarctic," he says.

+ MORE ANTARCTIC ADVENTURES
wileyarchibald.blogspot.com

TONY CAMPBELL

Eating—and living—mindfully can be delicious, according to Jean Kristeller '74.

MIND OVER MACAROONS

To eat better, says Jean Kristeller '74, know yourself better

***by* Robert Strauss**

WHEN SHE WAS a sophomore, Jean Kristeller '74 decided to spend her junior year in Japan. She wanted to explore it because her parents had lived there after World War II—*not* because she was interested in meditation.

"Still, people kept asking me about that, so I looked into meditation, and as a psychology major, became fascinated," she says. "I returned to Swarthmore to delve even deeper by taking courses on Buddhism from Don Swearer. This was the beginning of what I am still doing today."

Kristeller, a professor emeritus in psychology at Indiana State University who earned her doctorate from Yale, is the author of *The Joy of Half a Cookie: Using Mindfulness to Lose Weight and End the Struggle with Food* and co-founder of The Center for Mindful Eating. In the book, she uses her expertise in mind/body research to explain why eating mindfully serves readers better than dieting.

"It helps you create a new relationship with your eating that has to do with tuning into your hunger and making choices about food while, at the same time, fully enjoying it," says Kristeller, who, with colleagues at Duke University, Ohio State University, and the University of California, San Francisco, has received four National Institutes of Health related grants. "You learn to stop when you have had the right amount, rather than stuffing yourself. That way, you don't have to cut out anything completely."

That is the point, she says, of "half a cookie." For example, a cookie-lover who swears off the sweet treat may soon binge and then feel guilty. By eating mindfully, however, that cookie-lover discovers that half that (large) cookie is satisfying without any guilt and with much more enjoyment.

"Practicing meditation is core because it is a powerful way to train mindfulness," says Kristeller. "You are learning how to quiet down, observe your experiences, and analyze how your body feels, without overreacting and plunging into negative self-judgment."

It's a learning process, admits this onetime meditation neophyte, but it's more than worth it: Ultimately, "the joy of half a cookie" is the joy of knowing oneself.

JEAN KRISTELLER '74
Psychologist, author

ERICA WILLIAMS

FLYING BLIND

Finding endangered bats helped Don Mitchell ’69 find himself

by **Jonathan Riggs**

ON A SUMMER NIGHT in 2012, Don Mitchell '69 leaned forward, scarcely daring to breathe. These were his 150 acres of Vermont farm, fields, and woods—had been since 1972—but tonight, they felt different.

He felt different.

Three years earlier, he'd surprised himself by agreeing to work with state fish and wildlife officials to help a rare Vermont population of Indiana bats recover—a species that had been federally declared endangered since 1967.

The idea was to thin his forest canopy around shagbark hickories, a favorite summer roosting place, so that the bats could more easily hunt, sleep, and raise their young.

Before the trees could be cleared, however, officials tasked Mitchell to spend two years removing invasive plant species—not for the bats' welfare, but for that of native plants.

It was ludicrous, really: him, of all people, with his lifelong distrust of authority, crawling through underbrush to uproot garlic mustard and chainsawing spiky buckthorn, only to present his forestry work for approval by bureaucrats who likely spent more time behind a desk than out in the field.

But he had done it all, and now they were here, checking gossamer-thin mist nets by moonlight to see how many bats they could tag and release.

"Bat!" shouted one of the team members. They lowered the net and began the delicate process of using a pencil's sharpened point to untangle the tiny, squeaking creature.

Mitchell's heart raced; he had never seen a bat up close before.

But there she was, hissing in a biologist's gloved hand. Any bat would be a welcome catch, but this was an Indiana bat, the reason behind it all. Best of all, she was pregnant.

Staring into her beady eyes, Mitchell felt a wondrous and wild shock: part recognition of a fellow mammal, part recognition of himself.

Could it be possible, he wondered, that she and he were thinking the same thing in that moment: "How did I get here?"

TAKING FLIGHT

At home on his farm in Vergennes, Vt., Mitchell is eager to discuss that night as well as his book, *Flying Blind: One Man's Adventures Battling Buckthorn, Making Peace with Authority, and Creating a Home for Endangered Bats* (Chelsea Green).

His voice is soft; his hair is wild. Walking with a slight limp—he just had his first surgery, ever, a minor procedure—he sits down, surrounded by books. Everything about his manner is quiet, but there is force in his speech and a flash in his eyes.

Mitchell grew up in southern New Jersey, a self-described "straight-arrow conformist all-star student" who was his high school's valedictorian. When he chose Swarthmore for its bohemian, beatnik atmosphere, his teachers wept.

"They never really forgave me," he remembers. "They told me I was going to a pinko school, and I'd never live it down."

At Swarthmore, he met his wife, Cheryl Warfield '71 ("a truly uninhibited spirit with a wide sense of possibility for herself and for others") when he crashed a freshman mixer at Sharples. After hitchhiking to San Francisco for the Summer of Love in 1967, they built a makeshift shelter in Crum Woods and lived in it that autumn.

Their adventures inspired him to write *Thumb Tripping,* "The New Novel That Says All There Is To Say About The Marijuana Society," per its jacket. Published shortly after Mitchell's graduation, the novel impressed film executives, who hired him to adapt it. Although the 1972 movie would become a cult favorite—don't miss Bruce Dern as a knife-wielding motorist—the experience rang hollow.

"Hollywood turned out not to be my cup of tea. For one thing, I don't like being told what to do—and a 22-year-old screenwriter was destined to be told what to do by a wide array of colleagues and collaborators," he writes in *Flying Blind*. "Cheryl and I recognized, too, that there were contradictions between our professed countercultural values and the über-materialism of the film world."

Forsaking Los Angeles and their new yellow Porsche, the two moved to Vermont to join the thousands of young idealists buying up old farms to milk goats, grow organic vegetables, and otherwise participate in the "greening of America"—a movement that would transform the state from a conservative to a liberal bastion.

Naming their land Treleven—in honor of Mitchell's father's last name by birth—Don and Cheryl started a family. As they built a life together on the farm, they also developed

DIGITAL IMAGE COURTESY OF THE GETTY'S OPEN CONTENT PROGRAM

ETHAN MITCHELL '99

Left, an illuminated manuscript's depiction of a nightingale and bats, dating to 1250–60. Don Mitchell next to one of his shagbark hickory trees.

separate careers outside of it. From 1984 until 2009, Mitchell taught creative writing, film, and environmental literature at Middlebury College—simultaneously daunted and inspired by his lack of a Ph.D.

But what about the bats?

"Ah, the bats," he says. For the first time in the interview, he smiles.

WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME

Over the years, Mitchell has made improvements to Treleven Farm by designing and constructing more than a dozen low-cost, energy-efficient buildings and structures as well as developing the land itself.

He first realized there were bats on his property in the 1980s, after he dug a new pond. Twilight sent them swooping and dipping out of the adjacent woods, skimming the water in search of mosquitoes.

"They had these herky-jerky, skittering maneuvers. Now you see it, now you don't. Our kids would be fascinated, but we told them that once the bats had started coming out it was a sign for us to head up to the house," he writes. "Humans and bats, we told them, don't really mix."

As plentiful as they seemed, the bats would soon face the worst wildlife disease outbreak in North American history.

In 2006, experts detected a strange phenomenon among certain hibernating bats. Caves carpeted with bat bones and bodies revealed weakened survivors clinging to the ceiling, their muzzles, wings, and bodies dusted white.

Dubbed white-nose syndrome (WNS), the epidemic is caused by a fungus that flourishes in the cold caves and mines where hibernating bats winter. Transmitted by body contact, the fungus ravages bats' skin and wings, causing them to awaken early and often from hibernation, depleting their fat reserves before they're able to feed again.

Scientists believe that human cave visitors carried this fungus from Europe—where bat populations have had generations to adapt—to North America, where native bats lack any such evolutionary defenses.

With no cure and 90 percent mortality in certain hibernacula, WNS cases have been confirmed in 26 states, five Canadian provinces, and even northeastern China. It has caused the death of an estimated 6.7 million North American

6 inches–6 feet

range of wingspans, from Thailand and Burma's bumblebee bat to the Philippines's giant golden-crowned flying fox

50 million

years in existence. Modern humans are only 200,000 years old.

20–30

year lifespan

1,331

of 5,400 known mammalian species are bats.

According to Micaela Jemison of Bat Conservation International (BCI):

- **Bats save us up to $53 billion a year in pest control**
- **One bat can eat up to 1,200 mosquitos in an hour**
- **Bats pollinate agave plants, from which we derive tequila**
- **Crucial seed-dispersers, fruit bats help regenerate human-razed rainforests**

Alas, most human hearts seem immune to the charms of *Chiroptera*—an order that means "hand-wing"—despite the exuberance of their enormous ears, the leathery wonder of their wings, the pink of their puppylike tongues.

Perhaps the instinctual horror many feel toward bats, however, lies within rather than without. As Theodore Roethke writes in his poem, "The Bat," we are afraid upon seeing a bat up close, "For something is amiss or out of place/When mice with wings can wear a human face."

MERLIN D. TUTTLE/GETTY IMAGES

"Ugly" is in the eye of the beholder. Just ask this pygmy round-eared bat.

bats, endangering several species. In fact, during the winter of 2008–09, the overall Indiana bat population declined by approximately 17 percent.

Recovery, at best, will be difficult and slow, since bats are among the slowest-reproducing animals in the world for their size.

THE BAT PROJECT

Against this backdrop, Vermont Fish and Wildlife officials identified Treleven for its unique geography as a site of interest in 2009 and offered Mitchell money—not much, but some—and technical resources to optimize the enormous potential of his forest.

During the summer, Indiana bats prefer to live under loose tree bark, like that found on Treleven's remarkable number of shagbark hickories. In fact, an excellent roost tree can host several hundred mother bats and their pups.

Swallowing his distaste for authority, Mitchell acquiesced to the demands of the state officials, whose dependence on protocol frequently conflicted with the reality and scope of the work.

They insisted that, with every step he took, Mitchell had to be careful not to upset the forest's ecological balance, which meant crawling on his hands and knees through 5 acres of woods, day after day, acquiring tick scares and scars, as he painstakingly identified then culled invasive plants. Although Cheryl and some friends helped when they could, Mitchell completed the lion's share of the job alone.

As laborious as the process was, Mitchell discovered that it was ultimately a gift. Devoting himself, mind and body, to physically working his land in service of bats felt like an opportunity to honor the vision that first called Cheryl and him to New England.

And faced with an abundance of time and an endless, monotonous task to perform, he found himself clearing away psychological and emotional brush and brambles, including repressed memories of abuse by his grandfather.

Weeding, both externally and internally, helped him analyze the formation of his personality, and as he worked, he began to recognize parallels between the way he—like these threatened bat populations—had to fight and evolve.

FLYING BLIND

In preparation for this piece, Mitchell reread *Flying Blind* while reflecting on his alma mater.

"It's a very unusual piece of work that, I think, shows I went to a college like Swarthmore," he says. "I emerged from that pressure cooker with a sense that I could do anything, and the book comes across that way, too—moving pretty effortlessly between evolutionary biology, theological philosophy, and the metaphor of chainsawing."

When Mitchell reflects on the bat project, he looks back on his journey. Each step has been seemingly random—raised as a conservative Baptist, then becoming a right-wing high-school student who worked for Nixon, then developing into a notorious countercultural figure, then a farmer, then an academician of his own devising, and then, at last, an environmental steward.

"WE'RE MORE LIKE BATS THAN WE CARE TO ADMIT ... OUR LIVES MIRROR THEIR UNGRACEFUL YET UTTERLY EXTRAORDINARY FLIGHT."

–DON MITCHELL '69

DIGITAL IMAGE COURTESY OF THE GETTY'S OPEN CONTENT PROGRAM

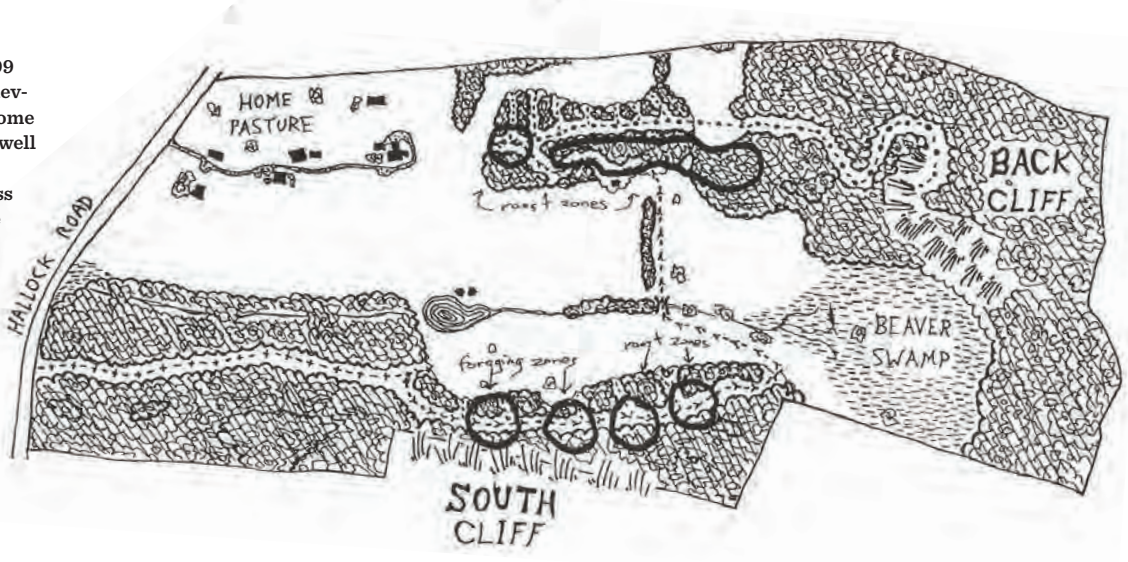
Starting in the 12th century, artists began to depict Satan with batlike instead of feathered wings, as seen here in William Blake's 1795 work, *Satan Exulting Over Eve*.

We're more like bats than we care to admit, he says, and our lives mirror their ungraceful yet utterly extraordinary flight. Fragile yet ferocious, we share an immense will to survive and to find our own way.

Looking back on the night that the team tagged the pregnant Indiana bat, Mitchell sees it as a turning point. Not only was it gratifying to know that his forest work has helped ease, however slightly, these bats' long and uncertain road to repopulation, but it proved that his life choices have brought him exactly where he always wanted to go—even when he didn't quite know it yet.

"Befriending bats had been a means to figure out, against all odds, where in the world I actually was. And exactly who I was," he concludes. "And to participate—thankfully, joyfully—in the wild party that keeps going on around us."

+ DISCOVER MORE: treleven.wordpress.com



Ethan Mitchell '99 drew this map of Treleven, which serves as home to Don and Cheryl as well as Ethan and his wife Susannah McCandless '98. The bat zones are circled.

CORRECTING THE RECORD

Time is eroding the espionage claims against Ethel Rosenberg

by **Carrie Compton**

LAST YEAR new developments roused our country's crisis of conscience vis-a-vis the trial and execution of Ethel Rosenberg.

Michael Meeropol '64 (nee Rosenberg) and brother Robert, orphaned in 1953 by the execution of their parents, Julius and Ethel, served up a *New York Times* op-ed column in August. "Exonerate our mother, Ethel Rosenberg," they wrote, addressing President Obama. Their plea was published a month after original grand-jury testimony was unsealed that reaffirmed perjury by the prosecution's star witness, Ethel's younger brother, David Greenglass.

Then in the fall, the New York City Council also took action on the issue of Ethel's innocence. Sept. 28—on what would have been her 100th birthday—spokesman Daniel Dromm read from a proclamation signed by 13 fellow council members. "The government wrongly executed Ethel Rosenberg," declared Dromm on the steps of City Hall to a crowd that included Michael, Robert, and their families.

These developments in the Rosenberg case prompt an important question: Is our country ready to exonerate Ethel Rosenberg?

The day after Julius's arrest, Ethel invited press into their Lower East Side apartment to demonstrate the family's ordinary way of life. She was arrested less than one month later.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MICHAEL AND ROBERT were 10 and 6, respectively, when their parents went to the electric chair June 19, 1953. They have spent their entire lives demanding justice for Julius and Ethel, though their perspectives have shifted over the years as new evidence emerged. "We always said the truth is more important than any of our positions. Sure, we had opinions, but we really wanted to know what happened," says Michael.

What happened to the Rosenbergs was carried off in the spirit of the times—perhaps America's most dystopian era. In 1950, when the couple was arrested, Cold War paranoia prevailed throughout politics and in the news media. The Soviets now had an atomic bomb, and the U.S. had just entered the Korean War—a conflict steeped with fears that a war with China, or worse, Russia, was next. It was a time of unparalleled xenophobia and unease, driven by demagoguery that culminated with Sen. Joseph McCarthy's fearmongering and, especially applicable here, the dangerous machinations of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover.

The FBI first arrested David Greenglass, in connection with Soviet operatives collecting and relaying atomic information to the KGB. Greenglass admitted that he had provided sketches based on what ultimately amounted to inaccurate and rudimentary knowledge gleaned from his Army post at the Los Alamos laboratory in New Mexico during the Manhattan Project. A month later, Julius Rosenberg, a working-class electrical engineer from New York's Lower East Side, was arrested and accused of relaying his brother-in-law's drawings to the Soviet's spies. In his ensuing grand-jury testimony, unsealed in July, Greenglass unequivocally disassociates Ethel from the spy ring.

A memo to then-Attorney General Howard McGrath, dated two days after Julius's arrest, however, suggests that Hoover was desperate to get Julius talking: "Proceeding against the wife," he wrote, "might serve as a lever in this matter."

After her testimony before the grand jury in early August 1950, the FBI arrested 33-year-old Ethel as she left the courthouse. Bail, which she had requested so she could find accommodations for her two young sons, was set at $100,000, almost $1 million when adjusted for inflation. She spent the rest of her life—three years—behind bars. During that time, the boys would be bounced around among relatives—and, briefly, a boys' home—before Anne and Abel Meeropol, a childless couple acquainted with the Rosenbergs' lawyer, adopted them.

As the Rosenbergs awaited trial, Greenglass reversed his earlier claim of his sister's innocence. He now cast Ethel as Julius's typist and willing co-conspirator. In exchange for his testimony, Greenglass earned his wife, Ruth, immunity for her role in his spying activities, and a lesser sentence for himself. (He spent only nine-and-half years in prison.) His reversal, a boon for the prosecution, aligned perfectly with testimony from the only other witness against Julius, fellow Soviet informer Harry Gold, who was jailed near Greenglass as they awaited trial. Many, including Meeropol, believe these accommodations provided ample opportunity for collusion. Greenglass recanted his trial testimony during interviews with the press more than once before his 2014 death.

"THERE ARE MANY judges, including myself, who think that the case was not well handled," says Jed Rakoff '64, U.S.

"THE JUDGE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN MORE IMPACTED BY THE PRESSURE OF THE TIMES THAN WAS THE JURY AND BENT TO THOSE PRESSURES IN A WAY THAT DOES NOT DO HIM CREDIT."

—JED RAKOFF '64

district judge for the Southern District of New York, the same court that tried the Rosenbergs. Rakoff, a classmate and friend of Meeropol, believes there is "ample basis" to request a statement of exoneration for Ethel.

For Rakoff, the couple's problems at trial—even beyond the false testimony and the hysteria of the times—were manifold. He cites inadequate counsel and calls prosecutors Roy Cohn and Irving Saypol "some of the least honorable ever to be a part of the Southern District of New York." Rakoff continues, "And Judge [Irving] Kaufman was brilliant but abrasive. I think most people who knew him felt he lacked a judicial temperament."

At the trial, which lasted three weeks in March 1951, the prosecution presented only three witnesses against the Rosenbergs—most damagingly for Ethel, the uncorroborated claim of the Greenglasses' that Ethel typed Julius's notes for the Soviets. The prosecution had only five pieces of physical evidence—considered dubious by most scholars of the case—but nevertheless Julius and Ethel were pronounced guilty of conspiracy to commit espionage.

"I think the jury probably gave a reasonable verdict, given what they saw, because they didn't get a fair picture," says Rakoff. "Ironically, the judge seems to have been more impacted by the pressure of the times than was the jury. Judge Kaufman bent to those pressures in a way that does not do him credit."

April 6, 1953, Kaufman sentenced the couple to death, asserting that their transference of atomic secrets helped start the Korean War. In his sentencing he assigned them responsibility for "casualties exceeding 50,000 and who knows but that millions more innocent people may pay the price of your treason." He was the first judge to issue a death sentence in civil court for a conspiracy charge.

THE YEARS SINCE the Rosenbergs' executions have been laden with informational bombshells: In the '90s came the Venona decryptions, deciphered communications between the KGB

1 COPYRIGHT BETTMANN/CORBIS / AP IMAGES

2 ASSOCIATED PRESS

1. The brotherly bond remains strong between Robert, left, and Michael Meeropol shown here in 1953 just before their parents' execution. Robert, a lawyer, founded and directed the Rosenberg Fund for Children, an organization that provides aid to the children of targeted activists.
2. Julius, second to left, and Ethel are escorted to their courtroom by U.S. Marshals. Their 1951 trial lasted from March 6–28.

LAURENCE KESTERSON

Michael Meeropol '64 near his home in Putnam County, N.Y. In addition to the 13 council members' proclamation of Ethel's innocence, Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough president, declared Sept. 28, 2015—Ethel's 100th birthday—the Ethel Rosenberg Day of Justice in the Borough of Manhattan.

and its U.S.-based agents who worked with American informants, including Julius's small spy ring. It was revealed that Greenglass and Julius had KGB code names and were active informants. Ethel was never given a code name—in the communications she is rarely mentioned and only ever in relation to Julius.

For the Meeropols, this was the first convincing evidence they'd seen against their father. "With the Venona decrypts, my brother and I recognized the very strong possibility that [the charges against Julius] weren't just CIA misinformation," says Michael.

A few years later, the Rosenbergs' co-defendant, Morton Sobell, who received a 30-year sentence, admitted to his and Julius's involvement with Soviet intelligence gathering.

"When Morty told *The New York Times* he was involved with my father, that was it. We changed our position completely," says Meeropol.

Meeropol continues, "The government had had its eye on my father [before his arrest]. … The death penalty and indicting my mother was a way to get him to talk." Meeropol adds that Julius steadfastly protected fellow informants and that while Ethel probably knew about his activities, in the absence of a KGB code name, her involvement was likely negligible. "I don't think my father was being loyal to Communism; I think he was being loyal to his friends who'd gotten involved with him."

IT'S IMPORTANT TO PLACE progressives in the context of the times, says Editor Emeritus of *The Nation* Victor Navasky '54, who has written about the case. "Growing up [in New York] when the newsreels showed FDR and Stalin during World War II, there was always applause," he says. "Russia was our ally, and they were losing lives at Stalingrad. Then came the Cold War immediately after World War II, and suddenly the Russians were the enemy."

Rosenberg proponents often note that Russia was a U.S. ally when Julius

"ETHEL WAS A HOSTAGE THAT THE GOVERNMENT MURDERED."

—MICHAEL MEEROPOL '64

worked with the Soviets, but Rakoff roundly rejects the point: "Where in the law does it say it's OK to spy for allies, but just not for enemies? Today's allies may be tomorrow's enemies."

Navasky adds that in post-Depression New York, class inequalities were vast, radicalizing forces. Many politically minded people thought Soviet-style socialism could save the working class, he says. "Whether or not [the Rosenbergs] were guilty of espionage, they thought they were doing something that helped mankind."

SO WHY DIDN'T ETHEL cooperate and save herself?

"She would have had to testify against her husband and then live a certain kind of a life in the eyes of her children, her own eyes, and in the eyes of the world—and I don't think she wanted that," says Miriam Schneir, whose works, co-authored with her late husband, Walter, include *Invitation to an Inquest* and, the book that the Meeropol brothers believe solves it, *Final Verdict: What Really Happened in the Rosenberg Case*. "I think, too, Ethel and Julius always hoped right up until the end that something would happen that wouldn't result in the electric chair."

There were attempts to derail the death sentence, including two ignored pleas for clemency submitted to President Eisenhower. There were appeals. There was even a stay of execution filed by Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, which was ultimately undone by a 5–4 vote of the Supreme Court—a ruling Meeropol says Justice Hugo Black later argued was unconstitutional.

Privately, Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter lamented the ordeal for years: "The manner in which the court disposed of [the Rosenberg] case," he wrote 1956, "is one of the least edifying episodes in modern history."

With the exception of still-classified U.S. records and Soviet-era documents locked away in Moscow, Meeropol believes that—for his lifetime, anyway—the public has seen all it ever will of the evidence against his parents.

"I believe we know what happened," he says. "Ethel was a hostage that the government murdered."

In 2001, *New York Times* reporter Sam Roberts interviewed William Rogers, the deputy attorney general at the time of the Rosenbergs' trial. Rogers revealed that, as outlined in Hoover's note, the FBI intended to leverage the death sentence against Ethel to elicit Julius's cooperation. Roberts asked him what went wrong.

Rogers replied, "She called our bluff."

RAKOFF, WHO OPPOSES the death penalty, believes that where Ethel is concerned, the system got it wrong. "I don't want to overstate it, but our system makes mistakes, and if you recognize that a system makes mistakes, you cannot have a penalty that can never be corrected."

Schneir, who has studied the case for 50 years, believes that the country is more prepared than ever to reconsider Ethel's case.

"The historical record now very strongly points to Ethel's innocence," she says. "Also, as public opinion on the death penalty gradually becomes less favorable, I think that the execution of the Rosenbergs seems increasingly unwarranted."

Rakoff believes that the information that Julius likely stole was "not overwhelmingly important." He thinks a 20-to-30-year sentence would have been more appropriate.

"With respect to Ethel, she knew that [Julius] was up to no good, but that's about it," he says. "But assuming she helped him out, I don't see giving her more than five years, at the most." He adds, "And, of course, I personally think she should be exonerated."

TODAY MEEROPOL, a retired economics professor, is a vocal opponent of the death penalty but primarily occupies himself as his grandsons' Little League coach. He's not sure about the next step to exonerating his mother, but he's hopeful that President Obama's background as a constitutional lawyer will help his cause.

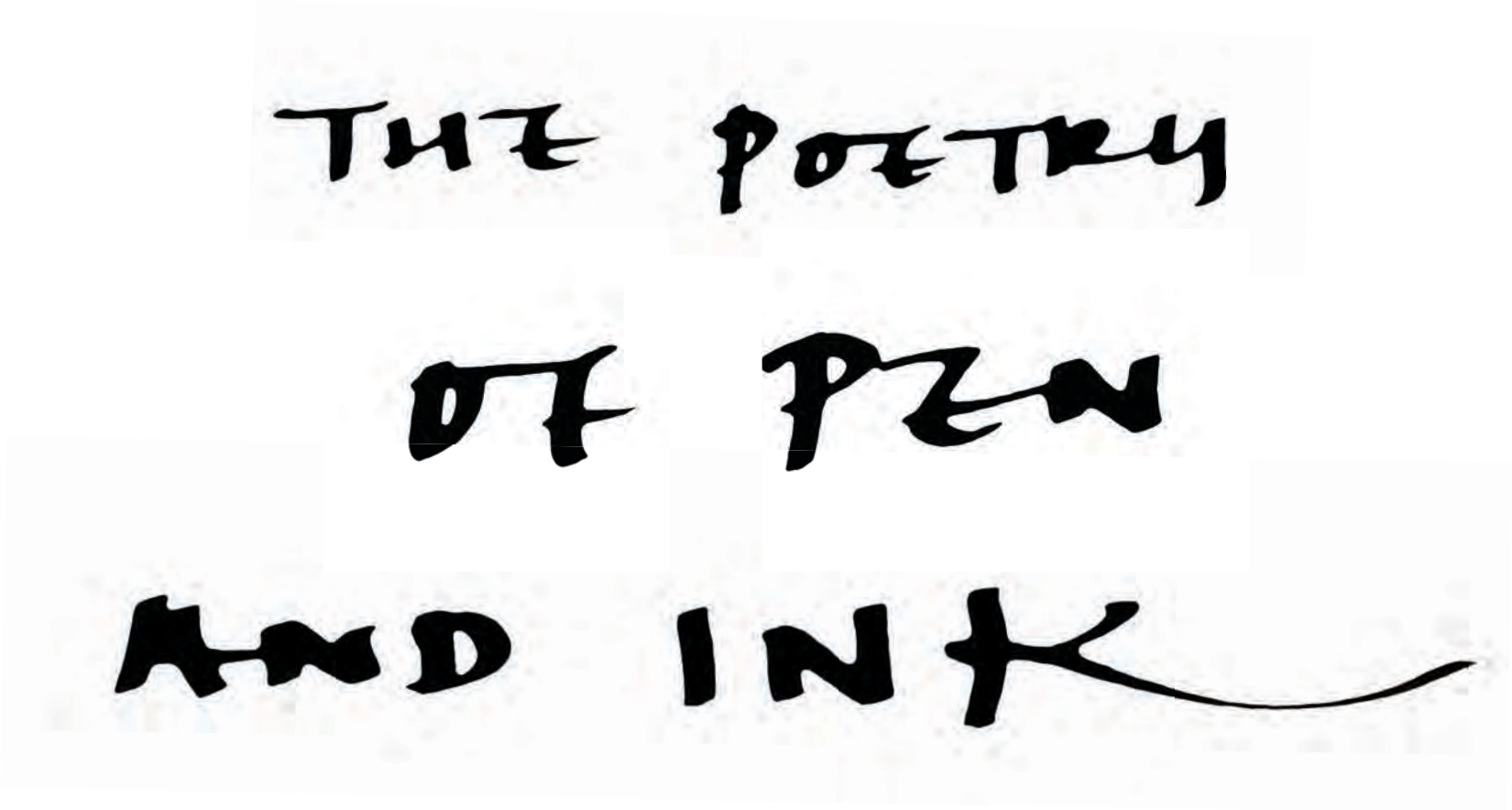
"There's still a lot of pushback online," he says. Recent articles about the Meeropols' efforts to exonerate Ethel are unfalteringly followed by commenters' screeds decrying liberals, Jews, and Communists.

Still, on the steps of New York's City Hall in September, Meeropol delivered yet another message to the president: "We call upon Attorney General Lynch and President Obama to acknowledge the injustice done to Ethel Rosenberg ... as a way of learning from our past in the hope that similar injustices will be avoided in the future."

"Now," Meeropol says, 62 years after his mother's execution, "we wait." S

+ **WATCH:** Michael Meeropol's 1996 debate with Joyce Milton '67 at bulletin.swarthmore.edu

MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD
Behold the lovely and life-changing fountain pen.



LAURENCE KESTERSON; TITLE HANDWRITING: TOMOKO SAKOMURA

A Swathmorean ode to the romantic, remarkable fountain pen

***by* Elizabeth Vogdes**

"YOU HAVE TO LEARN not to gesticulate when holding a fountain pen," cautions Tomoko Sakomura, associate professor of art history, who once ruined a colleague's shirt with splattered ink.

However, many Swarthmoreans consider the occasional stain a small price to pay for the beauty and power this writing implement bestows. In fact, when Sakomura arrived on campus in 2005, she was surprised to discover so many fellow aficionados.

Chief among them, perhaps, was the late Ed Fuller, McCabe's witty and erudite reference librarian. He was "center stage on the College fountain-pen scene," says Helene Shapiro, emeritus professor of mathematics. Fuller once described himself as carrying "the bulk of his wealth" in his jacket pocket, which contained multiple fountain pens, often with solid-gold nibs.

Decent starter fountain pens, however, can be had for the price of a good cup of coffee. Recently, there's been a widespread resurgence of interest in the pens among all ages. Michael Cothren, art history professor, first noticed them as a child in his school store; half a century later, future art history major Damien Ding '18 learned about them online.

"Fountain pens are like people," says Richard Binder, a nationally recognized nibmeister, aka a master pen repairer. "Every one has a unique personality."

"It's as if I'm divulging a part of myself through the writing," says Alexandra Gueydan-Turek, associate professor of French and Francophone studies. "There is an individual quality to using fountain pens, as nibs are shaped by one's particular handwriting."

They can make lines of varying thicknesses, lending great personal character to one's handwriting.

Sakomura agrees: "Though I am only one person, with fountain pens I can write in a range of styles."

It is easy to write with fountain pens, which don't require hand pressure with subsequent cramping the way a ballpoint can. Binder describes fountain pen action as a "controlled leak."

Ding says, "You just glide it across paper." The pure physical pleasure of fountain pen use is a recurring theme among enthusiasts.

In addition to the loveliness of the

lines they produce, fountain pens are also prized among users for their exquisite craftsmanship.

"I really love the beauty of the object," says Cothren as he discusses his two handmade, natural-lacquered Japanese Nakaya pens.

Pens come in multiple shapes, colors, sizes, and materials; inks, too, offer countless options. Sakomura has a dark teal ink that, when dry, sparkles gold. Logan Grider, assistant professor of studio art and a self-described "materials geek," has made a deep sepia ink from black walnuts collected on campus. Ding's inks come in beautiful containers that he compares to perfume bottles.

HISTORY

"Some of the most interesting technology of the past two centuries has gone into the development of fountain pens," says Binder.

They evolved from dip pens, which, as the name implies, demanded frequent, laborious dipping into a separate ink container. Fountain pens, with their own internal reservoir of water-based liquid ink, proved much quicker.

A combination of gravity and capillary action draws the ink through a feed, transferring it to the nib and thence to the paper. Many iterations of this basic system were improved over time, and during the course of the 19th century, multiple fountain-pen patents were established.

The actual pen components can be broken down into basic parts: the body (the barrel by which you grip the pen and which holds the ink reservoir), the ink-filling system (which varies from pen to pen), the feed (which connects the reservoir to the nib so that ink can pass from one to the other), and the nib (the writing tip of the pen).

The modern feed, patented in 1884 by Lewis Waterman, dramatically improved airflow and minimized blotting. By the first half of the 20th century, when fountain pens were in more general use, Mark Twain wrote about his Conklin Crescent Filler—so named for the crescent-shaped filling device that prevented it from rolling—for an ad: "I prefer it to ten other fountain pens, because it carries its filler in its own stomach, and I cannot mislay it even by art or intention. Also, I prefer it because it is a profanity saver; it cannot roll off the desk."

The best-selling fountain pen in the U.S. in 1945, the Wahl-Eversharp Skyline, was created by celebrated American industrial designer Henry Dreyfuss; the pen bears a strong scaled-down resemblance to Dreyfuss's streamlined Twentieth Century Limited locomotive design.

This was the first type of fountain pen owned by Scott Gilbert, emeritus professor of biology. Sakomura, too, has a collection of these particular vintage pens, each with a different kind of nib.

By the 1960s, disposable ballpoint pens—which used thicker quick-drying ink and worked at high altitudes—became very inexpensive, overtaking fountain pens for everyday writing in the United States. Fountain pens are still more commonly used by young students in Europe, and they are a popular gift in Japan, where some of the finest fountain pens are made.

Though their technology is older, fountain pens remain far more environmentally sustainable than ballpoints. A fountain pen can be continually repaired, lasting for years.

WRITING

Users frequently mention the surprising joys of slowing down the writing process that the fountain pen imposes. Cothren speaks of the pleasure he derives from rewriting notes, saying "it's a more reflective kind of writing," a sentiment that Gueydan-Turek echoes. Additionally, Cothren feels that the need for "really slow looking and patience" when studying art is reinforced by the more measured writing process.

"You pay more attention to what you're drawing," agrees Grider. He uses a fountain pen for his study sketches preparatory to painting. In this sense, any handwriting could be viewed as a kind of drawing. Arabic script, which Gueydan-Turek writes with a fountain pen, is "commonly used as an art form," she says, "in not only Islamic but also popular art."

Writer Stephen King notes that composing his nearly 900-page book, *Dreamcatcher*, "with the world's finest word processor, a Waterman cartridge fountain pen … put me in touch with the language as I haven't been in years."

Recent neuroscientific research reinforces this anecdotal evidence. Psychologists have reported that students learn better when they take notes by hand than when they type on a computer. One explanation is that writing by hand is slower. Since words cannot be transcribed verbatim as they can be on a keyboard, the student absorbs and reshapes them. In effect, they're recreating ideas, requiring more mental energy and engaging more mental circuits.

There is also some evidence that learning cursive, as opposed to printing, can be helpful for certain kinds of

"IT'S AS IF I'M DIVULGING A PART OF MYSELF THROUGH THE WRITING."

—ALEXANDRA GUEYDAN-TUREK

LAURENCE KESTERSON

Tomoko Sakomura, left, and Alexandra Gueydan-Turek know fountain pens, inside and out.

dyslexia and can improve brain development in terms of language, thinking, and working memory. And fountain pens are particularly well suited to cursive writing.

As Canadian writer Josh Giesbrecht observed in *The Atlantic*, "Fountain pens want to connect letters. Ballpoint pens need to be convinced to write."

TODAY

"The fellowship of users," as Cothren calls it, continues to grow, with fountain pen sales rising in recent years. There are crowded fountain pen shows in cities around the world. The Philadelphia Pen Show is held every year in January. Attendees can take pens out for a "test write," purchase new and antique pens, have their grips analyzed, and listen to—and share—fountain pen history.

Nibmeisters like Binder will also tune or grind a nib. For example, he can grind a medium-point pen into a stub so that a pen will write with wider lines or he can smooth out a scratchy nib.

"It's quite magical," Sakomura says. "There's always a long queue for his work."

Social media, too, has been instrumental in spreading the old-fashioned word about fountain pens, with Twitter users clicking a quill pen icon to tweet. The Internet has also worked to counteract a certain historical snobbery still associated with some brands—a recent *Adweek* headline: "Meet the $935 Pen That Turns a Scribble Into a Status Symbol"—while an element of fascination with the retro may also add to their allure.

There are hundreds of websites focused on fountain pen use, both commercial and non-, along with blogs and forums. The biggest is The Fountain Pen Network, which serves users, repairers, collectors, and sellers.

Since 2012, Fountain Pen Day (which paradoxically uses a highly stylized computer logo) is celebrated yearly on the first Friday in November to encourage individual acts of pen promotion, such as writing letters.

In Philadelphia, there are periodic events called Pub Letters, organized by a fountain pen user who was tired of seeing people in bars hunched over their smartphones. Providing free stationery and stamps, leader Michael McGettigan says in *Philadelphia* magazine, "A decent letter should take about as long [to write] as two good drinks."

For many people like Grider, fountain pens are highly valued on a largely utilitarian level. For others, fountain pens stimulate the collecting impulse—Sakomura says she doesn't purchase jewelry, but instead buys carefully chosen pens.

She, like others, talks about the attachment she's developed for individual fountain pens, and the stories behind each. Sakomura loves the fact that, for example, her vintage Eversharp Skylines have the names of the former owners on them, though technically that decreases the value. Gueydan-Turek says when she emigrated from France to the U.S., her fountain pens "were among the few reminders of home that I was able to bring with me."

In her diary, Anne Frank wrote an affecting entry, "Ode to My Fountain-Pen In Memoriam," which describes the life and death of "one of my most priceless possessions."

Ultimately, as Ding explains, a fountain pen is something that "builds history and belongs to you."

Nowhere is that more obvious than on Swarthmore's campus, where the feather weathervane mounted on Parrish's central cupola—echoed in brass on its staircase landing—is actually a quill pen. In fact, McCabe Library is considering making a set of fountain pens available for the College community to try out later in the school year.

Try one out to see if you agree with Damien Ding who says simply, "It's a joy to use a fountain pen."

+ SEE TOMOKO SAKOMURA, LOGAN GRIDER, AND ALEXANDRA GUEYDAN-TUREK using and discussing their fountain pens: bulletin.swarthmore.edu

Sumner B. Dennis (1866–1950) and wife Mary Kinslow Dennis (1869–1957); the back of the Dennis farmhouse in the 1940s, when it served as a summer home.

AMERICAN FAMILY

ALFRED B. FOR

AMERICAN DREAM

A new Smithsonian exhibit honors the legacy of Denise Dennis ’72 and Darryl Gore ’79’s family and farm

by **Jonathan Riggs**

THE ELEVATOR WAS SLOW.

By the time it delivered Denise Dennis '72 to the second floor, the other guests at the preview gala for the "Through the African American Lens" exhibition had already entered the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) gallery space.

When Dennis caught up with them, the curators were describing the first exhibit.

Hers.

"I took that chance to stand in the back and hear our family's history—something I'm usually explaining to people—described by curators," she says. "It was very moving. Many people think there's only one narrative about African-Americans—the slavery narrative—but our family's goal in sharing our history is to expand that."

Dennis and her brother Darryl Gore '79 are direct descendants of the Perkins-Dennis family, which traces its history back to 1700. Not only did their forebears always live freely in New England, but they passed down a 153-acre Pennsylvania farm across the centuries and generations.

"Simple people can have so much importance in the history of this country," Gore says. "When I tell people that we still have land in our family that has been with us since George Washington was president, no one can believe it."

"This isn't land that a white slaveowner gave to his slave children," Dennis adds. "This is land that this free African-American family bought and cultivated by and for themselves at a time when owning black people was the law."

Purchased for 6 pounds in 1793 by Prince Perkins, a Connecticut-born African-American who may have earned his freedom fighting in the Revolutionary War, the farm, in rural Hop Bottom, Susquehanna County, Pa., reached its current acreage in 1858, when granddaughter Angeline Perkins and husband Henry W. Dennis purchased 100 additional acres.

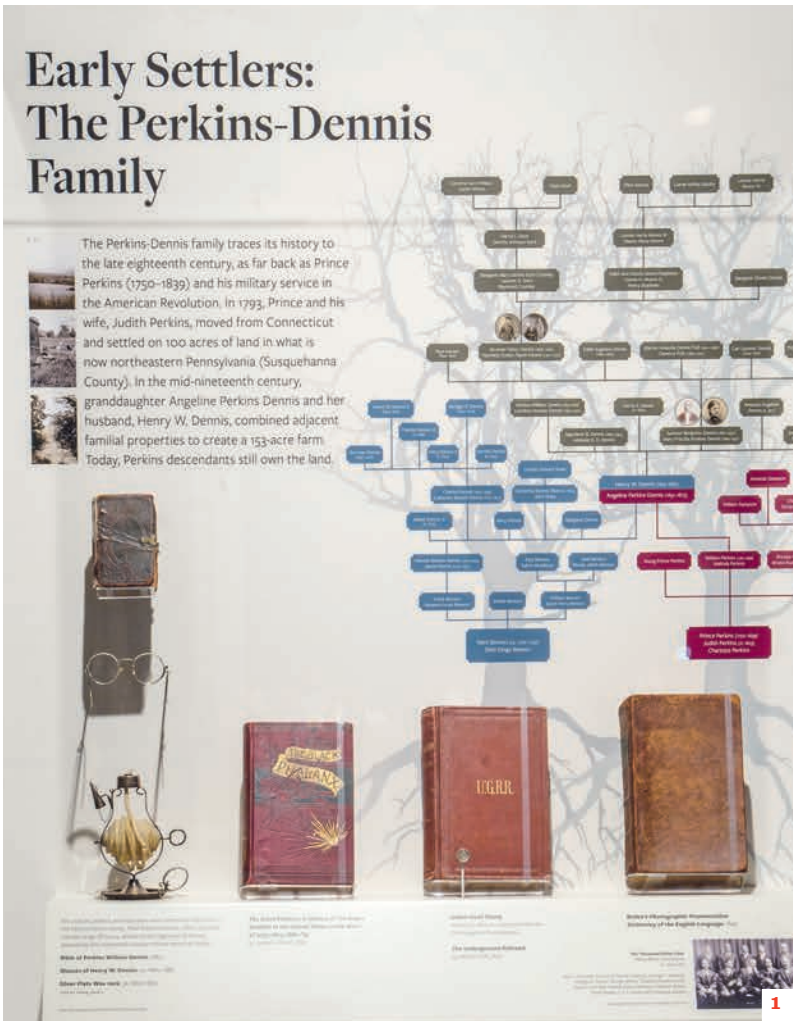
Thanks to the family's determination, today, the Dennis Farm has been listed on the National Register of Historic places as a site of national significance and was declared a Pennsylvania historical landmark. And as they continue to work toward their goal of restoring the farm into a full-scale educational and cultural site, programs and public tours are already underway.

Their preservation effort has been both a labor of love as well as a family affair.

"We're proud, but that's not what our family is all about—we know our history is special but we're also very humbled by it," Gore says. "I gladly give Denise all the credit for

"THIS IS LAND THAT THIS FREE AFRICAN-AMERICAN FAMILY BOUGHT AND CULTIVATED BY AND FOR THEMSELVES AT A TIME WHEN OWNING BLACK PEOPLE WAS THE LAW."

—DENISE DENNIS '72



COURTESY OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

1

2

ALFRED B. FOR

1. The exhibit in the Smithsonian. 2. Pennsylvania historical and museum commission marker dedication ceremony, Dennis Farm Symposium, Oct. 7, 2015. From left: Linda Ziemba, Trace Design Group; Maria Madison, Robbins House African-American History Interpretive Center; Denise Dennis; Patricia Brooks, National Endowment for the Humanities; Jennifer Scott, Jane Addams-Hull House Museum.

keeping our focus, because she's done the work with all her heart and soul, the way big sisters do."

"I am the eldest of the seventh generation and you can tell," Dennis concedes with a laugh. "But Darryl is indispensible—he has been so supportive. Every trip I make to the farm, he's been there."

Dennis serves as president of the Dennis Farm Charitable Land Trust, which she co-founded with her great aunt, Hope Dennis, a guidance counselor who steered her to Swarthmore.

"She really did us a favor—Swarthmore was so good for Darryl and me. You come out of there knowing and believing in yourself," Dennis says. "You have to, in order to survive!"

Much of the siblings' self-confidence comes from their family's long and proud history. Although they grew up hearing these stories, visiting the farm, and handling heirlooms like the family Bible, it wasn't until Dennis began her exhaustive research to collect documentation that they realized just how remarkable their history truly was.

She uncovered proof that Henry W. Dennis's father, James Dennis, was a teamster in the War of 1812 and three of his nephews fought in the Civil War. She also discovered that her great-great grandfather, Ralph Payne, who was in the United States Colored Troops, the 41st regiment, was one of 2,000 African-Americans present when Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox, Va.

Ultimately, the records she compiled reflected her family's tenacity, including an affidavit from the early 19th century where Henry W. Dennis proved a store clerk had overcharged him and James Dennis's petition to Congress to receive back pay he lost when a blustery day blew his papers into the snow before the Battle of Plattsburgh.

ALFRED B. FOR

"In history and in a family, we each have a role to play and these were ours," say Darryl Gore '79 and Denise Dennis '72.

In fact, when Smithsonian curators first approached Dennis about contributing to the exhibit, they were floored—not just by the wealth of artifacts she had, but by her wealth of knowledge.

"Often, you'll come across something wonderful and there'll be some information, but not enough really to situate an artifact properly," says Jacquelyn Days Serwer, NMAAHC chief curator. "But Denise is a force of nature. She had done such in-depth research on the family and the pieces that it was extraordinary to hear her talk about them."

Sharing their story brings a fire to Dennis's voice, as she describes how, while reading Jon Meacham's 2012 biography *Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power*, she was struck by the irony of Jefferson's belief that free African-Americans wouldn't know how to manage their own land.

"He said that at a time when my family was already on the farm," she says. "It's very important that stories like this come out. Not just my family's story, but again, stories that show the longevity of African-American self-determination. The American Dream was not designed with African-Americans in mind, and it's still a struggle."

The Perkins-Dennis farm and family exhibit will remain at the beginning of the "Through the African American Lens" exhibition, with its Bible dating back to 1863 situated across from the shawl Queen Victoria sent to Harriet Tubman, until fall 2016, when the new NMAAHC building will be complete. Then, it will receive its permanent home among such iconic displays as the dining room table around which the *Brown v. Board of Education* case began.

Rather than personally take credit for her family's inclusion, however, Dennis dedicates this honor to the generations who came before her, "who bought the books, paid the taxes, wrote the documents, and saved everything against great odds.

"When Daddy—Norman Henry Dennis—would tell me the story of our family when we were up at the farm or show me their names in books, it gave me my first sense of history," she says. "I saw my family as this long continuum of people, joining hands across time and eternity, and I was one person in that long chain of people.

"They knew that there was a larger story to be told, which is why our artifacts were so lovingly passed from one generation to another," she says. "It is an honor—that is the best word—an honor to know that our story, and stories of families like ours who beat the odds when the nation was new, will be shared for posterity."

+ LEARN MORE: thedennisfarm.org

GARNET HOMECOMING AND FAMILY WEEKEND, OCT. 23–25

1. Celebrating athletes of all stripes—and species. 2. Students—not to mention chairs—are kind of a big deal around here. 3. Come on in, the Garnet Weekend's fine! 4. Garnet Weekend's a great time for "selfie"-reflection. 5. Putting the "pep" in pep rally at the Garnet Athletics Hall of Fame induction. 6. President Val Smith makes friends wherever she goes. 7. Families enjoyed art activities hosted by the Women's Resource Center.

MICHAEL PEREZ © THE BARNES FOUNDATION

A native of Media, Pa., Thom Collins '88 told Philly.com that "the Barnes holds a special place."

MASTER OF ARTS

Thom Collins '88 brings his visionary touch to the Barnes Foundation

by **Elizabeth Vogdes**

THOM COLLINS '88, the new executive director and president of Philadelphia's Barnes Foundation, has big plans.

"I keep joking that we moved into this new building but we still haven't unpacked," he says about the world-famous art collection's move to the city three years ago from its original suburban home.

"Unpacking" is a herculean concept, however, when you're thinking about the museum's contents, which encompass a staggering number of impressionist, postimpressionist, and early modern paintings, along with many other works, including one of the first significant collections of African art.

"I would argue that we can talk about every important idea in the modernization of the West using the Barnes collection," says Collins, citing examples such as the changing views of gender, race, ethnicity, and the natural environment.

He envisions the Barnes, with its iconic artworks intended from the outset to be teaching tools available to all, as an educational forum.

Collins believes that art collections, unlike other performance-based cultural expressions such as theater, are similar to the Internet, in which learning can occur in a self-structured, visually oriented manner.

Last Garnet Weekend's McCabe lecturer, Collins has honed this belief ever since he fell in love with curating during a three-year fellowship at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Gravitating towards jobs that, he says, offer "growth and change" rather than "maintenance," he has worked in museums all over the country, most recently as director of the Pérez Art Museum Miami.

Starting from "a rigorously academic place," Collins hopes to connect stories to the Barnes's artwork that enhance their meaning through historical and modern contexts, building on the foundation's original method of teaching purely visual literacy.

Take, for example, the collection's 1876 painting by Claude Monet called *The Studio Boat*. It depicts the painter in the titular watercraft. But what the viewer may not know is that the boat was specially constructed with openings that enabled Monet to frame views of nature at the edge of Paris, screening out evidence of rapidly encroaching industrialization.

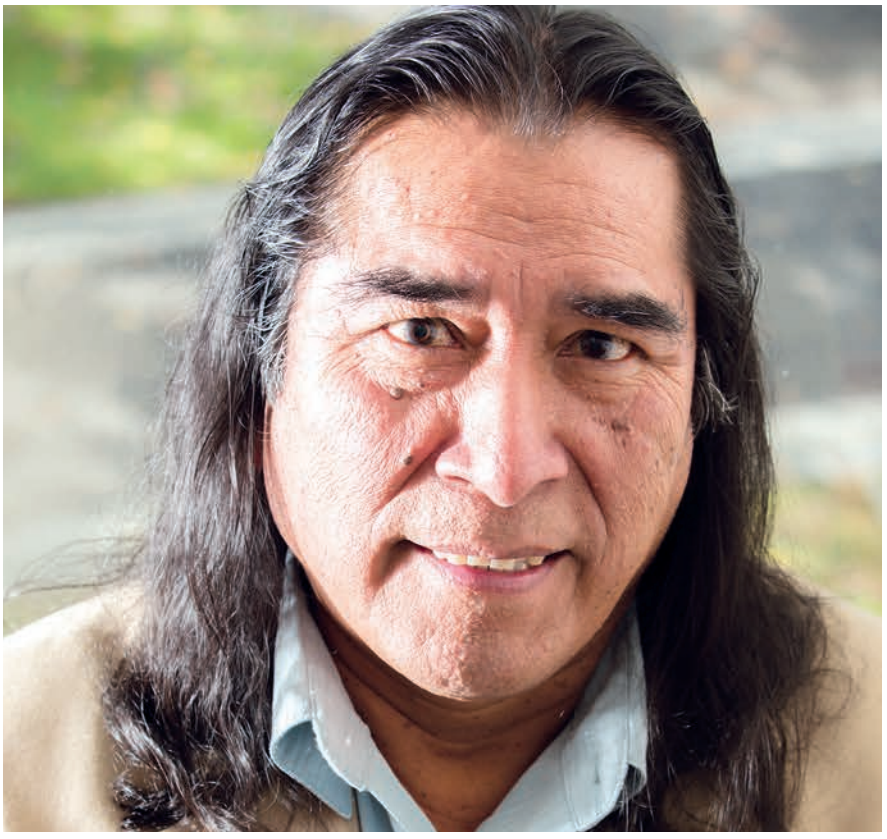
This is the kind of story that Collins plans to advance by developing new handheld audio/video touring tools and online materials, along with the more established educational routes of books, lectures, symposia, films, and community outreach programs.

He developed his deep appreciation for art at a very young age when he and his brother—Chris Collins '90—visited Philadelphia-area art museums with their father, a social studies teacher and football coach who understood paintings not only as pleasing aesthetic experiences but also as conveyors of social meaning.

That lesson became even more compelling to Collins at Swarthmore, where he was an art history honors student with a religion minor. He raves about his teachers, calling them "really smart, and just so engaged and so available." He loved his work-study job in the art gallery, where, among other tasks, he organized receptions, unwittingly preparing for his future. Collins also sang in the a cappella group Sixteen Feet, and indeed still enjoys singing in nightclubs or, in his words, "anyplace louche."

His education dovetailed very well with his upbringing in which, he explains, he was "already attentive to lots of the dynamics around difference, class, race, gender, and how they play out in representation in some nuanced way." It is a mission he now enthusiastically advances at the Barnes.

+ WATCH Thom Collins '88's 2015 McCabe lecture: bulletin.swarthmore.edu.



LAURENCE KESTERSON

WORDS FOR A WARRIOR

BORN IN PERU, BRAULIO MUÑOZ is the College's Centennial Professor of Sociology as well as a successful novelist who has been published around the world in English, Spanish, and Italian. Even when it seems as if humanity is more fractious and fraught than ever, he maintains that art has the power to unite, elevate, and even save us. Here, he explains why to *Bulletin* editor Jonathan Riggs.

How does art connect people within and across all cultures?
Art is a window into human communality as well as differences. Through the beauty of African masks, Peruvian *huaco* pottery, or the different *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, we come closer to the people who produced it. Art helps us overcome our preconceived ways of seeing, hearing, tasting, and touching—even of understanding our place in the cosmos. In an increasingly disenchanted world, art nurtures the sacred found in all cultures.

What lines can you trace through your own art?
I believe I have been writing the same book all my life. My work is a halting dance around a set of questions: How do we make sense of the strictures and freedoms which contemporary life gives us? What happens when, because of forced or chosen exile, we come to lose our moral compass? How complex are our shifting identities and how fragile? What is the price paid for allaying our fears by embracing ever-new identities?

Who are some of your favorite artists whose work epitomizes what it means to navigate—or even create—what it means to be American?
Juan Felipe Herrera, poet laureate of America: a teacher/poet child of migrant farmers, and Cesária Évora, a Cape Verdean singer who used to perform shoeless. Her song *"Sodade"* touches the heart of those among us who seek a future in a new land while never forgetting what we have left behind.

Which literary characters have influenced you the most?
Moncada, a crazy black man who appears in José María Arguedas's last novel, *The Fox from Up Above and the Fox from Down Below*. Moncada is a truth-teller who connects us to the Andean notion of the *upa*—someone who speaks truth to power in riddles or in silence—and to the Western concept of logos.

Sherlock Holmes, whom I read of when I was a child discovering Peru. It helped me focus on the minutia of the world at a time when the sky that had held for me the map of all possible paths was dimming.

Frédéric Moreau, of Gustave Flaubert's *Sentimental Education*. I read it in Paris when I was still an impetuous young man who allowed himself to feel the lure of turbulent feelings amid social turmoil.

How has a Swarthmore student inspired you with his or her own art?
A few years back, I met Haydil Henriquez '14, an impressive Latina student with a deep and sweet voice. She was sitting on our department lobby's sofa, looking inward. To lift her spirits, I said to her: "I love your voice. Don't lose it." With her eyes, she told me she had understood the double meaning of my words.

A couple of years later, Haydil read one of her poems as part of the welcoming ceremony for incoming Latino students.

Near the end of it, she writes:

You looked at me with gleaming eyes
And I swear I was transported into the ancient times
Before all our lands were colonized
And you were a medicine man
With the words for a warrior ..."

A most precious gift. I will cherish it until I can no longer write my book.

LAURENCE KESTERSON

MOMENT IN TIME
Vivek Ramanan '18 and Aamia Malik '18 celebrate Diwali, the "festival of lights."

SWARTHMORE

500 College Ave.
Swarthmore, PA 19081–1306
www.swarthmore.edu

Periodical Postage
PAID
Philadelphia, PA
and Additional
Mailing Offices