

JUNE 2006

# Swarthmore

COLLEGE BULLETIN



## V THE SPIRIT OF VIETNAM



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## ON THE COVER

The Van Ho Pagoda in Hanoi is typical of the vibrant religious expression in Vietnam. Thirty-five Swarthmore travelers visited Vietnam in January.

Photograph by Jeffrey Lott. Story on page 14.

## OPPOSITE

Extensive renovations to Parrish Hall, completed in January, include the new Shane Student Lounge, given by J. Lawrence '56 and Martha Porter Shane '57.

The lounge is adjacent to the College's new post office and has become a hub of activity. The Parrish renovations were part of an \$18.4 million project that included modifications to Sproul Observatory as well as an endowment for the future maintenance of both Parrish and the new Alice Paul Residence Hall.

Photograph by Eleftherios Kostans.

In January, Kim Marino sat next to me on a flight from Ho Chi Minh City to Danang. She's 39, lives in San Jose, Calif., and last saw her homeland at age 13, in 1980, when her name was Kim Nguyen. I was in Vietnam as a member of the Swarthmore Alumni College Abroad (see page 14). Kim said she planned to stay for about a month—"seeing some of my childhood friends and Auntie Nan and some of the places where we lived."

Kim told me her story in a matter-of-fact manner, as if her homecoming were just another vacation. Her family had lived in the coastal town Nha Trang, about halfway between Saigon and Danang. Most of her childhood memories are of war—"fighting, dropping bombs very close to where we lived." Her father, a truck driver who owned his own vehicle, built a bomb shelter for his family.

When the South Vietnamese Army collapsed in 1975 and the communists were roaring south along Highway 1, the family—who had backed the South in the war—fled to Saigon, hoping to get out of the country. She remembers making it as far as a beach where United States helicopters were ferrying people to ships offshore, but they could not get aboard one of the choppers. They eventually returned to Nha Trang, but life there was very difficult after the war.

I had expected to find some coldness or hostility toward a former enemy, but for Vietnam, the "American War" is over, and peace is the people's property.

"They [the communists] took everything," including her father's truck, Kim said, her voice betraying some emotion at last. "My parents were always trying to find a way to escape."

When friends offered them a place on a boat, Kim and 112 others fled Vietnam. Among them were her father and mother, an uncle, three brothers, and two sisters.

After 6 months in a refugee camp in the Philippines, a church in Texas sponsored their admission to the United States.

The family spent 2 years in Texas before moving to California, settling into the large Vietnamese community in San Jose. Kim married an Italian-American man (she is now divorced) and has two sons, 15 and 13 years old—about the same age she was when she left Viet Nam. "They don't even speak Vietnamese," she said.

Kim's story underscores the special relationship between the United States and Vietnam. The Vietnam War (which Vietnamese call the "American War") forever joined our histories and brought more than 1.25 million Vietnamese to the States.

This was my first visit to Vietnam. As an American, I expected to find some coldness or hostility toward a former enemy. There was none. What we found was a memory of a common experience that two peoples had suffered together. The souls of the dead are living in the same ground, their spirits intertwined. For Vietnam, the war is over, and peace is the people's property—it's Kim's, yours, mine, Vietnam's, and America's. Let's make it last.

—Jeffrey Lott

To read Jeffrey Lott's blog, written during the Alumni College Abroad, go to [www.swarthmore.edu/alumni/vietnam](http://www.swarthmore.edu/alumni/vietnam).



## Swarthmore COLLEGE BULLETIN

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## UNDERLYING ISSUES EXPOSED BY KATRINA

My wife, Carol Shapley Etter '79, and I share Joe Thompson's ['86] love for New Orleans ("Survival of a Gumbo Culture," *March Bulletin*) and have lived there since 1995. Joe's recounting of the tragedies, acts of charity, and spirit of the Crescent City since Hurricane Katrina mirrors our experiences. We have been part of the New Orleans diaspora for 7 months, now renting a house and office in Lafayette, La., while we rebuild our New Orleans home and offices.

Yet the issues arising from Katrina are larger than any single person's tragedy. Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma directly affected more than 5 million people who were threatened, evacuated, or had their homes damaged by wind or water. Nearly 1 million are still displaced.

The "rebuilding" that was promised after the storms has been too little, too late, and should be a national and international embarrassment. Entire sections of New Orleans, other Louisiana coastal parishes, and the Mississippi and Alabama Gulf Coasts are still wastelands of ruined homes without electricity, water, telephones, or sewers. Volunteer groups—including Swarthmore students and alumni—have helped people "gut" their houses, removing flooded clothing, furniture, refrigerators, and wallboard, but most sit empty, waiting to become homes again.

For a few days in September, the national media, politicians, citizens, and academia were forced to acknowledge that there are poor people in the United States, that racial divisions still exist, that urban areas have serious problems, and that our nation was unprepared to respond to a major natural disaster. Now, the media—and much of the population—suffer "Katrina Fatigue," and the political discussions have degenerated to placing blame and fights over funding without serious discussion or resolution of the social issues exposed by the storms.

I challenge the greater Swarthmore community to lead and participate in a discourse on the social issues that exist in New Orleans and in the nation's other urban areas. An abbreviated list of those issues would need to include poverty; race; housing; schools; the roles of federal, state, and local governments; regional divisions;

emergency preparedness and response; health care; the environment; coastal development; wetlands; energy exploration and development; criminal justice; the role of charities and religious organizations; differences and conflicts between urban and suburban populations; the rights of displaced persons; and the allocation and sharing of risks of natural and man-made disasters.

The Swarthmore community has the intellectual, political, and moral capability and authority to explore and seek consensus on approaches and solutions to the issues that continue to impact our cities, and that have become particularly evident since Hurricane Katrina. We should learn the lessons from Hurricane Katrina now, so we will not have to experience those tragedies again.

JOHN ETTER '79  
Lafayette, La.

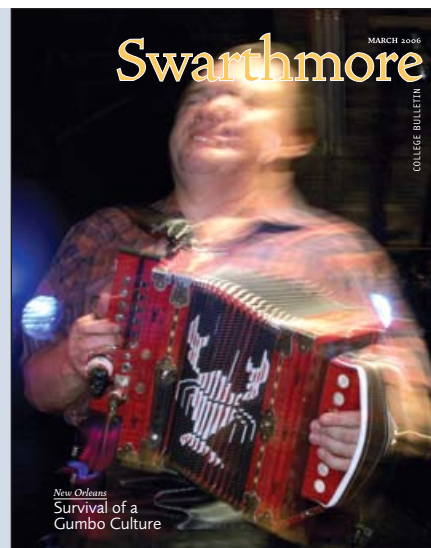
## HOW WRONG AND SAD

Parthenogenesis? My husband and I are trying to encourage our young adult son and daughters to be respectful of the opposite sex and of themselves. All three mothers in "Mothers After 40" (*March Bulletin*) show a profound lack of respect for the fathers of the children they bore. What fathers, you ask? Exactly.

Not to decide is to decide. How sad that three intelligent, highly educated women can't accept the responsibility for, and the consequences of, the choices they made in their 20s and 30s. So much easier to blame their (very privileged) socioeconomic circles or *Newsweek* (actuarial data are "another way to keep women down?"), or to rail about how unfair nature is. (Aside: What about adoption?)

You know you're old when you start to complain about the younger generation. Except I am only 50. How in the world did I manage to go to medical school, have three babies (back when you had to be back at work 6 weeks postpartum), conduct National Institutes of Health-funded research, get tenured, and stay married? Maybe because nobody told me it was someone else's responsibility to make it all work. Maybe my husband and I just really wanted to do it, so we did.

Life is not perfect. Life is not convenient. Yes, it is awkward to express breast milk in your office (I have 30 months total



experience). Some days, I was glad to have a 30-minute commute because it meant I could cry all the way home to relieve pent up feelings of conflicting loyalties. In-home child care was expensive. I had a miscarriage. Our older daughter is developmentally disabled, and I took leave to try to help shepherd her through difficulties during her childhood. Sometimes, I felt out of the loop of stay-at-home moms in our neighborhood. Oh well.

Situations are what they are. Your feelings are what they are. How you act is up to you. We are happy to be here, my husband and I, even though we have made mistakes with the kids (who seem to be OK anyway) and with each other (ditto). But we acknowledge that they are our mistakes. Ours.

Maybe that is what I find appalling about the article: It seems to convey that there is a whole generation of women who somehow have been brainwashed into thinking that they are not really in charge of their lives or that there is some magic combination of social programs that will make life perfect and absolve them of any need to make difficult choices. How wrong. How sad.

JAN McDONNELL '78  
Owings Mills, Md.

## FOR THE RECORD

In an obituary about the late David Bowler, professor emeritus of electrical engineering (*March Bulletin*), Professor of Engineering Erik Cheever '82 was misquoted. He stated that Bowler's students were "somewhat intimidated" by the professor, not "somewhat irritated."

## A New Dean for Swarthmore

James Larimore, current dean of the college at Dartmouth, has been appointed dean of students at Swarthmore. Larimore will replace Robert Gross '62, who is retiring this year, after 9 years of service as dean and 6 years as associate dean (see page 12).

Larimore will oversee aspects of student life such as academic advising, career services, health and psychological services, residential life, multicultural initiatives, and social and extracurricular activities.

"I am confident that Jim will bring exceptional energy and vision to the area of student life; will contribute importantly to advancing Swarthmore's leadership in American education; and will come quickly to be regarded as a warm, admired, and trusted friend of every constituency of the College's community," President Alfred H. Bloom said.

Larimore said: "I look forward to working with students, alumni, and my new colleagues on the faculty and staff to build on Swarthmore's considerable strengths, which are nurtured and strengthened by the institution's distinctive culture of service, ethical leadership, and academic excellence."

Larimore, 46, has been dean at Dartmouth since 1999. Previously, he spent 14 years at Stanford University, where he



COURTESY OF DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

James Larimore comes to Swarthmore from Dartmouth College.

served in roles including assistant to the provost, acting dean of students, deputy dean of students, and assistant dean and director for Stanford's American Indian Program. In 1994, Larimore received Stanford's Dinkelspiel Award for Outstanding Service to Undergraduate Education, and he was named to Stanford's Alumni Hall of Fame in 2005. Larimore serves on the advisory council for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Millennium Scholars Program and is a member of the National Vice Presidents Group.

—Tom Krattenmaker

## The Art of Tea

This spring, ceramic bowls crafted by students in Associate Professor of Studio Art Sydney Carpenter's course The Potter's Wheel were exhibited in McCabe Library with other artifacts and objects related to Japanese tea ceremonies. One component of a course that Art History Instructor Tomoko Sakomura teaches, the exhibit was part of a series of events titled *Crafting Nature: The Art of the Japanese Tea Ceremony*.

"The tea ceremony is neither ceremony nor ritual. It is an art form," Mariko LaFleur, a professor and tea practitioner of the tea group Urasenke La Salle and the University of Pennsylvania, said in a March lecture "*Ichigo, Ichie: One Time, One Meeting*," during which she explained the origins of the Japanese tea culture and demonstrated the art of "doing tea"—a complex process that involves sharing the experience with a friend or guest, observing strict rules of tea-drinking etiquette, and incorporating spiritual, philosophical, and aesthetic elements.

Students used bowls made in a ceramics class in the Japanese tea ceremony.



ELEFTHERIOS KOSTANS

## Literacy and Social Justice

Some commonly held notions of literacy are obstacles to social equality, Diane Downer Anderson, assistant professor of education, says. By "recognizing one discourse as better than another," we reinforce a dominant notion of literacy that views other ways of reading, writing, and speaking as "deficient."

Anderson made her remarks at a faculty lecture in March, stressing the importance of distinguishing "deficit views" from "difference views." A deficit view regards students not speaking in the dominant discourse as inferior; a difference view maintains that one discourse is different yet not necessarily better than another. She said that many students in urban and working-class schools do

not engage in the dominant discourse and are therefore viewed as "deficient" despite being fully engaged in a different, nondominant discourse.

Anderson said it was important to link beyond school sites when investigating student literacy and numeracy. Citing the example of Danny, a 3-year-old African American boy, she said that researchers observed that, when playing the game Chutes and Ladders, Danny played solely to win, resorting to cheating by "double counting" on certain squares to ensure that he landed on ladders and avoided the chutes.

Danny's teachers saw only a lack of respect for the rules or an inability to follow them, whereas the researchers recognized in his play a sophisticated, well-developed mathematical strategy. Danny had figured out how and when he should double count

squares based on the board and the number on the spinner—an impressive task for a 3-year-old. Should this boy be seen as a "cheater" or a "precocious mathematician?" Anderson asked.

Danny's intelligence, perhaps even brilliance, was being ignored in the classroom because the curriculum at the school was largely focused on socialization—adhering to the rules was more important than developing strategies to win. Yet teachers should not overlook or ignore this type of student literacy, Anderson said.

Next, Anderson showed examples of persuasive writing by students in elementary school, using letters written by a third- and a fourth-grader aimed at persuading their school principal to implement a change and essays written by two fifth-graders preparing for state assessment tests. The disparity

## Focus on East Asia

Following a 2-year review of the College's academic priorities, the Council on Educational Policy (CEP) recommended that the fledgling Japanese language and literature program, funded since 2002 by a 4-year \$1 million grant from the Freeman Foundation, become a permanent part of the College curriculum. The current language and literature position held by William Gardner will become a tenure-track position, to which Gardner has been appointed. Language instructors Yoshiko Jo and Atsuko Suda will also remain on the staff. Because of budget constraints, a fourth position, in the Sociology and Anthropology Department, will be discontinued in June 2007.

"We were pained that we couldn't keep this position," said Provost Constance Hungerford, "but we simply can't afford the whole package."

Hungerford explained that at least \$4 million in new endowment funds would be needed to yield sufficient income to support such a program. She says that it will be financed by the reallocation of resources within Modern Languages and Literatures, from another available tenure line at the College, and through additional fundraising.

Student interest in Japanese has been strong, Hungerford says, with 50 to 60 students enrolled each semester since the pro-

gram began. It has also received strong backing by the Modern Languages and Literatures Department.

"All of us are grateful that the CEP identified Japanese as a priority for the College," John Hassett, Susan W. Lippincott Professor of Modern and Classical Languages and chair of the department, says. "We have an

The faculty has approved Japanese language instruction as a permanent part of the curriculum. William Gardner (below), who has taught Japanese under a Freeman Foundation grant, will remain on the faculty to head the program.



COURTESY OF WILLIAM GARDNER

Asian studies major here, and it's very hard to imagine a serious Asian studies major without a Japanese component. It fits perfectly into the College curriculum and what we offer as a department."

Professor of Chinese Alan Berkowitz, chair of Asian studies, has been an advocate for Japanese from the start. "We had been saying for many years that Asian studies' greatest need and highest priority was to add Japanese language and Japan-related courses to the curriculum."

Gardner, a native of Kentucky, first visited Japan as a high school student. He studied Japanese language and culture at Columbia University, graduating with a B.A. in East Asian studies. After 2 years teaching English in Japan, he went on to earn M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Stanford. Before coming to Swarthmore in 2002, he taught at Middlebury College. "I'm happy that I get to continue doing a job I love at one of the best colleges in the country," Gardner says, "but I'm also happy for our students, who are passionate in learning about Japan and studying Japanese. They will be living in a world where issues of globalization increasingly dominate the cultural, political, and economic landscapes. I believe it is vital that Swarthmore should have a healthy Asian Studies Program and continue to build a campus culture that is internationally engaged."

—Carol Brévart-Demm

between the two sets of examples was startling. The letters, although written by younger students, were on task—concise, polite, and effective—whereas the essays were confusing and unfocused.

Anderson said that several factors account for this disparity. In the letters, the students knew their audience and what form their letters should take. The task was explicit and relevant to their lives, resulting in effective persuasion and relatively sharp, focused writing. The students knew exactly what they wanted to say and cared about their task, which enabled them to communicate effectively.

The fifth-graders, however, were faced with a vague, unclear prompt and an unfamiliar audience. They were also constrained by time and length. Because of these factors, the standardized test setting obstructed the



ELEFTHERIOS KOSTANS

Diane Downer Anderson and her students work with children at a Chester, Pa., elementary school. Members of the senior class chose her as their speaker for Last Collection.

students' abilities to write persuasively.

Anderson concluded her talk by reiterating the importance of examining the home and community circumstances in which children's literacy develops as well as the need to acknowledge that students speaking outside of the dominant discourse are less "deficient" than they are "different." She said

that failure to take the time to understand the students' situations fully and lack of appreciation for their unique discourses will result in their "brilliance" being missed.

—Zehra Hussain '09

*This article is adapted with permission from the March 15 Daily Gazette.*

## POSITIVELY AGING, GERGEN SHIFTS GEARS

A corner office in Papazian Hall—dressed in dark paneled wood and brocade draperies—has been the backdrop for Gil and Frank Mustin Professor of Psychology Kenneth Gergen's distinctive career at the College. In 40 years, he has seen the campus move from Quaker tranquility to a vibrant environment brimming with stimulating activities. He says the richness of classroom dialogue has increased as the student body has grown in diversity.

Gergen will retire from teaching but remain on campus as a senior research professor. He leaves a legacy of voluminous writings, student-centered education, an orientation to "social construction" theory, and a concentration in interpretive theory. He has also maintained Swarthmore's connections to an international network of scholars in the field of psychology.

On April 22, friends and colleagues gathered for a symposium titled "Constructing the Self" to honor Gergen. Five former students addressed his theories on constructing alternative futures. A presentation by Gergen completed the afternoon.

In the classroom, Gergen focused on helping students to grow. He says: "I have always taught the subject [psychology] specifically to broader intellectual and social issues so students can see how it connects to society in general and the international milieu. I'm much less interested in them swallowing lots of facts than in growing and developing in ways that will be of use to them."

To Gergen, retirement is a transition and a renaissance, which is also the focus of an electronic newsletter, *Positive Aging*, that he and his wife, Mary, launched in 2002 and continue to write. As he moves into the next phase of his life, Gergen will continue to lecture in Europe and the United States, complete several books that are currently in the works, and continue as president of the Taos Institute, an international, nonprofit group dedicated to education in social constructionist theory and relational practice, which he co-founded.



## HASSETT HAS BEEN A "COMMUNITY BUILDER"

From his office in Kohlberg Hall, which provides him with a delightful view of the Isabelle Bennett Cosby [28] Courtyard and where he is surrounded by books and artwork, John Hassett reflects on his 32 years at Swarthmore: "It has been a wonderful life. I've been surrounded by gifted teachers and have had the joy of being in class with superb students."

Susan W. Lippincott Professor of Modern and Classical Languages John Hassett remembers having an average of just three to four students per class when he joined the faculty in 1974. He takes great pride in the fact that the program in modern languages has grown substantially over the intervening years.

The recipient of numerous awards, including the Eugene Lang Fellowship for Faculty Research and the Award for Excellence in Teaching, Hassett has been department chair twice. His interest in literature that reveals the fabric of society—the political realities, the injustices of repressive regimes, and the aspirations of citizens—is well reflected in the book *Towards a Society That Serves Its People: The Intellectual Contribution of El Salvador's Murdered Jesuits*, which he co-wrote with Scheuer Family Professor Emeritus of Philosophy Hugh Lacey in 1991.

Scheuer Family Professor of Humanities and Professor of German Marion Faber affectionately describes Hassett's contributions to Swarthmore: "He is an impeccable administrator, blending energy with pragmatism; a strong and caring presence as a teacher—patient, organized, and thorough; and as a colleague, a community builder who encourages members of the department to gather together at the end of the week."

Hassett, who has recently received teaching offers from Santiago, Chile, and Spain, says: "It's a funny thing how retirement sneaks up on you, and you need to make a decision about when is the right time to move on." For him, it's now time to travel, continue his research and translating, spend more time in Chile and Holland with his wife, and indulge longtime interests in vegetable gardening, restoring old cars, and playing golf.

## JAMES MADE TECHNOLOGY EASIER FOR ALL

Jane James, who retired in December after 30 years at the College, will be missed. From the perspective of Eric Behrens '92, associate director of academic computing, "Jane was a light in our midst all along." Employee Relations Manager Lee Robinson, who served on the former Benchmark Committee with Jane James, understands: "Jane is very focused, conscientious, and thorough in everything she does. She's a joy to work with in any capacity."

Swarthmore has played a major role in the lives of the James family. The connection began in 1973, when her husband Charles "Chuck" James, Sara Lawrence Lightfoot Professor Emeritus of English Literature, was appointed associate professor of English literature.

In 1975, James began her tenure at the College in a part-time position in the Annual Giving Office and then moved into a secretarial position in the President's Office. In 1983, James joined Information Technology Services (ITS), then known as the Computing Center, as assistant to the director. She also served as user services and training coordinator before ending her career as a member of the academic computing team.



# RETIREMENT



Retiring at the end of the academic year are (left to right) Kenneth Gergen, John Hassett, Jane James, Eva Travers, and Robert Williams. Together, they have served the College for 152 years.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
ELEFTHERIOS KOSTANS

A former nursery school and kindergarten teacher, James remembers the impact that the introduction of personal computers had on the campus community. She said: “Through my work with ITS, I came to know so many people on campus. In the beginning, some were reluctant to use computers—they had to be cajoled into it, and we had to do a lot of hand holding.” Behrens recalls, “For over 20 years, Jane’s focus was on doing anything she could to make the ever-changing and often-confusing world of technology a little easier for everybody else.”

In addition to the Benchmark Committee, which reviewed administrative staff requests for pay-grade increases, James served on the Equal Opportunity Advisory Committee, the Black Cultural Center Advisory and Planning Committee, and Swarthmore Foundation.

James has ambitious plans for retirement: catching up on her reading, working on her family’s history, knitting more, getting back to playing the piano, doing volunteer work, taking classes, and traveling.

“I’ll miss the people here, but it’s easy to keep in touch living close by. One of the nice things about Swarthmore is that all the cultural activities give me a reason to come back.”

## TRIVERS MADE EDUCATION A DEPARTMENT

When Professor of Educational Studies Eva Travers arrived at Swarthmore in 1975, the Program in Education was housed in the basement of Parrish Hall. Today, the second floor of Pearson Hall is home to the Educational Studies Department. According to Travers, “Education has come a long way—from almost being eliminated at the College to being an integral part of it.”

In 1977, Travers, who retired this spring after 31 years at the College, was appointed director of the program. Besides developing the Introduction to Education, Urban Education, and Educational Policy courses, she was the first education professor to receive tenure and chaired the department for a total of 20 years. Travers also hired the faculty members who make up the department today, served on and chaired committees across the College, and was associate dean and acting dean of the College from 1988 to 1991.

Dean of the College Robert Gross ’62, who worked with Travers for 7 years to strengthen the program said: “Perhaps one of Eva’s most significant contributions was making the case that educational studies has an important place in the liberal arts curriculum. We used to have a T-shirt with the slogan, ‘The Program in Education—anywhere else, it would be a department.’ Now it is, thanks to Eva.” [Gross is also retiring this year. See page 12 for an adaptation of his 2006 Baccalaureate address.]

Travers has mentored many students. In 1999, she received the Lindback Award for Outstanding Teaching at Swarthmore College. Last fall, the department’s second conference on Education for Social Justice, attended by more than 100 alumni, was dedicated to Travers.

In retirement, Travers plans to travel, continue a study of the state takeover of the Philadelphia School District with other researchers, and write short stories about her parents’ experiences as Hungarian refugees in the United States.

## WILLIAMS STEPS TO THE SIDELINES

As much as Swarthmore has been an essential part of Marian Snyder Ware Professor of Physical Education and Athletics Robert Williams’ life for nearly 2 decades, he and his wife, Thema, have played a role in the lives of many students. Director of athletics for 16 years, Williams reminisces: “Our home has always been open to students. Many former student athletes are personal friends. I go to their weddings, and they send me pictures of their babies—it gets to be a way of life.”

Formerly chair of the Physical Education and Athletics Department, Williams has retired after 19 years at the College. He also served as past faculty athletics representative to the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA), administrator of club sports at the College, and head track coach.

Provost and Mari S. Michener Professor of Art History Constance Hungerford hails Williams’ commitment to Swarthmore students: “Bob has been a widely admired leader of our sports programs, his top priority a thriving program serving all students, whether in intercollegiate athletics or simply fulfilling the physical education requirement.”

In recent years, Williams has initiated equal access to funding for all sports teams; made each coach full time with responsibility for one sport; and improved the athletics facilities so that, today, they are state of the art, well maintained, and safe. He is most proud that his appointment to Swarthmore was key in paving the way for many other colleges in the NCAA to hire African Americans to be athletics administrators.

Because athletics have taken up evenings and weekends for the last 40 years, spending time with family will be a big part of Williams’ retirement. He also plans to do volunteer work in an area that has always interested him—fitness for disadvantaged children and the elderly.

Williams still plans to enjoy Swarthmore athletics as a spectator, although it’s going to be difficult for him to watch from up in the stands. “I plan to be in the bleachers and on the sidelines watching, and I truly hope someone will invite me to sit on the home bench.”

—Susan Cousins Breen



COURTESY OF JOSE-LUIS MACHADO

Jose-Luis Machado measures photosynthesis and respiration in plants.

## "Plants Are Different Beasts"

Assistant Professor of Biology Jose-Luis Machado and three colleagues are authors of a controversial article "Universal Scaling of Respiratory Metabolism, Size, and Nitrogen in Plants," published in the January issue of *Nature* magazine.

Using data from about 500 lab and field plants of 43 species, the scientists conducted four experiments whose results challenge the prediction that Kleiber's law relating size and metabolic rate in animals is also valid for plants. Measuring respiration in the sample plants, they discovered that the law does not apply to vascular plants across the six orders or magnitude they tested, thereby seeming to refute the possibility of the law's universality. They have yet to test whether their results are valid for mature trees.

"It's good to be known for proving that plants are different beasts," Machado said.

—Carol Brévert-Demm

## Upwardly Mobile

This spring, promotion from assistant to associate professor status with continuous tenure was awarded to two faculty members: David Cohen, physics and astronomy; and Farha Ghannam, sociology and anthropology.

Four associate professors were promoted to full professorship: Elizabeth Bolton, English literature; E. Carr Everbach, engineering; Don Shimamoto, mathematics and statistics; and Mark Wallace, religion. —Carol Brévert-Demm

## Accolade Cascade

Four members of Swarthmore's faculty were recent recipients of prestigious awards and honors. Associate Professor of Mathematics Garikai "Kai" Campbell '90 received the 2006 Henry L. Alder Award for Distinguished Teaching by a Beginning Faculty Member from the Mathematical Association of America. Nominated by his Swarthmore colleagues, Campbell was recognized for his intense interaction with students and active participation in national programs, particularly those supporting underrepresented groups.

Associate Professor of Religion Nathaniel Deutsch was one of 187 honorees to be named a 2006 Guggenheim Fellow. Deutsch will use the Guggenheim, awarded to scholars with a history of exceptional scholarship and whose research shows outstanding promise, to support his work on a book about Jewish ethnographer S. Ansky.

Associate Professor of Computer Science Lisa Meeden was

honored as a co-recipient of the Premier Award for Excellence in Engineering Educational Software for *Pyro: Python Robotics*, an educational robotics-programming software package. Meeden—along with Bryn Mawr's Douglas Blank and Deepak Kumar and the University of Massachusetts' Holly Yanco—was recognized for her role in creating the programming environment that enables students to explore topics related to robotics and artificial intelligence.

Professor of Biology Amy Cheng Vollmer received the 2006 Carski Foundation Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching Award from the American Society for Microbiology. The award honors educators with a minimum of 10 years' total teaching experience for outstanding teaching of microbiology to undergraduate students and encouraging them to subsequent achievement.

—Carol Brévert-Demm

## Ruach Resurgence

With popular events such as the Chanukah Gelt Poker tournament, a "Brews and Jews" party, and a performance by an African American Jewish gospel choir, Jewish life at Swarthmore has been undergoing a renaissance.

The resurgence of activity followed a November open forum for Jewish students sponsored by Ruach, the Jewish student organization. Co-president Adam Levine-Weinberg '07 says it was an opportunity for students who had not previously been involved in Ruach "to let us know what they wanted out of a Jewish student organization and to have the ability to become more active in planning."

Out of the forum came the idea of monthly "Big Shabbat" services, which Co-President Nate Allen '08 calls "a way for people who don't practice as much or are just plain busy to get involved and active in the Jewish community." By offering two different services, one traditional and one creative, "Big Shabbat" has drawn up to 60 members of the community.

The forum also inspired the creation of Kef Ruach, or the "fun committee," which planned social events such as "Hip-Hop and Hookah" and a Purim party that drew more than 100 students.

## They Can't Help but Sing

On April 1, the Swarthmore College Gospel Choir and the Black Cultural Center both marked their 35th birthdays. In what was a joyous celebration of singing together in praise, choir members, under the musical direction of Vaneese Thomas '74, delighted an audience that filled the Friends Meetinghouse. They even caused several passersby to stop and listen—or even allow themselves to be enticed inside.

Singing with their whole bodies, swaying and clapping to the rhythm, they performed a selection of songs both rousing and haunting. They concluded with Paul Halley's vibrant composition "Freedom Trilogy," sung in 16th-century Greek, an African language, and English.

During the event, Jane James, who retired as a member of the academic computing team in Information Technology Services in December, and



COURTESY OF THE BLACK CULTURAL CENTER

"Just in Time" featured soloist Gerald Cox '78 and the trio of NiYa Costley '97, Marissa Davis '08, and Jacqueline Edmonds '74.

Astrid Devaney, associate director of alumni relations, were honored for their longtime sup-

port of the choir. Vice President for College and Community Relations Maurice Eldridge '61 spoke of its having "transformed the College and made it a more welcoming place."

Reminiscing about the choir's founding during her undergraduate days in the mid-

1970s, Thomas recalled fondly the times when a few students gathered "wherever they could find a piano ... singing because they couldn't help but sing."

Luckily, they still can't help it—and their audience couldn't help but be enchanted.

—Carol Brévarat-Demm

"Since most of the [Jewish] students here are secular, the way to draw them in was to have fun activities that were somewhat connected with the holidays occurring at the same time," Ruach secretary Daniela Manopla '08 says.

Although social events have consistently proved the most popular, Jethro Berkman, Jewish student adviser and a rabbinical student at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, also runs weekly groups on studying the Talmud and learning to lead services. "We're trying to provide opportunities to connect in a variety of ways—socially, culturally, through study, by coming to services. It's important that we express the idea that all of these are valuable ways of connecting to Judaism," Berkman says.

Berkman, in his first year at Swarthmore, is one of three religious advisers on campus, all with offices in Bond Hall, which has become a campus Interfaith Center. Berkman's part-time position is funded by Hillel of Greater Philadelphia and contributions from alumni.

Father Ed Windhaus also arrived in fall 2005 as the Roman Catholic adviser. He was appointed by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia through the auspices of the Newman Community and also serves students at Bryn Mawr and Haverford colleges.

Protestant adviser Joyce Tompkins has been at Swarthmore since 2003. Her position is supported by Partners in Ministry, a consortium of local Protestant churches whose congregational contributions are supplemented by a small endowment. Tompkins advises the Swarthmore Protestant Community (SPC, also known as the Swarthmore Progressive Christians). Another student group is affiliated with the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, a national evangelical campus mission.

In 2006–2007, Tompkins will become a full-time staff member. In addition to advising the SPC, she will work with Associate Dean of Multicultural Affairs Darryl Smaw and two student interns to expand interfaith programs. These will include a Religion on Campus Week to be held in January 2007. According to Tompkins, this event will embrace all faiths on campus. "Because of the growing diversity of the student body, we're seeing representatives of more diverse religious traditions, including followers of Hinduism, Islam, Ba'hai, Sikhism, and students who self-identify as pagans. The Interfaith Center seeks to support all religious expression and to promote dialogue among these different groups."

—Lauren Stokes '09 and Jeffrey Lott

## Women Rule Spring Season

**Women's tennis (16–3, 10–0)** Swarthmore, ranked No. 18 in Division III, won its second straight Centennial Conference (CC) Championship—the fourth in six seasons. Junior Sonya Reynolds, a first-team All-Centennial selection for singles and doubles, was chosen to play in the NCAA Division III Individual Championships but was defeated in the first round. Qualifying for the NCAA Tournament for the fourth consecutive year, the team fell, 5-2, in the first round to 12th-ranked Carnegie Mellon in Lexington, Va. Freshman Jennie Park earned a First-Team All-CC selection for singles play, and Reynolds and junior Marissa Matthews were named First-Team in doubles action.

**Men's tennis (8–10)** Ranked 21st in Division III, the Garnet advanced to the NCAA Tournament for the 30th time in 31 years. Swarthmore defeated 14th-ranked Washington College, 4-3, in the first round and then upended seventh-ranked Mary Washington 4-2, before falling 4-0 to top-ranked Gustavus Adolphus in the quarterfinals. Senior Zac Rodd was selected to compete in both the singles' competition of the NCAA Division III Individual Championships and the doubles' championship with classmate Brian Park. Both championships ended in the first round for the Swarthmore teammates.

**Baseball (6–23, 1–17)** The Garnet got off to their best start (3-1) since 1986, batting .297 while scoring 47 runs off 54 hits with 21 stolen bases in six games during their annual spring break trip to Florida, but won just three more games after returning North. Sam Faeder '07 led the team with career highs in batting average (.349), hits (38), runs batted in (22), total bases (49), on-base percentage (.429), and slugging percentage (.450). Senior captain Scott Young also had a strong season, topping the squad in runs (24) and stolen bases (15) and finishing second in batting average (.317) and hits (32).

**Golf (fourth at CC Championship)** In the first season under new head coach Jim Heller, the Garnet won five matches and posted the best finish in school history in



the Centennial Conference Championships played at Pilgrim's Oak Golf Course in Peach Bottom, Pa. Senior Michael Cullinan (80-85-77=242) and junior Eric Zwick (79-83-80=242) were named First-Team All-Centennial after finishing in a tie for fifth in the individual competition. As a team, the Garnet posted a score of 988 (329-335-324) and led the tournament with an average score of 3.62 strokes on the par threes.

**Men's lacrosse (4–10, 1–7)** Boosted by sophomore goalie Frank Mazzucco's 17 saves, the Garnet defeated Franklin & Marshall for the first time in 22 years. Junior captain Jay Charles led Swarthmore with a career-high 17 goals, tying with freshman Stelios Wilson (12 goals, seven assists) for the team-lead with 19 points. Mazzucco finished fifth in the Centennial in goals-against (8.50) and saves-per-game (10.50) averages in more than 825 minutes of action.

**Women's lacrosse (14-5, 5-4)** The Garnet put together its best season ever. Winning the Seven Sisters Lacrosse Championship on March 19 with an 11-8 win over Wellesley, the team broke the school record for wins with a 17-6 victory over Rosemont on April 26, earning its first Centennial playoff berth. Senior defender Cara Tigue (41 groundballs, 18 caused turnovers) became the fifth Swarthmore woman to make All-Centennial in three consecutive seasons, earning a first-team selection. Junior midfielder Lindsay Roth (31 goals, seven assists) also made All-



PHOTOGRAPHS BY KYLE LEACH



Christine Sendelsky '09 (*top*) led the offense as the softball team went 23–17. Sonya Reynolds '07 (*center*) was invited to the NCAA Championships. The women's lacrosse team and Coach Karen Borbee (*bottom*) won the Seven Sisters Championship in March. In men's lacrosse, Ivano Ventresca '08 (*right*) competes against Drew University.

## Phoenix Chosen as New Mascot

Thanks to an energetic effort by students, Swarthmore College has a new mascot: the phoenix. Campus voting in April and a recent e-mail poll of alumni both reached the same conclusion, choosing the mythical bird over three other candidates and a “none of the above” option.

With the support of the Physical Education and Athletics Department, the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) led an initiative to gauge interest in the creation of a mascot. SAAC, consisting of representatives from each of the College’s 22 intercollegiate sports, discusses issues faced by Swarthmore’s student-athletes and works to

enhance communication about athletics within the campus community. The Garnet Club, formed in 2004 to organize pre-game tailgates, post-game bonfires, and fan buses to Haverford-Swarthmore games and conference championship games, also supported the initiative.

The new mascot will not replace “The Garnet” as the name of Swarthmore’s intercollegiate athletic teams. “We wanted a tangible creature—a character—that will get people fired up at College events,” said Heidi Fieselmann ’06 of SAAC.

Kyle White ’08, a leader of the Garnet Club and ex-officio member of SAAC, explained that a

*The phoenix has deep roots in Swarthmore lore. When an 1881 blaze gutted Parrish Hall, the College’s original structure, it was rebuilt. Thereafter, **The Phoenix** became the name of the campus newspaper, which used this representation of the mythical bird on its title page in the 1890s.*

mascot is “intended to bring the campus together in a community—not only in athletics but everywhere a little school spirit and fun are needed.”

The phoenix won the campus vote, garnering 327 of 873 ballots cast, and a straw poll of alumni that accompanied the College’s regular electronic newsletter on April 28. The new mascot was endorsed by 368 of the 851 alumni who responded, defeating “none of the above” by 100 votes. Remaining votes were scattered among the other three candidates.

In the fall, a new committee of students, faculty members, and alumni will determine how the mascot can be incorporated into College life and begin an implementation process, which will likely include the creation of a costumed character and a graphic identity for the phoenix.

—Jeffrey Lott



ELEFTHERIOS KOSTANS

Centennial and became the 12th Swarthmore woman to score 100 goals in her career. Head Coach Karen Borbee—one of 12 former players named to the NCAA Division I Women’s Lacrosse 25th Anniversary Team—notched her 135th career victory as a coach.

**Softball (23-17, 9-7)** Swarthmore had one of its best seasons in history, breaking school records for overall and conference wins and earning its first Centennial playoff berth and an 8-4 playoff victory. The Garnet led the CC in batting average (.313) and on-base

percentage (.388). They finished second in runs (199), hits (332), and runs batted in (156). Freshman second baseman Christine Sendelsky led the team in seven offensive categories, including tying the school record for home runs (4). She is the first Garnet softball player to earn All-Region honors and the first Swarthmore freshman to make First Team All-CC. Senior catcher Christina Procacci joined Sendelsky on the first team, breaking her own conference record for walks (38) and finishing third in Division III history with 104 career walks while not committing an error in conference play (66 chances). Junior first baseman Kelly Siano was an All-CC honorable mention selection after setting career highs in seven offensive categories and finishing second on the team with a .984 fielding percentage. Freshman pitcher Alexandra Zelaski was the first Garnet hurler to win 10 games in a season.

**Men’s track and field (ninth at CC Championship)** Garnet sophomore Ross Weller

won a bronze medal in the 3,000-meter steeplechase, running the fifth-fastest time (9:48.30) in school history and the best in 15 years. The 4 x 800-meter relay team of Dillon McGrew ’07, Vernon Chaplin ’07, Keefe Keeley ’06, and Paul Thibodeau ’06 collected a silver medal, finishing with a time of 7:54.83.

**Women’s track and field (ninth at CC Championship)** The 4 x 800-meter quartet of Kavita Hardy ’08, Lauren Fety ’06, Caitlin Mullarkey ’09, and Emily Wistar ’06 ran third at the CC Championships, finishing with a time of 9:54.31 to earn a bronze medal. Mullarkey also took fifth in the 400-meter intermediate hurdles, posting a personal best (and the fifth-fastest time in Swarthmore history). Senior Carrie Ritter ran fourth in the 10,000-meter run with a time of 39:44.58 (good for fourth fastest in school history). Ritter set the school mark in the 3,000-meter steeplechase at the Tuppamy Twilight on May 16, and Wistar capped a stellar senior season by lowering her time in the 1,500 to 4:49.77 (fifth fastest in school history). Classmate Emily Conlon passed the 100-foot mark in the javelin to land in third position on the school annuals.

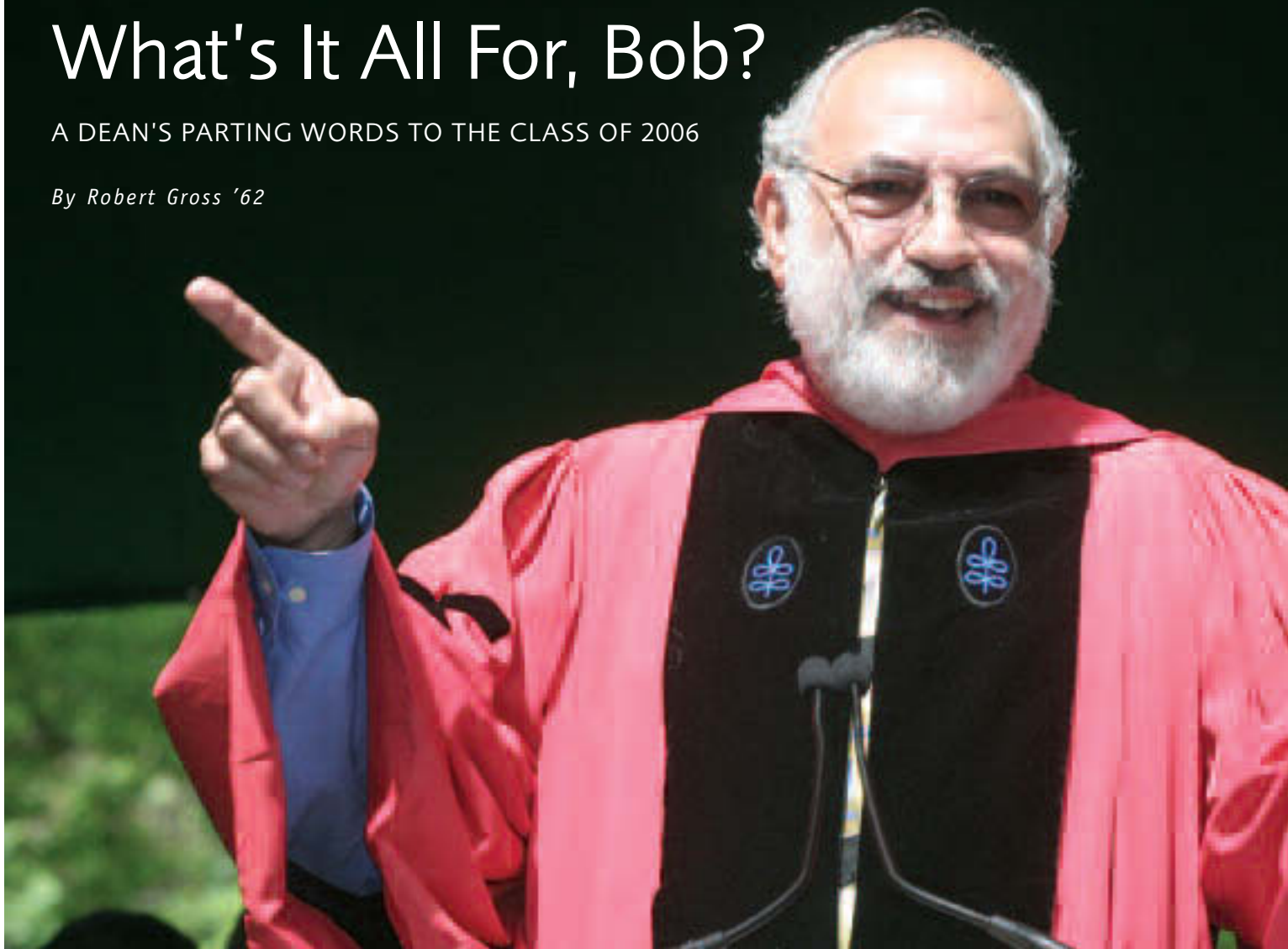
**Hood Trophy** In the annual head-to-head competition with Haverford College for the Hood Trophy, Swarthmore fell 11-7 to Haverford, which will retain the trophy.

—Kyle Leach

# What's It All For, Bob?

A DEAN'S PARTING WORDS TO THE CLASS OF 2006

By Robert Gross '62



As you leave Swarthmore, it's a good time to reflect more broadly on the meaning of life. One of the best expressions of these concerns—at least since Monty Python—came from Greg, a high school junior I taught at Friends Select School some years ago. It was spring, and the juniors had just gotten the college application pep talk. Greg stopped me the next day and said he wanted to ask me a question. "What's it all for, Bob? You work hard in high school to get into a good college. You work hard in college to get a good job. You work hard at your job to support your family. And then you're dead. What's it all for?"

I don't recall what I answered. Yet, after brooding about it for 2 decades, I am very sorry to report that I'm still not entirely sure what it's all for. But I do have some ideas about how to "do life" well. I think the answer lies in locating oneself in terms of

four questions relating to time, interpersonal space, risk, and attitude.

The question about time is this: How much energy and attention should you spend on planning and acting for future goals and how much on living in the present? There's no right answer, but I worry that many kids today seem to sacrifice their childhood and adolescence to polish a resume that will get them into the right college. And then they sacrifice their good times and health to get into a top medical school, and then the right residency, and so on. Sooner or later, they find themselves in Greg's trap, asking what it's all for.

Conversely, I also worry about those students who spend all their time writing poetry and hanging out with friends or playing video games and Beirut. Will they end up homeless or—even worse—living with their parents?

As a dean, I've worked both ends of this street. To those who lived too much in the moment and consistently forgot they had a paper due, I have emphasized time management and planning. As for those who have lived in McCabe or Cornell libraries for 4 years, I have encouraged them to slow down and find more of a Zen-like approach to their work.

There are two ways out of the either-or trap. The first is simply to pay attention. Be intentional about what you want to do, but be present in the activity of the moment. Paying attention is useful in accomplishing anything, but it is particularly important in things like appreciating art or falling in love.

The second is to look at what motivates us. Sometimes, we are instrumentally motivated; that is, we act in order to achieve some further goal. And at other times, we are intrinsically motivated; we act because

The following is adapted from the baccalaureate address delivered by Dean of the College Robert Gross on May 27. Gross retires this month after serving in the Dean's Office from 1991 to 2006 and as a member of the faculty in the Program in Education from 1977 to 1983. From 1984 to 1990, Gross served as head of the upper school at Friends Select School in Philadelphia. The complete text of Dean Gross' talk is at [www.swarthmore.edu/news/commencement2006/](http://www.swarthmore.edu/news/commencement2006/).



ELEFTHERIOS KOSTIANS

means to me is being open to opportunity, willing to give up the comfort of the familiar. It may be too late now, but it might have meant sitting down in Sharples Dining Hall with some people you didn't know.

Finally, there is the question of attitude: how to balance belief and doubt, or idealism and what one might call postmodern deconstructionism. To use a term more familiar at Swarthmore, how does ethical intelligence work? Beliefs and ideals are essential, and societies advance through the ethical commitments of their members. But ideals that are not subject to reality testing can lead, at best, to self-righteousness and, at worst, to disaster. Herman Kahn, who wrote *On Thermonuclear War* in the 1960s, once said, "In order to make a revolution, you need a certain amount of ignorance, for knowledge debilitates." Perhaps so, but who wants a revolution based on ignorance?

Intelligent analysis is essential, but maybe Kahn was right: Knowledge can debilitate. You have been trained to find holes in the arguments of others, but if all arguments prove defective, what's left? We all celebrate healthy skepticism, but there's such a thing as unhealthy skepticism. It's important that we respect the beliefs and ideals of others and nourish our own—even as we subject them to rigorous analysis. The alternative is a corrosive cynicism that feeds off the ideals of others.

A half-century ago, the psychoanalyst Erik Erikson wrote that acquiring a sense of identity is the primary task of adolescence. And by a sense of identity, he meant not just the objective description of one's roles but rather the capacity to maintain a strong sense of self through the changes and challenges that life presents. This, in turn, requires enduring confidence and self-esteem. I am mindful of what I told you 4 years ago at orientation—that Swarthmore's environment and your own high standards will place a lot of pressure on your self-esteem. You have received a lot of evaluation—from your professors, your peers, yourselves—and, sometimes, these judgments begin to define you.

During the past week, a lot of judgments have been flying around: honors, Phi Beta Kappa, and others. These distinctions feel slightly unsettling in this community and

remind us that what makes the intensity of Swarthmore tolerable is the College's relative lack of competitiveness. But the judgments are there and, sadly, so is our tendency to internalize the negative and reject the positive.

It is very distressing to me that some leave Swarthmore feeling less able than when they entered—feeling "not good enough." One antidote to this is what I call Gross' Law of Personal Assessment: "Whenever there is a discrepancy between the way you value yourself and the way others value you, always go with the higher."

When I first spoke to you 4 years ago, I felt confident that Swarthmore would offer you plenty of challenges, and I saw my job then as offering what support I could. I remain confident today that the world out there will continue to offer more than enough challenges: careers, dissertations, relationships, children, public service. So please stand, and recite the mantra I taught you at orientation: "No matter what you say or do to me, I am still a worthwhile person."

*"No matter what you say or do to me, I am still a worthwhile person."*

Now, let me tell you some things you are going to hear during the next few years. Please respond with the mantra.

"We were going to hire you, but then, we looked at your Facebook site."

*"No matter what you say or do to me, I am still a worthwhile person."*

"Do you really have to move all the way to Seattle?"

*"No matter what you say or do to me, I am still a worthwhile person."*

"I see your friends are getting married. And you?"

*"No matter what you say or do to me, I am still a worthwhile person."*

"You have how many credit cards?"

*"No matter what you say or do to me, I am still a worthwhile person."*

"Wow, a documentary film about transgendered adolescents in Indonesia—how interesting! Now, could I have two double lattes to go?"

*"No matter what you say or do to me, I am still a worthwhile person."*

"Swarthmore— isn't that a girl's school in upstate New York?"

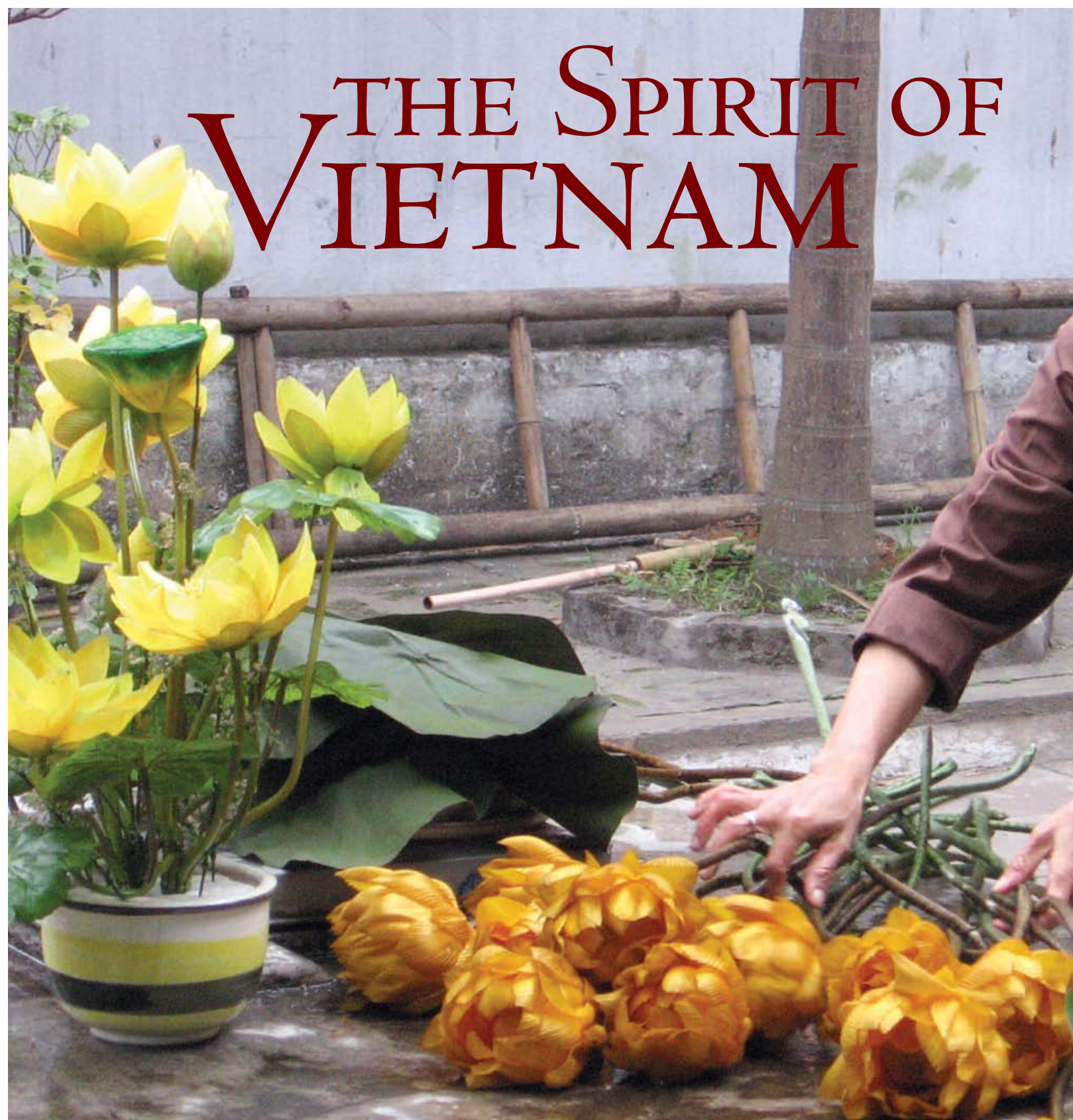
*Applause. ♪*

what we are doing is intrinsically pleasurable or meaningful. What I wish for you is an opportunity to merge the two.

Regarding interpersonal space, the question is about what we owe to ourselves, what we owe to others, and how to bridge the gap. If we do not nurture ourselves—physically, emotionally, spiritually—we risk burning out and being of no use to others. Yet, if all we are concerned with is ourselves, then of what use are we to others? And if all we care about are others, how do we maintain enough energy and commitment to actually be helpful to them?

The third question is how to balance security and risk. People are used to thinking of these in terms of crafting an investment policy, but sometimes it's worth taking other sorts of risks in your career and relationships. The Quakers say that if you wait on the Light, the way will open. What this

# THE SPIRIT OF VIETNAM



In January, 35 travelers with the Swarthmore Alumni College Abroad went on a 13-day tour of Vietnam that included stops in Ho Chi Minh City, Hoi An and My Son (both near Danang), Hue, and Hanoi. All were deeply impressed by the energy and spirit of the Vietnamese people—and by the sheer beauty of the country.

The group, led by Associate Pro-

fessor of Religion Steven Hopkins, explored Vietnam's religious, cultural, and historical legacy. Hopkins (*right, center, with his wife, Adrienne*) spoke with a priest at the Cao Dai "holy see" in Tay Ninh, west of Ho Chi Minh City. It was among more than a dozen religious and cultural sites that Swarthmore travelers visited, including Hindu ruins, a Catholic cathedral,

Buddhist pagodas, and Confucian shrines.

In Hanoi, near a Buddhist shrine, a woman arranged lotus flowers (*above*). "There's an artfulness to living here that creates beauty in everyday things," Judy Fetterley '60 said.

"This is clearly a country on the move," said Carol Shapley Etter '79, who joined the trip because she had

grown up "at the tail end of the Vietnam War" and suspected that there "was something more than what we'd been told" about Vietnam.

"Most Americans want to push Vietnam out of their minds, to dismiss it as just another communist country like China," Dorothy Wynne Marschak '51 said. "We totally misunderstand Vietnam, and it's a pity."





## HOW TO CROSS THE STREET IN HO CHI MINH CITY AND OTHER TALES FROM THE ALUMNI COLLEGE ABROAD

*Text and photographs by Jeffrey Lott*

**Y**ou must understand that the traffic never stops, even at intersections with traffic lights. And there are very few such intersections in this city of 6 million people and 4 million motorbikes. The khaki-uniformed policeman standing on the sidewalk seems to have no function beyond placidly watching the honking hordes buzz by. His white baton—police in Vietnam are largely unarmed—hangs on his belt, more a symbol of office than a tool of the trade. He has a whistle too, but who could hear a whistle in this din? No single human could direct this traffic.

You want to get to the other side of Le Duan Street. Were you to wait for a lull, you would be standing here tomorrow—or a week from tomorrow. Yet, if you don't cross the street, you will be forever confined to the single block where you stepped off your tour bus. So you watch for a tiny opening in the tide—and a lull in your fear—and step resolutely off the curb.

Before you came to Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon), an earlier visitor advised you to cross at a steady pace, neither stopping nor running, allowing the river of two-wheelers—some of which carry families of four or a driver and three live pigs (I'm not kidding)—to rush around you. The idea seems preposterous, but, walking straight and stealing only furtive glances at the onrush, you wade into the current. Miraculously, it flows around you—as if you are a permanent obstacle, a rock or an island, that has always been anchored in the flow—except that you're a moving island in a swift current.

Clearly, there's a Zen in this. The intelligent, beeping river senses your speed and trajectory. It permits you to cross only because you've given yourself up to it: You've absorbed the *chi* of the street. And, as you step up on the opposite sidewalk, knees a little rubbery, you know in some place inside you that the street has loved you.



## HOW UNCLE HO BECAME EVERYONE'S ANCESTOR

As we stood in line to see Ho Chi Minh's mummified body on our last morning in Hanoi, Ann Imlah Schneider '55 told us that she had previously visited both Lenin's and Mao's tombs. So, seeing Uncle Ho in repose would complete a macabre life list of dead communist leaders—"the three Red stiffs," someone jokes, "your trifecta."

Our Vietnamese guide has told us that Ho Chi Minh asked that his ashes be scattered in the three regions of his homeland after unification was achieved. But he didn't live to see that first Unification Day, and his body was preserved in a Soviet-style mausoleum, where grim guards herd a steady stream of Vietnamese pilgrims and foreign tourists past the bearded, saffron-skinned corpse. They won't let you stop to gaze, so your memory of him is strange and fleeting, like a sight glimpsed over your shoulder on the highway. Was it real? you wonder. But it takes only a glimpse to know one thing for certain: Ho Chi Minh is dead.

Or maybe not. Since his body failed him in 1969, the architect of independent Vietnam has become even more of a national hero. In a society that venerates its ancestors, the father of the country has become an ancestor of all—kindly Uncle Ho, a greater force in death than in life. Although he never witnessed the nation's final victory over the Americans (some said he died of a broken heart after the failure of the Tet Offensive), Ho Chi Minh—the idea of him, the legend—is now crucial to the spirit of Vietnam.

His image is everywhere—on calendars, clocks, T-shirts, billboards, and every denomination of coin and bill. His portrait hangs in hotels, restaurants, shops, post offices, and religious shrines. Signs exhort, "Remember Ho Chi Minh Forever and a Day."

At once secular and spiritual, Ho Chi Minh has become the newest addition to the rich pantheon of Vietnamese history and culture.





The owner of a restaurant in Tay Ninh (top left), who fought for the communists in both Vietnam and Cambodia, sports her medals—and a new Swarthmore College lanyard. “The friendliness of the people is quite amazing, considering their historical experience with Americans,” Jeremiah Gelles ’63 said.

In the former Saigon, Colonel Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken

fame (bottom far left) smiles down on a busy street from the window of the city’s largest department store. It made one wonder, do the Vietnamese, who see images of Uncle Ho every day, recognize something familiar in the Kentucky colonel?

Monuments and museums dedicated to what the Vietnamese call “the American War” are seen in every city and town, but one of the largest

is in Cu Chi, northwest of Ho Chi Minh City. There, guerillas hid by day in 75 miles of underground tunnels and rooms that included hospitals, factories, and schools.

A former Viet Cong soldier (center far left) who lost his right arm in the war led a tour that included American cluster bombs, a 1960s propaganda film, and a chance to clamber through some of the creepy tunnels.

Other than a group of Vietnamese army cadets (above)—who were also touring Cu Chi—and armed soldiers in dress uniforms at Ho Chi Minh’s tomb, very few military personnel were seen during the Alumni College tour of Vietnam. John Etter ’79 said he was expecting more of a Soviet-style state, “with a police and military presence everywhere—but that’s not the case.”



Vietnam at peace is a place of beauty, enterprise, and spirit.

The Swarthmore travelers were impressed by the generosity shown toward Americans. One Vietnamese scholar told us: "We don't blame the people of America for the war. It was your government that did it. The war was something we went through together, something we shared. Now, we are friends." (There was, however, great concern about the restless spirits of American soldiers who had died

in battle. Unlike the spirits of their own dead, which they continue to venerate and have largely put to rest, the Vietnamese don't quite know what to do about American ghosts, who are said to still tug at the feet of village farmers.)

City streets teem with food stalls, stores, and other enterprises. "Everyone is doing something," Roy Dickinson '50 said. "There are almost no beggars, the markets are thriving, and there doesn't seem to be any overall

regimentation." In Hue (*top*), a barber takes a break at his sidewalk shop.

In Hanoi, there is almost no evidence of the destruction caused by American bombs. The city of lakes is bustling with automobiles, government offices, factories, and trade. Among the few tranquil places are the Van Ho Pagoda on West Lake (*near right*) and the historic Kim Lien Pagoda (*above*), where we ate a delicious vegetarian lunch (*bottom far right*) cooked by Buddhist nuns.

Thousands of Vietnamese Americans travel to their ancestral homeland each year. On a beach at Thuan An, we met a young man (*top far right*) who asked: "Where are you from? I'm from Iowa." He was with a young woman he had met on holiday.

"This is a country on a rising wave," John Etter said. "It's trying to find a path from the Third World to the Second World while dealing openly with the issues involved in doing that."



## PEACE, INDEPENDENCE, AND THE PROMISE OF PROSPERITY

Vietnam's Declaration of Independence, delivered as a speech by Ho Chi Minh on Sept. 9, 1945, begins:

*My countrymen,  
"All men are created equal. They are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." This immortal statement was made in the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America in 1776. In a broader sense, this means: All the nations on the earth are equal from birth; all the nations have the right to live, to be happy and free.*

Having suffered millions of war casualties, Vietnam is basking in peace. Having fought for decades against foreign domination, its people are proudly independent. And, having embraced economic reforms in the late 1980s that ended collective agriculture and opened the door to private enterprise, they are enthusiastically—almost giddily—free to make money.

Despite these improved conditions, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam remains a one-party state, and all power flows from Hanoi. Although our well-educated and articulate guides—all government employees—felt free to criticize past government actions, they have no way to challenge the regime politically. They, like many Vietnamese, face the decision of whether to join the Communist Party—a sure path to upward mobility, but one that has the downside of increased Party scrutiny and control.

Bill Van Stone '51 noted that Party influence seemed to be "in the political realm and not much in the economy." His son, David Van Stone '88, was impressed by the energy of the Vietnamese people: "There's an excitement about the future, but it's not clear what that future will be. They are on a fast train."

But David Peterson '61 worried that "jealousies and class issues may develop as wealth increases," hoping that the government "might be able to prevent some of those inequalities from occurring."

A whole new world has opened up for Vietnam. Peace, independence, and the promise of prosperity are their newfound freedoms—the kind of freedoms that are defined by the absence of evils rather than the presence of truly democratic forms of government. For most Vietnamese, half of whom were born after 1975, those sorts of freedoms seem superfluous. They have business to attend to first.

"This may be the beginning of a golden age for Vietnam, when it will decide its own future," Jeffrey Scheuer '75 said. "They're starting from a point where there isn't a lot of stratification in society—ethnically, religiously, and economically. As an American, I envy the unity here."

Paul Armington '62 viewed Vietnam as "a living laboratory for how you can lead social and economic change in the Third World." Because of forced isolation after the "American War—the U.S. trade embargo was lifted in 1993 and normal diplomatic ties began in 1995—Vietnam learned to develop its economy without much help or interference from the West. Armington saw this as a plus: "Their backs were to the wall and they had to do it on their own. They made mistakes and learned from those mistakes. Other Third World countries have a lot to learn from Vietnam."



## GOING TO GOD: YANG AND YIN MEET THE PRACTICAL, WHATEVER-WORKS PERSONALITY OF VIETNAM

North and South Vietnam no longer exist. Since 1975, there has been but one Vietnam. Yet dichotomies remain: urban and rural, traditional and modern, communist and capitalist.

Steven Hopkins, citing Neil Jamieson and the Vietnamese scholar Thien Do, tried to put the tensions in Vietnamese society and religion in a cultural context during his first lecture to members of the Alumni College Abroad. “Everywhere in Vietnam, there are patterned oscillations around points of balance,” he said. “These are the *yang* and *yin* of Vietnam—the neo-Confucian system of forces that are, taken at once, the unity, the whole.”

According to Hopkins, core *yang* values can be identified more strongly in northern and central Vietnam: *ly* (conformity to the “natural order,” the Confucian *tao*); *hieu* (moral debt to ancestors); and *nghia* (a combination of duty and righteousness, the Hindu *dharma*). In the southern part of the country, there is more *yin*: *dieu* (reasonability and relativity, counterbalancing *ly*); *tin* (feelings of love, vulnerability, and spontaneity); and *nhan* (compassion and charity, the human face of *nghia*). Altogether, there are three strands of ancient Vietnamese religion—Taoist, Confucian, and Buddhist—comprising what is known as the *Tam Giao*.

Religious expression, which is tolerated by the government as long as it eschews politics, is ubiquitous, even in the North. It seems nonexclusive. Buddhists dominate, but they borrow freely from other traditions and practices, as does everyone else: A little *yang*, a little *yin*, and you get a home-grown spirituality that fits Vietnam’s practical, whatever-works personality.

For example, the indigenous Cao Dai movement sprang up in the 1920s as a part-political, part-spiritual syncretic combination of anticolonialism, Taoist self-cultivation, Buddhist millennialism, and Confucian social order. Throw in some Catholic elements—its “holy see” in Tay Ninh is a white Romanesque basilica with an astonishing Disney-meets-the-Vatican interior—and you think you have touched much of the

territory of religion in Vietnam. Except that you haven’t.

At one point, Hopkins cited the work of Vietnam historian Shawn McHale ’82, who argues for the past and continuing importance of Buddhist traditions in the history of Vietnam. There are robust traditions of both Zen and Pure Land Buddhism; brightly painted spirit houses gracing countless courtyards, farmyards, and street corners; 1,000-year-old pagodas where monks chant, gongs vibrate, and joss sticks perfume the air; and rooftop statues of popular female-Buddha goddesses such as Phat ba (Quan Am) and Thap Ba, who began life in Vietnam 1,500 years ago as the Hindu goddess Parvati, the wife of Shiva. Include those who worship nature spirits, tutelary spirits, Taoist court deities, Hindu deities, or the Dark Maiden of the Ninth Heaven, and you have the spirit of Vietnam: secular and sacred, natural and supernatural—the *Tam Giao*. ☞



Sunlight streams through incense-filled air in the Buddhist temple at Thien Mu Pagoda (above), a few miles from Hue. Just a few yards from this peaceful scene is the carefully preserved blue Austin car that Thich Quang Duc, a monk who lived at the pagoda, drove to Saigon in June 1963 to commit self-immolation in protest of the U.S.-backed government’s persecution of Buddhists.

The diversity of religious expres-

## MORE ON THE WEB

Following 9 days in Vietnam, about half of the Swarthmore travellers continued to Cambodia, visiting Angkor Wat and Phnom Penh. Jeffrey Lott's account of the Cambodia excursion—plus a more extensive blog with additional photographs from Vietnam—can be found on the Web at [www.swarthmore.edu/alumni/vietnam](http://www.swarthmore.edu/alumni/vietnam).

sion in Vietnam finds its zenith at the Cao Dai Holy See in Tay Ninh (*above left*), where a lidless eye gazes from a giant orb on the altar and the holiest saints include Chinese nationalist Sun Yat Sen and French author Victor Hugo. Vietnam "assails the senses," said Anne Saisselin '79, whose great-great-grandfather was a French official in Hanoi. "It's a wonderment—so *passionant*. You see, hear, taste, and smell different things."

"Buddhism, Catholicism, Cao Dai, Taoism, ancestor worship—all blend together in a society that celebrates Tet [the lunar new year] with enthusiasm that rivals our celebration of Christmas," Frances Brokaw '76 said. "Spirit houses welcome good spirits and keep ghosts out of peoples' homes (*bottom left*); a 'kitchen god' reports on the doings of the family to the Jade Emperor in heaven; and their shrines are almost as likely to have tall

statues of Mary, Jesus, the Buddha, St. Joseph, or Quan Am—the female Buddha."

In Ho Chi Minh City, devotional chapels in the French-built Catholic cathedral feature neon-enhanced statues of saints (*top left*).

At My Son, a United Nations World Heritage Site west of Danang, the former center of the Champa civilization lies in a secluded mountain setting (*center far left*). The Hindu

Cham people dominated central Vietnam from the 4th to the 12th centuries, when they were conquered by the Viets, who remain the dominant ethnic group. Many artifacts from My Son, which was uncovered by French archeologists in 1898 and twice bombed by American planes during the Vietnam War, are found at the Cham Museum in Danang. A relief of the goddess Uma/Parvati (*top far left*) dates from the 10th century.

# Streetwise

## MARSHALL CURRY '92 MOVES FROM FLEDGLING FILMMAKER TO ACADEMY AWARD NOMINEE.

By Lewis Rice      Photograph by Eleftherios Kostans

It's just like old times for Marshall Curry. He's driving on the streets of downtown Newark, N.J., calling a "mole" from the campaign of mayoral candidate Cory Booker to get the latest news on the upcoming election. He learns that Sharpe James, the city's longtime mayor, will be listed in the first position on a ballot for an election he may or may not run in. Curry closes his cell phone and talks of the excitement building around the possible rematch, which could show whether the city has changed since Booker lost to James in a bruising battle 4 years ago.

Certainly, much has changed for Curry since he roamed these streets as a fledgling filmmaker who captured the intrigue and chicanery of the last campaign. He garnered an Academy Award nomination for *Street Fight*, the documentary he directed, produced, photographed, wrote, and edited. The film chronicles a political race between two African American men of different generations and styles, in which issues of race and class come to the fore and old-style machine politics help propel James to victory.

Curry began the project after his brother, who raises money for Democratic candidates, told him about Booker, a charismatic Stanford and Yale Law graduate in his 30s whom some have compared with Barack Obama—the popular young African American senator from Illinois. He met Booker and saw the potential of a film about the match-up with James.

Curry, however, wasn't the most obvious person to make such a film. After college, he taught, worked in public radio, and later wrote scripts and learned how to structure and edit stories. But he couldn't imagine becoming a professional filmmaker.

"It always just seemed like a dream," he says. "It was like being a rock star or something. It just wasn't something you do."

Armed with a Sony PD-150 camera and usually alone, Curry decided to make the dream a reality after Booker agreed to give him complete access to his campaign. James, on the other hand, suspected Curry of being a Booker booster and directed city police to stop him from filming the mayor's public events. "When I was shut out by Sharpe, I thought that ruined the movie," Curry says. Instead, while editing 200 hours of footage, Curry realized that he had unwittingly become a part of the story—his treatment an illustration of the bare-knuckle mayoral campaign.

Curry wasn't the only target. The film depicts city workers threatening code violations against businesses that sport Booker signs. In addition, it zeroes in on James campaign tactics to portray Booker as a carpetbagger (he was raised in a New Jersey suburb); a Republican (Booker, like James, ran as a Democrat in the nonpartisan election); and even not authentically black.

With a cut of the movie he edited on a Macintosh computer, Curry pitched the film to PBS, which aired it and provided money to complete the final version. A brief run at Landmark Theatres made the film eligible for Academy Award consideration, although he says, "It seemed like a crazy waste of time and effort to try to qualify for a

movie I made in my apartment." He jokes that the paparazzi changed their film when he and his wife walked the red carpet outside the awards ceremony. He also faced his toughest challenge yet—going up against the blockbuster hit movie *March of the Penguins* for best documentary: "Someone said to me, 'You think Sharpe James was tough; just wait until you take on the penguins.'"

The birds won the Oscar, but Curry's nomination gained a wider release for *Street Fight*, which attracted uniformly positive reviews. Some have complained, however, that the film presents a one-sided view of the campaign.

Curry counters that it reflects what he saw and experienced while he was in Newark. "People who are upset with the portrayal of Sharpe James should be upset with Sharpe James and not the film," he says. "My goal was to make it accurate more than to make it balanced." Curry says he went into the project with admiration for the legendary local politician; in the film, he credits James for bringing economic development to Newark. Likewise, he included scenes that Booker didn't care for. But in the aftermath, Curry now says, "I like Cory and don't like Sharpe James."

For the mayor, the feeling seems mutual. According to Curry, James released a letter the day after *Street Fight* aired on PBS last year, saying the film was comparable with one about the Holocaust made by Adolf Hitler. Because of his history with the mayor, Curry expected less than red-carpet treatment in Newark. He hadn't returned to the city since he completed the film. When I picked him up in his Brooklyn apartment for the trip to revisit Newark in late March, his wife, Elizabeth Martin, told him to be careful and make sure that the DVD package of *Street Fight* couldn't be seen in the car. Curry reveals that he moved the crib of their baby, Jane, away from the window of their ground-floor apartment in light of the harassment from the James camp. At one point in the film, a police officer demands Curry's identification and notes his home address.

Yet, on the streets of Newark, the only repercussion from the film comes in the form of a hug, when Curry greets the counsel from the previous Booker campaign in a downtown diner. We stop outside Brick Towers, the public housing complex that Booker—who works as an attorney in Newark—calls home in solidarity with the low-





## Swarthmore and Oscar



Marshall Curry (*left*) isn't the only Swarthmorean to enjoy Academy Award recognition in recent years.

- **Gerald Cotts '65** won a 2005 technical Oscar for his design of the Satellight-X, a portable lighting system that provides color-balanced light for location cinematography. Cotts entered the industry after earning an M.F.A. from the NYU Film School; he has worked as a cameraman, director, and—often when shooting TV commercials—both.
- **David Linde '82**, former co-president of Focus Features, saw his company nab 16 Oscar nominations and three awards for *Brokeback Mountain*, *Pride & Prejudice*, and *The Constant Gardener*. Focus Features had previously been honored by nominations or Oscars for such films as *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. (In March, Linde left the company to join Focus's parent company, Universal Pictures.) **Jerry Melichar '00** has been working in international distribution for Focus Features since the company's founding in 2002 by Linde and James Schmaus.

- In 2001, *Seraglio* by **Gail Lerner '92** and her husband, director Colin Campbell, was nominated as Best Live Action Short. Lerner has written and produced for many sitcoms, including the Emmy-nominated *Will and Grace*.

- **Erik Rehl '94** served as art director for *Six Shooter*, the 2004 Oscar winner in the Best Live Action Short category. Rehl, who majored in theater at Swarthmore, later studied film production design in Finland and received a master's degree in scenography from Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design. He has worked widely in theater, TV, and film.

While editing 200 hours of footage, Curry realized that he had unwittingly become a part of the story—his treatment an illustration of the bare-knuckle Newark, N.J., mayoral campaign.

income residents of the city. Nearby is Booker's former campaign headquarters, a section of a plastic bag factory whose machines sometimes blasted while Curry was filming. He also points to the spot on a sidewalk where, when he was filming outside a debate, a police officer broke the microphone off his camera.

Despite such travails—and the election result—Curry still retains his ideals about politics. "I don't think the movie's hopeless at all," he says. "Democracy's not going to run itself. The good guy's not always going to win. It requires vigilance. It requires getting into fights without being afraid of getting mud thrown at you."

For his next project, Curry is considering a documentary about a multiracial adopted family

or a person he knows who is facing a trial for eco-terrorism. There will be no *Street Fight* sequel, on film or in Newark. A few days after we revisited some locations from the film, James announced that he wouldn't run for a sixth term as Newark's mayor.

Curry wasn't planning extensive coverage of the next mayoral race other than adding some bonus footage for the *Street Fight* DVD. But on the day James pulled out of the race, Curry returned to Newark with his camera, back to the fight. ☞

*Lewis Rice is a freelance writer based in Arlington, Mass. For more information on Street Fight, visit [www.marshallcurry.com](http://www.marshallcurry.com).*

# Jumping in the Deep End

IT'S NOT YET CLEAR HOW BEST TO TEACH WRITING AT SWARTHMORE.

By Elizabeth Redden '05



*Few modernist authors espouse the possibilities of youth so fervently as Rainer Maria Rilke. Be patient, he writes in his letters—do not seek answers, but live the questions: “Resolve to be always beginning—to be a beginner!”<sup>1</sup> But in *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, Rilke delves into the anxiety that lurks beneath possibility, the pressure that inhibits wayward exploration: “There are no classes in life for beginners; it is always the most difficult that is asked of one right away.”<sup>2</sup> How can we reconcile Rilke’s exaltation of exploration with his acknowledgment that external pressures demand for young subjects to confront immediately that which is most difficult? (NEED THESIS!)*

Had this been an actual Swarthmore paper, I might have identified 10 potential problems with this introductory paragraph, one of which would be, yes, the lack of a thesis. My peers, my professor, my internal editor would tell me how to do better, and I’d return to my computer, turning what I said into what I should have said, or closer to it. Then, and only then, would I stand a fighting chance of figuring out what I know—about Rilke, about beginnings, about that which is most difficult.

Writing is inseparable from the intellectual experience. By dancing with the unknown on paper, students learn the steps. “It’s not the simple transference of what I know into someone else’s mind,” says Rebekah Rosenfeld ’07. “The process of making sure that your own communication is clear to others involves your making it clear to yourself.”

But, as for Rilke’s Malte, expectations for beginning college writers are high, and the pool deep enough for some to sink where others can swim.

A freshman writer is a novice acting as

expert, says Nancy Sommers, director of the Harvard Study of Undergraduate Writing, a longitudinal effort begun in 1995 to determine how students perceive the academic writing experience. “One could imagine another pedagogical approach that recognizes freshmen as beginners and asks them to write a series of exercises that are more technically suitable to their skills—to construct paragraphs or two-page reports, instead of being asked to write 10-page arguments, or even not to write at all,” Sommers and co-author Laura Saltz write in “The Novice as Expert,” which appeared in the September 2004 issue of *College Composition and Communication Online*.

However, the authors argue that by throwing first-year students into the deep end, they’ll learn to stay afloat: “Even if asking freshmen to do the work of experts invites imitative rather than independent behavior, it is the means, paradoxically, through which they learn to use writing tools of their own and grow passionate about their work.” Those students who enter college thinking of themselves as novices, open to

<sup>1</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, *Rilke on Love and Other Difficulties*, Trans. John J.L. Mood (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993), p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge: A Novel*, Trans. M.D. Herter Norton (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992), p. 80.



learning the strokes of academic writing, tend to show the most rapid improvement, Sommers says.

But doesn't this pool need some life-guards? What kinds of institutional support for writing would best help freshmen learn to swim? If writing is a tool that allows students to engage more deeply in intellectual discourse—and, more basically, serves as a main medium for academic debate—how can a college without a freshman composition or even an English literature course requirement best ensure that students master its practice?

"There are lots of ways to learn how to write in college, and a required writing course isn't the only way," Sommers says. "What is important is to have plenty of practice and instruction throughout 4 years—lots of feedback and patient attention to the words on the page."

At Swarthmore, what's most important about the pool analogy is that people prefer to swim in the sun, not the shade, so that they can constantly critique their own reflections. The College is known for constantly evaluating its own policies and pedagogy—thoughtfully, even exhaustively.

In *U.S. News & World Report's* 2006 college edition, peer institutions recognized Swarthmore for making writing instruction a priority. But despite the College's stellar reputation for teaching writing across the disciplines, Swarthmore students and faculty still feel the school can do better. A significant curricular overhaul 2 years ago was a major step in an ongoing review of its commitment to undergraduate writing instruction—and the debate isn't over.

Swarthmore replaced the tired "primary distribution course" (PDC) format, established in the 1980s, with a system of freshman seminars and writing-intensive courses, or "Ws," as they're known. Beginning with the Class of 2008, students must complete at least three W courses in two of the three divisions (natural sciences and mathematics, social sciences, and humanities).

Ws must require multiple writing assignments totaling at least 20 pages of analytic writing per semester, says Sarah Willie, associate provost and associate professor of sociology. They also must fulfill certain stipulations: a focus on expository writing; explicit attention to helping students develop analytical prose appropriate to the discipline; explicit attention to the mechanics of writing; and a focus on a student's ability to identify and define a thesis, develop an argument, present documentation, and analyze evidence.

"I don't think it's accidental that Ws

happened in tandem with a movement toward a shared learning experience for first-years," Willie says. "People were thinking about what will create cohesion and coherence in the first-year experience and also provide a vehicle for writing." Many, but certainly not all, first-year seminars are writing intensive, Willie says; the small class size fosters an opportunity for greater writing instruction.

Another advantage of the switch away from the PDC, which essentially required that faculty teach writing within the scope of introductory courses, is that departments



SOZICK WEISTER/MEDIA BAKERY

may now choose what level course should be designated as a W. In physics, for instance, Associate Professor Carl Grossman says the advanced laboratory course, taken by upperclassmen, serves as the department's lone W offering. Students write four 10-page laboratory reports in components, incorporating thorough revisions throughout the process. In contrast, the introductory Physics 006 course, which, as a PDC, required students to write humanities-style papers, has morphed into a more mathematically oriented class, Grossman says.

The flexibility of the Ws also has potential pitfalls. There are some concerns that not enough W courses are available, particularly in departments that face enrollment pressures, such as economics and political science, and at the introductory level for the natural sciences, says Peter Schmidt, professor of English literature and department chair. Schmidt served as chair of the Writing Program Review Committee, which met throughout the year to evaluate the Writing Associates Program, the College's peer feedback initiative. The committee finished its work this spring.

Although the committee didn't formally evaluate the relatively new Ws, Schmidt says that student feedback indicates some frustration regarding the shortage in W courses, the variation in what counts as a W across the disciplines, and the fact that some writing-intensive courses aren't designated as Ws.

"There's lots of good will toward improving how well we teach writing, but we don't yet know what the best formats for doing this will be," Schmidt says.

A fundamental point to understand about Swarthmore's writing program is that it's not easily defined. The authority for curricular offerings rests with the faculty and administration, but much of the day-to-day work falls to the Writing Associates (WA)

*If writing allows  
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master its practice?*

Program, a group of about 70 peer reviewers whose role at Swarthmore is comfortably institutionalized. Most WAs are assigned to specific courses, but the program also offers drop-in help at the Writing Center and, on special request, writing associate mentors (WAMs) who enter into semester-long partnerships with individual students.

The WA program was started in the 1980s under the guidance of Thomas Blackburn, Centennial Professor Emeritus of English Literature. Until then, he says, the College hadn't done much in the way of overt writing instruction beyond offering English 1A, a composition class formed in the 1960s as part of an effort to provide writing support to a student body with a more diverse range of preparation for college.

There had also been an advanced course on exposition at one time, Blackburn says, plus a 1960s-era requirement that civil and mechanical engineering students take a class on speaking and writing, "with the prejudicial assumption that engineers aren't good at that," Blackburn says. Electrical engineers were exempt, "Again, on the prejudicial assumption they were smarter than the others."

In contrast, the Writing Associates Pro-

gram, developed to support the new PDCs, immediately targeted a wide cross-section of the student body. WAs were paired with courses and asked to review the work of every student in the class. Syllabi would include two separate due dates for a paper: one for the "WA copy" and the other for the final draft to the professor. The unique structure of the program, which today serves about 20 to 25 courses per semester, may be one reason why Swarthmore's Writing Associates Program has largely avoided a remedial stigma among students. It would be difficult to get through Swarthmore without having to hand over a WA copy—no matter how strong or weak a student's skills.

"For the size of Swarthmore, the WA Program is quite large and really intertwined in the culture of the school," says Jill Gladstein, assistant professor of English literature and director of the program since 2001. Students clamor for the paid WA positions, and—keeping up the program's tradition of institutionalized acronyms—spend a semester training as "WAITs" (WAs in training) before they drop their "IT." Potential WAs must be nominated, make it through an increasingly selective application process (the number of applicants is the highest it has been in 5 years), and take a training course for credit.

Students turn to WAs for last-minute help and long-term partnerships. Nearly 450 students sought advice at the Writing Center in 2004–2005, according to WA statistics, and 1,273 total papers were "WAed" at the center (English, political science, and economics papers were among the most commonly reviewed). Although most students who use the center are freshmen and sophomores, the numbers don't drop dramatically for upperclassmen: in 2004, 33 percent of users were freshmen, 29 percent sophomores, 18 percent juniors, and 19 percent seniors. In addition, some alumni sent graduate school applications or other materials to be reviewed.

WAs aren't meant to be proofreaders, and although some students will invariably turn to them, in part, for that purpose, WAs are trained to address the deeper questions surrounding structure, argument, and organization. Maceray Sesay '07 rarely shows her WAM a draft. Instead, she and Laura Twichell '06 talk the assignments out, giving Sesay a chance to organize her thoughts and draw the connections she'll later put to paper.

Allison Balter '06, special programs coordinator for the WAs, says Swarthmore's Writing Associates Program stands out for the respect it garners from students and faculty as well as for its scope. The program recently expanded to serve the community, and some WAs use their talents to work with Upward Bound students or do grant writing for area nonprofits.

Schmidt says his committee likely will not recommend any substantial changes to the Writing Associates Program. The number of students who have contact with WAs has more than doubled in the last decade, Schmidt says, and Gladstein has revamped the curriculum for the WA training course since taking over in 2001. But although the program's scope has expanded, the number of WAs needed has actually decreased slightly, Schmidt says, with the shift toward smaller W courses leaving faculty freer to focus on writing instruction themselves.

Yet, at least one member of the Writing Program Review Committee, Professor of Economics Stephen Golub, questions whether the appropriate faculty resources are available to support the smaller and more intensive Ws. The W classes are often half the size of the vintage PDCs, which generally had a 25-student enrollment cap.

Not a single tenure-track professor is charged with the responsibility of teaching academic writing, Golub points out, and no new faculty resources were provided with the switch to the W courses. "The reform is

*Students expressed a very Quakerly desire that professors talk about their own writing struggles—an acknowledgment that "we are just simply younger scholars in the field."*

somewhat misguided in that sense. You can't just stipulate a requirement without saying how you will meet it." Without additional faculty resources, Golub says he fears much of the burden for writing instruction could fall to student WAs rather than to professors.

The College's writing reforms would perhaps best be described as being in draft form, open for revisions. A formal review of the W courses won't commence until 2007–2008, under the guidance of a different committee than the one that has overseen the WAs review, Schmidt says. Many faculty members aren't sure what to expect.

"What I'm in suspense about is, do students feel that the W classes deliver a differential or distinctive outcome? I really don't know. I have not gotten any sense as to what the student buzz is on that, whether they feel that a W course reliably delivers a kind of writing instruction," says Associate Professor of History Tim Burke, who served on the Committee on Educational Policy when the College began its recent curricular overhaul.

When asked, students often give vague

answers. Many upperclassmen fulfilled their requirements under the old PDCs, and freshmen are still getting accustomed to Swarthmore's course load. However, a spring 2005 survey conducted by WAs indicates that students report, on average, 29 pages of writing in W courses versus 13.3 pages in other classes, says Matt Fiedler '06, the WA scheduling coordinator. The on-line survey, designed primarily to gauge why students think writing should be a part of the Swarthmore curriculum, yielded 448 complete responses, for a 33 percent participation rate. Respondents also reported 6.6 writing assignments per W course compared with 3 in other classes.

Swarthmore has resisted an institution-wide composition requirement—the Comp 101 equivalent. The school instead subscribes to the philosophy that writing instruction should be distributed across the disciplines and class years. Students gain discipline-specific writing instruction through the W courses and can turn to the elective English 001A, Insights Into Academic Writing, for a more structured study of the writing process. Students in 001A read articles on the role of writing in the college curriculum while developing their own academic writing skills.

But 001A, taught by Gladstein and a part-time visiting assistant professor, has been over-enrolled in recent years, Schmidt says. Enough students tried to register for the class last fall to fill four sections. Just two were offered. The Writing Program Review Committee is recommending that funds be made available to provide more sections of the course. Schmidt says the committee will also request additional funds to fulfill a faculty desire for more training on how best to teach writing.

Overall, Golub says, the current program works well because students are talented. However, he thinks some students who need additional help may be at risk of falling through the cracks.

"I still think we struggle. There are stu-

dents who show up in the senior year with pretty serious writing deficiencies, and you try to figure out, how did that happen?" Burke says.

There's a balance, he says, between ensuring that all students have access to the College's resources and padding the curriculum so it catches those few students who stubbornly refuse to find them.

There remains a strong will on the part of many faculty members and individual students to enhance writing instruction. This commitment is leading to innovations and discussions never before initiated.

Gladstein, with the help of a group of WAs, has begun a detailed error analysis of introductory biology lab reports and a qualitative study of the writing experiences of the students writing those reports. The work has energized the teaching of writing in the discipline, professors say.

"There is an evolution of all of us trying to understand how we write in science," says Assistant Professor of Biology Jose-Luis Machado. "We thought we knew."

In recent years, Assistant Professor of Biology Julie Hagelin says introductory biology students were presented with a series of formatting guidelines: "Do this, don't do that." The guidelines gave students the incorrect impression that science writing "was somehow fundamentally different from writing a cohesive argument or essay for another class," she says. Professors are now emphasizing the importance of argument, and, for the first time, have devoted a biology lab session to teaching writing.

Other faculty members are also highly engaged with the instruction of writing. An April student-faculty discussion on writing and feedback, closed to reporters, marked the first such dialogue in recent memory. Over Indian food, students and faculty members chatted about what feedback works and what doesn't. They discussed the dread of finding the words "see me" on a paper: "I swear to you, I never thought the words 'see me' would freak students out so

much," Assistant Professor of French Carina Yervasi said after the meeting. Students also expressed a very Quakerly desire that professors talk about their own writing struggles—an acknowledgment, one student says, that "we are just simply younger scholars in the field."

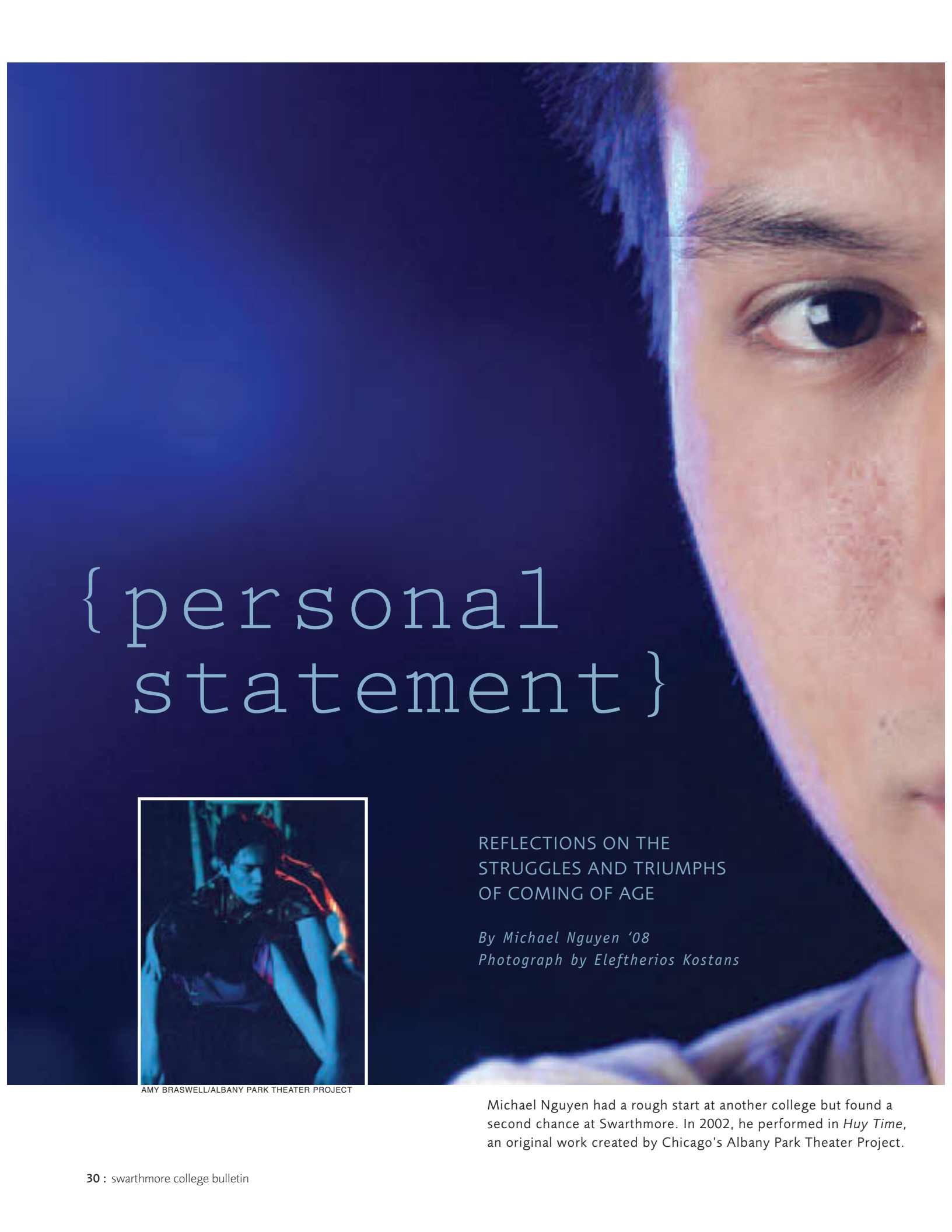
The stage seems to be set for a larger dialogue among the community's various scholars. As Associate Provost Willie says, Swarthmore's writing program consists of the student WAs, the institutional W requirement, and the dedication of individual faculty members to the cause. Although those pieces are not as coherent as on other

campuses, Gladstein says there is a real effort afoot to better integrate them.

But Willie says there likely will be resistance to any major change, particularly one involving the creation of a more centralized authority. "If our current model is working for students and faculty, terrific," she says. "If not, we need to figure out what will be more effective." ☞

*Since her graduation from Swarthmore, former writing associate Elizabeth Redden has been a reporter for the Delaware State News. She will enter Columbia University's graduate program in nonfiction writing in the fall.*





{ personal  
statement }



AMY BRASWELL/ALBANY PARK THEATER PROJECT


REFLECTIONS ON THE  
STRUGGLES AND TRIUMPHS  
OF COMING OF AGE

*By Michael Nguyen '08*

*Photograph by Eleftherios Kostans*

Michael Nguyen had a rough start at another college but found a second chance at Swarthmore. In 2002, he performed in *Huy Time*, an original work created by Chicago's Albany Park Theater Project.





**High School:** *Freshman year.* My algebra teacher expected students to go up to the board and work out problems every day. I made mistakes virtually every time I was up there, dropping the large, beige chalk that would shatter into tiny little pieces, which I would bend over to pick up. I felt mortified for the rest of the day. Whenever I had to talk about a problem out loud to the class, I could feel the muscles in my neck trembling. I felt like the volume of my voice was set at zero and could not go any higher. Marcus, a classmate, would often tell me that I had a “stupid voice.” He’s the same guy who enjoyed calling me a “fag.” My eyes often dampened, but I made fists to hold back the tears. Instead of excitement about all the cool subjects I could learn, I focused on daily survival without humiliation.

At home, I idolized the movie *Dennis the Menace* but realized that my family was nothing like that. Living with a violent father and brother, both chain smokers (my brother also smoked marijuana); a miserable mom; and a confused 9-year-old sister made a horrible day at school look pretty decent. My dad would accuse my mom of cheating on him, calling her obscene and insulting names that sounded even worse in Vietnamese than in English. The little time that she had after a busy workday at a factory, my mom spent cooking dinner. When my dad wasn’t satisfied, which was often, he would dump all the food into the trash. He insulted her intelligence, comparing her to a cow. Like Marcus at school, my brother hounded me. Except my brother was worse. He said the whole word—“faggot!” That hit me so much harder. My sister would ask me questions about why our family was this way. I could never tell her why. I didn’t know myself.

*Senior year.* Our humanities teacher asked us to name a person from any time that we’d like to meet and explain why. I chose

Jonathan Kozol and talked about how his book *Amazing Grace* opened me up to the complexities of poverty in the South Bronx and the United States as a whole. The depth of Kozol's work inspired me to commit my life to social activism. The day I talked about Kozol, I wore my gay pride necklace with beads of rainbow colors at school for the first time. That same day, I raised my hand when my trigonometry teacher asked the class for a volunteer to go up to the board and explain a word problem that most of the class had difficulty understanding. I wasn't afraid of dropping the chalk anymore.

At home, my dad and my brother continued with their intimidation, but I no longer let their ruthlessness wear me down. I began to see that my mom has a lot of strength to love me and believe in me despite the ugliness of her world. My sister was the first and only person in my family to know that I'm gay. She hugged me, saying, "That's cool," and asked me for a gay pride flag. I gave her one, and, ever since, she's been educating her

abuse, barely avoiding starvation, or hiding to evade deportation. It inspired me to be a creative, confident, shrewd, talented, thoughtful teenager as I saw company members probe deep into the complexities of abortion rights, read science journals to embody a character ill with schizophrenia, or think beyond the stereotypes about Muslims. It inspired me to celebrate my own vibrant, richly diverse, immigrant, working-class neighborhood because a long rehearsal day included breaks to eat Persian *koubideh* or Cuban *arroz con pollo*, we created music with instruments from India or Spain, or we took trips to see dancers from Uganda or water puppeteers from Vietnam.

By playing the title character in a piece called *Huy Time* during spring of my junior year, I came to appreciate my own culture as the cast sat in a quaint Vietnamese restaurant, enjoying a steaming bowl of *pho* (a traditional beef and noodle soup) and discussing the centuries of war and oppression that Vietnam has suffered under the French

immigrant families, including my own, who are politically oppressed. I became an activist by wanting to learn more about why the city of Chicago waited until there were condo developments with flawless green yards and polished doorknobs before adding a new structure to increase classroom space at the overcrowded neighborhood grammar school. I became an activist by working with APTP to craft powerful theater that revealed a condo owner's euphemistic statement that "the neighborhood will get better when the 'bad' people move out" and that voiced a story from Esther Deer—a 95-year-old Jewish woman who had lived in Albany Park for almost 60 years—about fighting for civil rights during the 1950s.

I shared a story about my mother with APTP. It was staged as a multidisciplinary performance piece called *Like My Mom*. The piece followed my mother's journey from the school where her arms were weighted down with books as punishment for "being so stupid," to the political chaos that made her a

{I searched for a school where I could grow not only as a scholar but also as an activist and artist who is a gay, first-generation, inner-city Vietnamese American.}

friends about respecting the gay/lesbian/transgender/bisexual/queer community. Besides my biological family, the Albany Park Theater Project (APTP) was also my family. This second family embraced me with hugs as I walked into the office after school, excited to know how my presentations at school went and circling around the piano to listen to a sonata I had learned. This family topped *Dennis the Menace*.

**APTP Impact:** In 4 years, I grew from being embarrassed about my identity, apathetic about school, and insensitive about my community to being proud of who I am, excited to learn, and eager to celebrate other cultures besides my own. This transformation came from the commitment and energy that I put into my work at APTP, an independent, not-for-profit, year-round, ongoing ensemble of teenagers who create original, professional theater out of real-life stories from Chicago's Albany Park neighborhood. APTP inspired me to be honest because fellow company members have the courage to share their stories about escaping the torments of sexual

and communist dictators. I found empathy for my own culture playing a Vietnamese refugee fleeing the shores of my homeland, risking my life on a small fishing boat in search of family and freedom. I became grateful for my ability to translate fluently between English and my native language as I taught cast members lines in Vietnamese. I discovered a new level of commitment when our performance—even in 100-degree heat—still stirred audiences to a standing ovation. I found compassion for other cultures when a black audience member shared that *Huy Time* moved her for the first time to think about the similarities between the plight of Vietnam refugees and her own ancestors' journey on ships from Africa to the New World.

I took on the role of a lead ethnographer during APTP's 3-year Going/Places project to investigate the neighborhood's history and its current spurts of gentrification. I ultimately expressed my opposition to these creeping neighborhood changes as I worked on APTP's show *Aqui Estoy (I Am Here)*, doing justice to the voices of low-income

refugee, to the beautiful but simple white *ao dai* (long dress) she wore for her wedding, to the green and orange bed sheets upon which she was brutally beaten with a vacuum-cleaner pipe by my father in front of an audience of family members who didn't bother to stop it, to the beautiful photographs of her in sheer and shimmering dresses. By sharing this story and being one of the artists who developed it for the stage, I came to understand my mom's resilience, and I felt empowered to change the world as she told me each morning to "do your best and learn because you are the one." As the singer and co-composer of "La's Lament" for the piece, I came to appreciate my experience of catharsis and vulnerability as I broke down singing the words, "Deafening sounds/and trembling grounds/nowhere safe to go," which referred to the bombs that burst before my mom, creating a flood of people running for their lives. I also came to value the opportunity to let the world know the respect I have for my mom as people read a *Chicago Magazine* article about my life or as they woke up listening to my voice on two separate morning radio

shows. I came to cherish my ability to inspire audience members as they, total strangers, came up to me with tears dripping down their faces, to say, “Michael. Thank you for sharing your story.”

**College: Freshman year.** One of my professors at a well-known college in New England expected the 25 students of my yearlong, interdisciplinary seminar program to explore the themes of power, privilege, and inequality and the problem of choice in a pluralistic society. Although insecure at the program’s start because of the poor preparation I received from my Chicago public school education, by the end of the year, I had read more than 40 books and crafted more than 30 essays. I reflected on how, in sociology, I learned about the institutionalized racism that perpetuates the imprisonment of black men. I related to the struggle that each of the narrators in my favorite novels, *The Great Gatsby* and *Invisible Man*, faced as they attempted to shape their identities in cultures that marginalized them. I was proud of the paper I wrote on the striking parallel I saw between the Spanish conquest of Mexico and the current upper-class conquest of inner-city neighborhoods such as Albany Park through gentrification—and how this parallel reflects the never-ending cycle of injustice in our society. In just two semesters, I gained new knowledge and new tools, and I broadened my perspective on the world.

Yet despite the confidence, love for learning, and scholarship I was building in the classroom, as soon as I left the classroom, I found myself walking with my eyes directed straight at the ground because I was reminded about my *otherness* on the campus. Hate incidents throughout the year—like the note written on a student’s dry-erase board that read, “You are a dyke”; the swastika symbol drawn throughout a dorm hallway; and the student who yelled out a racist remark to a campus security officer of color—left me feeling alienated, displaced, and unsafe. Even though none of these incidents was a direct attack on me, each represented profound ignorance and deep divisions among people on campus.

Not only did hate envelop the campus, but so did indifference and selfishness. Black Solidarity Day, held every year on Nov. 1, is dedicated to recognizing black Americans’ contributions to our nation. For

3 weeks, UMOJA, the small but active African/African-American Students Association, encouraged the campus community to show support by dressing in special clothing. Proudly walking out of my dorm room, wearing all black and a green and red ribbon, I was bewildered to find that 3 weeks of posters, e-mails, flyers, and voice-mail announcements hadn’t been enough to rouse students to support a day devoted to celebrating the beauty of black culture and recognizing its people’s historic struggle for equity and freedom.

On weekends, while I read Freud, Plato, Kasulis, or the Gnostic gospels in the library; practiced Martha Graham dance technique in the studio; or elaborated on a piano solo I composed in the music library, most of the students chugged so much beer and vodka that they would leave cans and bottles and puddles of stinking alcohol and vomit on the floor for the anonymous custodians—who actually have names, like Marcia—to clean up the next morning. The mean-spiritedness, lack of engagement, and vapid self-interest I found at this college are emblematic of an epidemic that plagues this mostly privileged yet ungrateful and ignorant student body.

During winter break, I flew back to Chicago to work with APTP on a festival called *Heat Included*. The Albany Park community gathered to witness powerful performances about struggle and resilience, sit in on panel discussions about undocumented immigrant rights and the poor state of college counseling programs in Chicago public high schools, sip rich hot cocoa and savory soup, and listen to good live music. In a dance-theater piece called *Nine Digits*, I played a young man named Julio who was illegally brought to the United States from Colombia by his parents when he was a small child to escape poverty and war. As he got older, he experienced the debilitating constraints of not being a citizen in the country that is truly his home. As I worked on this politically charged piece, I also listened to my opinionated and passionate fellow company members voice their anger toward President Bush for fusing the separate institutions of church and state and spending more money on the Iraq War than it would cost to end world hunger. I was thankful for the invaluable lessons that APTP taught me and for the loving sense of family it never fails to provide. I was remind-

ed about the level of social and political engagement and the open-mindedness I sought in a college. Realizing that my current situation was preventing me from becoming who I want to be, I searched for a different school where I could grow not only as a scholar but also as an activist and artist who is a gay, first-generation, inner-city Vietnamese American.

**Sophomore year.** At Swarthmore, I had a second chance. My modern dance instructor, Sharon Friedler [Stephen Lang Professor of Performing Arts] expects students to go up to the stage and work out movement phrases every day. I make mistakes almost every time I go up there, but I grow as I take risks and as I get supportive attention. My voice is set at 10 because I have ideas to share—and the caring, curious, and excited people at Swarthmore listen. When I leave the dance studio, I walk down a beautiful campus path with my boyfriend and think, “I can’t wait to meet with Allison Dorsey [associate professor of history, see p. 80] to talk about her book *To Build Our Lives Together*.” Later in the day, after admiring the drum battle on Parrish Beach that stirs a sense of solidarity in everybody passing by, I head to the Lang Performing Arts Center to rehearse an original dance piece inspired by my recent summer research on the role of women in Vietnam. I meet up with friends at Tarble, where, long after classes have ended, we immerse ourselves in thoughtful conversations about sex tourism in Hawaii, how well the Sager Symposium planning is going, and what we’re wearing for the Screw Your Roommate party. Too inspired to sleep, I stay up until 3 a.m., writing an article to submit to *OURStory* about how my experiences at Swarthmore, especially within the vibrant Asian community, are beginning to help bridge the gap between my Vietnamese and American identity. I’ll book my flight to Chicago for winter break to visit APTP, looking forward to sharing with the company my decision to double major in sociology/anthropology and dance. As I greet my mom and sister in Vietnam at the airport, I’ll tell them about all that I’ve learned, and my sister will say, “I can’t wait to go to college.” ☞

*This essay appeared in the fall 2005 issue of the student literary publication OURStory and is reprinted with the author’s permission. Write to Michael Nguyen at [mnguyen1@swarthmore.edu](mailto:mnguyen1@swarthmore.edu).*

Today's Swarthmore activists have no manifestos. Instead, they tend to identify a problem and then come up with a way they can make a direct impact as quickly as possible. In Buffalo, N.Y., Aaron Bartley's street-level group not only puts public pressure on bureaucrats and slumlords, it's buying and rehabilitating homes with the idea of turning them into co-ops.



Aaron Bartley (*center*) led a living wage campaign at Harvard and worked as a labor organizer before returning to his hometown to start a campaign to revitalize its neighborhoods.



# THE NEW ACTIVISM

**PROTEST IS OUT.  
PROBLEM SOLVING IS IN.  
BUT THE PASSION FOR CHANGE REMAINS.**

*By Paul Wachter '97*

Listen to the empty shells of Buffalo, N.Y., the gutted and forlorn edifices, majestic even in their decay. In 1929, when its massive art deco Central Station was built, Buffalo was the country's largest inland port, a hive of industry and enterprise—America's "City of Lights" powered by nearby Niagara Falls. But 50 years later, the train station was abandoned, and today, the city can't spare the \$30 million it would cost to knock it down. A quintessential postindustrial city, Buffalo is dying, and its streets are thick with gloom.

Last year, Aaron Bartley '96 moved back to his native city and founded People United for Sustainable Housing (PUSH Buffalo). Already, the two-man operation has brought public pressure against government bureaucrats and slum speculators who are partly responsible for the city's thousands of unoccupied homes. And PUSH Buffalo is buying up and rehabilitating homes itself with the intention of turning them into subsidized co-ops for low-income residents.

Bartley is part of a new generation of Swarthmore activists, both recent graduates and current students. Others include Mark Hanis '05, Andrew Sniderman '07, and Sam Bell '05, whose Genocide Intervention Network is working to bring additional peacekeepers to Darfur; David Adler '00, James Johnson-Piett '03, and Lisandra Lamboy '03 of The Food Trust, which brings supermarkets to poor, underserved Pennsylvania neighborhoods; and Bernadette Baird-Zars '06, who has organized a student-staffed translation service for immigrants.

Although most of these students are politically like-minded (i.e. liberal), what binds them together is not a particular ideology but rather the sophistication they bring to their discrete causes. They have learned the lessons of the 1960s and adapt-

ed them to their own high-minded purposes with astonishing success. "I don't want to diminish our accomplishments," said Paul Booth '64, a labor organizer and former student-activist leader. "But today's Swarthmore students are smarter than we were, more politically savvy. It's exciting to watch them."

In the popular imagination, student activism perhaps always will be associated with the 1960s and the protests against Jim Crow and the Vietnam War. Although there was much difficult and good work done—voter registration drives in the South as just one example—the most dedicated activists fell short of their stated goals, which were nothing less than international revolution. In its 1962 Port Huron statement, the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) famously declared its intention to create a "new left" dedicated to eliminating nuclear weapons, war, poverty, discrimination, and political disenfranchisement. "The movement wanted to be both strategic and expressive, political and cultural: to change the world (end the war, win civil rights) while freeing life in the here and now," wrote former SDS President Todd Gitlin.

By the late 1960s—which saw the assassinations of Malcolm X, Robert Kennedy, and Martin Luther King as well as revolutionary upheaval in such disparate places as Paris and Angola—it became clear that neither the SDS nor any other single group could hope to direct or contain the impulses of its more restive members. Splinter groups were formed, including the Weathermen, which bombed government buildings—dramatic but ultimately politically impotent gestures.

This latest generation of activists has yet to bring about the seismic changes that

1960s activists can claim, at least partially, as their successes: ending Jim Crow and the Vietnam War. But they have not made many mistakes, either. Or at least not tragic ones like that of Cathy Wilkerson '66.

Some 25 years ago, Wilkerson emerged from her father's exploding Manhattan townhouse. It was an accident. Wilkerson and her fellow Weathermen were assembling a bomb intended for an officers' dance in Fort Dix, N.J. But it detonated prematurely, killing three of her friends and sending Wilkerson into hiding.

To many, the March 6, 1970, explosion marked the bloody end of a peaceful era of activism. And today, Wilkerson, who served 11 months in jail and is writing a memoir, says she regrets the Weathermen's excesses.

"I think our accomplishments in the 1960s were monumental and lasting," she said. "In the context of this scale of change, it was inevitable that we would also make some substantial mistakes, especially as we got on to increasingly unfamiliar territory." The student movement fizzled. When Roane Carey '82, now the managing editor of *The Nation*, arrived at Swarthmore as a freshman, he saw signs for an "SDS" recruitment meeting. At the designated time, he showed up in a subterranean Parrish office and was greeted by an upperclassman and a mimeograph machine. No, Carey demurred, he wasn't interested in volunteering for the College's Student Duplicating Service.

Today's Swarthmore activists, unlike their 1960s counterparts, eschew the grandiose. They have no manifestos. Instead, they tend to identify a problem and then come up with a way they can make a direct impact as quickly as possible. At least, that's what Mark Hanis did when he became increasingly concerned about the genocide in Dar-

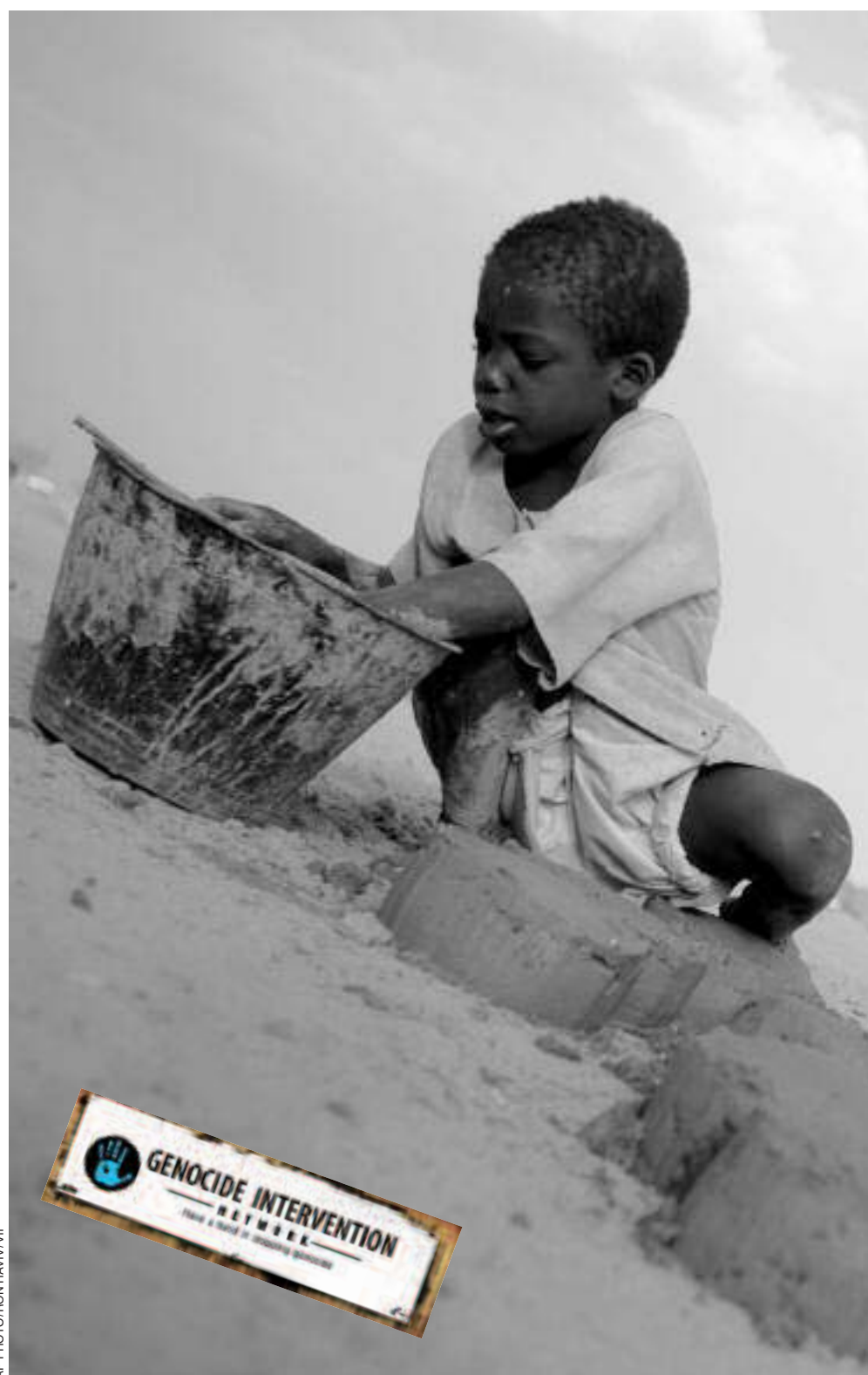
fur, Sudan, where hundreds of thousands of civilians have been killed by government-backed militias.

In October 2004, Hanis and Sniderman founded the Genocide Intervention Fund, later renamed Genocide Intervention Network, or GI-Net. Soon after, Bell joined them. “We wanted to raise awareness about the genocide but also take direct action,” Hanis says. “And one area we thought we could contribute was to raise money for the undermanned (African Union) peacekeepers there.” As senior editor of *The New Republic*, Jason Zengerle '96 wrote in a recent profile of GI-Net: “It was an out-of-the-box, arguably ludicrous idea—college students passing the hat to support a military force for a foreign intervention—but the idea got people’s attention.”

Working out of a Swarthmore office and based today in space provided by a liberal Washington think tank, GI-Net raised \$250,000 in donations. They considered buying an unmanned aerial vehicle to help peacekeepers track the movements of militiamen or funding private security firms—mercenaries—to go to Darfur. They approached the African Union about making a direct contribution, only to back off once the group said it couldn’t make any specific guarantees on how the money would be spent. Finally, in January, GI-Net arranged to fund a nongovernmental African organization to train female peacekeepers to protect Darfurian women from rape and worse while living in refugee camps.

Hanis, who in March was awarded a \$300,000 fellowship from the Draper Richards Foundation to continue his work in Darfur, is the first to admit that GI-Net is not going to stop the genocide on its own. “Look, this is a good example of what I can do that actually helps the situation on the ground,” he said. “Sure, I think the government needs to be doing more about the genocide, and we cannot stop it without the president’s involvement. But meanwhile, there are steps we can take to save lives.”

Like Hanis, Aaron Bartley realizes that his goal—reviving Buffalo—depends to a large degree on factors beyond his control. Still, he’s identified areas where he can make a significant contribution. Soon after he moved back to his hometown, a few years



out of Harvard Law School, he discovered that the biggest holder of abandoned property in Buffalo was the state of New York. In 2003, the Municipal Bond Banking Agency (MBBA) bought up 1,500 delinquent tax liens in Buffalo (and another 2,000 elsewhere in the state). The idea was that the city wouldn’t have to foreclose and auction off the properties, a route that had left many abandoned homes languishing on the market. Instead, the state would assume the

debt, which it would eventually pay off by collecting back taxes or selling the properties itself.

But, since purchasing the debt, the state has resold it to private investors, a common investment scheme. Meanwhile, it has had little luck collecting back taxes on the properties, so the liens continue to increase. And recent efforts to auction off properties have been met with no bids because to recoup its mounting debt the state is asking for more

**In 2004, Mark Hanis and Andrew Sniderman founded the Genocide Intervention Fund. “We wanted to raise awareness about the genocide but also take direct action,” Hanis says. Working out of a Swarthmore office, they raised \$250,000. At first, the idea was to pay African Union peacekeepers. In January, they arranged to fund training of female peacekeepers to protect Darfurian women and children in the region’s refugee camps.**



*Left to right: Mark Hanis '05, UCLA student Bryan Collinworth, Sam Bell '05, Rajaa Shakir '04, and Ivan Boothe '05 in the office of the Genocide Intervention Network in Washington.*

than the properties' market value.

In March, Bartley led a march to MBBA's local office, surprising a hapless, unsuspecting bureaucrat. "I felt sorry for the guy because he doesn't have the power to do anything," Bartley said. "But it was a good way of drawing (Albany's) attention to the issue." Bartley, who co-founded Harvard's successful living wage campaign and also spent 3 years organizing janitors in Boston, is no stranger to direct action. But he also

realizes that picketing local officials will not solve Buffalo's problems. "The local politicians are so desperate, it's pitiful," he said. "Sure, there's some degree of corruption, but it's not like they're hiding resources. The city's broke."

It wouldn't be useful to frame the issue in overtly political, partisan terms, Bartley said, a realization shared by many of his fellow activists. "This generation doesn't confuse tactics with ideology," said Christine

Kelly, author of *Chimes of Freedom: Student Protest and the Changing American University*. Instead, Bartley is concentrating on grass-roots efforts, signing up community leaders and local businessmen to join PUSH Buffalo's board and enlisting volunteers to help rehabilitate a gutted, four-unit apartment building in West Buffalo, the first of several such buildings Bartley plans to convert into subsidized co-ops for the urban poor.

In Pennsylvania, three young Swarth-

moreans are taking another approach to helping the impoverished. “If you look at a lot of poor areas, you see that often they’re not served by supermarkets with fresh, nutritional food,” David Adler, communications coordinator for The Food Trust, said. The organization, founded in 1992, has raised \$80 million in public and private funds to lure supermarkets to underserved areas, bring nutrition education to schools, and run farmers markets, among other projects. So far, it has funded 11 supermarkets.

“We’re helping them with start-up costs, which can be prohibitively expensive, especially in cities like Philadelphia,” Adler said. “But we’re not subsidizing them on a long-term basis. The whole point is that this is a viable business opportunity that can bring jobs to areas that need them.” Recently, The Food Trust released a report demonstrating that in Philadelphia alone, poor neighborhoods were losing \$205 million in food-retail demand because they lacked super-

markets. And, by stressing job creation as well as public health concerns, the group has garnered support from across the political spectrum as well as acknowledgement from Harvard’s John F. Kennedy School of Government as one of the country’s top 50 innovative public-sector programs.

When African American students occupied Swarthmore’s Admissions Office in 1969 to demand that the College admit more black students, they were echoing protests that had erupted on campuses throughout the country. A year earlier, students had taken over several Columbia University buildings, decrying the university’s complicity in the American war effort in Vietnam and the takeover of a Harlem neighborhood gym to serve the needs of its overwhelmingly white student body. For student activists, university administrations were part of the establishment—foes not allies.

To a certain extent, this remains the case

today, especially with the living wage and unionization campaigns unfolding on the nation’s campuses. Likewise, Swarthmore’s Living Wage and Democracy Campaign tried to pit students, faculty, and staff against the College’s administration. “We were in contact with administrators early on and made our pitch to President [Alfred H.] Bloom in spring 2000,” Sam Blair ’02, one of the campaign’s student organizers, said. “We got an audience but no commitments that anything would be done.” The campaign gathered momentum, with petitions, articles in *The Phoenix*, rallies, and a brief demonstration at a Board of Managers meeting. Finally, in December 2004, the Board approved President Bloom’s staff compensation plan—carefully crafted during 2 years of campuswide study and discussion and endorsed by all constituencies. Swarthmore’s lowest hourly wage was pegged at \$10.38 an hour, and a subsidy was created to make family health care more affordable for



**The problem: Lack of supermarkets in low-income urban areas leads to scarcity of nutritious, fresh food.**

**The solution: Work with store owners and encourage supermarket chains to open new stores.**



Food Trust activists Lisandra Lamboy '03 (left), James Pieltt '03 (center), and David Adler '00 (right) have been working with store owner Juan Carlos Romano (rear) to improve the quality and variety of fresh foods in his North Philadelphia store.





the lowest-paid staff members.

As far as living-wage campaigns go, Swarthmore saw much less student-administration acrimony than the campaign Bartley led at Harvard. “The Harvard board was completely secretive, with no schedule for its meetings, no public minutes,” Bartley said. “They had a complete disdain for what we were trying to do.” Harvard President Neil Rudenstine repeatedly refused to meet with campaign leaders. Ultimately, Bartley and other students occupied Harvard’s administration building for 30 days, leaving only when the university agreed to create a joint committee to recommend wage changes.

“I was very sympathetic from the beginning to ensuring adequate compensation for our staff,” President Bloom said in a recent interview. “We appointed a committee to study and recommend the level of wages and benefits that would meet minimum needs in our region. I was also mindful of the budgetary implications for the College

and the impact of a higher minimum wage on staff members who would not share in that benefit.” Although the changes didn’t come as soon as campaign organizers would have liked, Bloom said it was important to find a solution that the College could afford and that the broader community thought was right.

Blair maintains that the administration “over-intellectualized a problem that had a pretty basic solution.” But despite the disagreements, the student-administration relationship during the campaign was “pretty cordial,” Vice President for College and Community Relations and Executive Assistant to the President Maurice Eldridge ’61 said.

These days, “pretty cordial” is about as bad as student-administration relations get in terms of student activism. Responding to a student petition to sever Swarthmore’s relationship with Coca-Cola, citing alleged anti-union violence in Colombia, the College voted its Coke shares in favor of a shareholder resolution, calling for an independent investigation into the allegations. And this year, it pulled the company’s bottled products from its snack bars. The College has left open the question of whether it will renew its Coca-Cola contract for Sharples Dining Hall, when it ends in 2007.

“We seek ways in which the College can responsibly support student initiatives aimed at a better world—so that the institution can become their best ally,” said Bloom. Hanis of GI-Net said the College’s support was instrumental in the organization’s early days. “The President’s Office gave us some grant money, got us a free phone line, and arranged for a basement office in the Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility.”

Created in 2001 by an endowment established by Eugene Lang ’38, the Lang Center is the latest tenant of the Swarthmore train station. From its perch between the campus and the larger community, it offers student and community activists office and meeting space as well as staff support for their work.

Financial support also comes from Lang Opportunity Scholarships of \$10,000 each. Recent recipients include Sa’ed Atshan ’06, who founded the Palestinian Student Society of America. The group’s inaugural conference was held at Swarthmore this spring.

Another recipient, Bernadette Baird-

Zars, started a language bank, enlisting 300 student, staff, faculty, and alumni volunteers to provide translation services for asylum seekers and refugees. The organization covers 38 languages. Its latest project, in conjunction with the Department of Justice, is recording “Know Your Rights” presentations to be made available at six detention centers around the country. “So, the immigration detainees will hear the voices of Swarthmore students speaking Mandarin and Hindi and nine other languages,” Baird-Zars said.

Today’s activists, to a degree much greater than their predecessors, say encouragement from faculty, staff, and administration have helped them in their work. In contrast, 1960s activists’ relationships with their liberal elders were strained.

“Unlike the current generation of activists, we were building on very little—there wasn’t a foundation,” said Paul Booth, a former SDS leader who, today, is the executive assistant to the president of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees. “We had some faculty encouragement but not much.”

Now, many on Swarthmore’s faculty are Booth’s contemporaries, and current student activists cite professors as among their biggest supporters. Likewise, many administrators saw the social conflagrations of the 1960s up close from the students’ side. President Bloom, for example, was studying in Paris in 1968, when student strikes led to a near revolution.

Today’s activists have studied the successes and failures of the previous generation. “They’ve studied the successes of the early civil rights movement and the better moments of the labor movement,” said Christine Kelly, who teaches political science at William Paterson University. “They aren’t really caught up in that whole media image of the 1960s and what it says about how an activist should be.”

Aaron Bartley agrees. “We grew up with an image of the 1960s,” he said. “It seemed like a fairy tale.” No longer, though. And not in necrotic Buffalo, which Bartley is hoping to resuscitate—one house at a time. It is no place for fairy tales. ❧

*Paul Wachter has written for Legal Affairs, Salon.com, The Nation, and other magazines.*



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELEFTHERIOS KOSTANS



## Recent Events

**Metro DC** Wuryati Morris '04 and Arthur Zito Jr. '81 have agreed to serve as Metro DC Connection chairs with the support of a very engaged committee including Sarah Nusser '02, Elizabeth "Lily" Gresham Engle '93, Mark Salzberg '87, Molly Marino '98, Charles Small '03, and Michael Turner '96. We look forward to exciting new events in the Metro DC area.

**London** "An Evening of Cheese" was organized by Abby Honeywell '85 in the British capital. Abby wrote: "On Feb. 16, the London Connection met for an evening of wine and cheese at La Fromagerie, a top cheese shop in London. The owner and cheese buyer gave us a tutored tasting of a variety of cheeses from the Savoie region in France, accompanied by wine from the same region. Conversation flourished, and a repeat, with emphasis on a different region, is planned."

**Philadelphia** Connection members attended a taping of NPR's *Justice Talking* on the topic of "Are Lawyers Really Necessary?" at the Constitution Center. In May, they visited the New Jersey sculpture garden Grounds for Sculpture with Professor of Studio Art and Studio Art Coordinator Brian Meunier. Many thanks to Connection Chair Paula Goulden-Naitove '79 and National and Philadelphia Connection Chair Jim Moskowitz '88 for arranging these events.

**Pittsburgh** In April, Pittsburgh Connection members sorted and bundled donated books for Book 'Em, a program that sends donated books to prison inmates based on their reading interests. Thanks go to Barbara Sieck Taylor '75 for organizing this community service event.



JIM MOSKOWITZ '88

Philadelphia Connection members and Professor of Studio Art Brian Meunier (center) posed before Carlos Dorrien's *Nine Muses* at Grounds for Sculpture in New Jersey.

## nominate someone for an Honorary Degree



Do you know a Swarthmore graduate who should be considered for an honorary degree at Swarthmore?

The College is accepting recommendations of alumni or others who might be considered. The Honorary Degree Committee uses the following criteria in choosing recipients:

- Distinction, leadership, or originality in significant human endeavor.
- Someone in the ascent or at the peak of distinction, with a preference to the less honored over those who have received multiple degrees.
- Ability, as a Commencement speaker, to serve as a role model for graduating seniors.
- Preference (but not a requirement) for individuals who have an existing affiliation with or connection to Swarthmore.

In addition, the committee seeks to balance choices over the years from a variety of categories such as careers, gender, academic discipline, race, ethnicity, and public service.

If you know a worthy candidate, please submit background information, including your own reasons for choosing this individual, by Oct. 2, to the Honorary Degree Committee, Vice President's Office, Swarthmore College, 500 College Avenue, Swarthmore PA 19081-1390; or e-mail the information to Vice President for College and Community Relations and Executive Assistant to the President Maurice Eldridge '61 at [meldrid1@swarthmore.edu](mailto:meldrid1@swarthmore.edu).

All nominations are confidential; please do not inform the nominee. The committee will forward its recommendations to the faculty in mid-November.

# RECONNECT WITH SWARTHMORE FACULTY

## lectures on-line

Swarthmore lectures on-line allow alumni to learn from College faculty members in the comfort of their own homes—or even to take the lectures with them anywhere, downloaded onto an iPod or MP3 player. These lectures are complete, self-contained talks that were open to the campus and local community.

### "The Ends of Literary Narrative"

Charles and Harriett Cox McDowell Professor of Philosophy  
Richard Eldridge (recorded Jan. 25, 2006)

"Holy Ground: Earthen Spirituality and the Crum Woods"  
Associate Professor of Religion Mark Wallace (recorded Oct. 5, 2005)

### "What Mark Twain Said Regarding Regime Changes and Other Righteous American Foibles"

Professor of English Literature Peter Schmidt (recorded June 3, 2005)

### "The Art of Surrender"

Professor of Sociology Robin Wagner-Pacifici (recorded Dec. 6, 2004)

### "Too Many Choices: Who Suffers and Why"

Dorwin P. Cartwright Professor of Social Theory and Social Action  
Barry Schwartz (recorded March 3, 2004)

Each lecture is presented in two different formats: Windows Media and Apple QuickTime. To download one or more of the lectures above, go to

[www.swarthmore.edu/alumni/faculty\\_lectures](http://www.swarthmore.edu/alumni/faculty_lectures)

## on the road

William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of Political Science  
Kenneth Sharpe traveled to Portland, Ore., during January, where he presented "Realpolitik or Imperial Hubris: What the Latin American Drug Wars Can Teach."

In March, Sharpe crossed the Atlantic to discuss "Practical Wisdom" with alumni in London. Sharpe also presented this lecture, based on the content of a popular course that he co-teaches with Dorwin P. Cartwright Professor of Social Theory and Social Action Barry Schwartz, to the Philadelphia Connection in March.



Ken Sharpe

JIM GRAHAM



Phil Weinstein

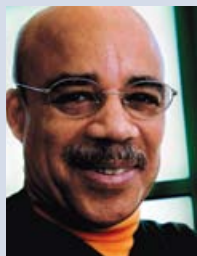
Alexander Griswold Cummins Professor of English Literature Philip Weinstein presented his lecture "Unknowing: The Work of Modernist Fiction" in Santa Monica and San Francisco during spring break.

Plans are being made for more faculty lectures during the upcoming academic year. If you have a suggestion for such an event, contact Geoff Semenuk, associate director of alumni relations, at (610) 328-8453 or by e-mail at [gsemenu1@swarthmore.edu](mailto:gsemenu1@swarthmore.edu).



## lifelong learning

Beginning the week of Sept. 18, Lifelong Learning at Swarthmore will offer two courses on campus and one in New York City. The program features small seminar-style classes with other educated adults. Courses are taught by senior or emeriti faculty members of the College. There are no grades or academic credit—just learning for learning's sake.



Chuck James

On campus, Professor of Physics John Boccio will teach *In Search of Reality* on Wednesday evenings, and Daniel Underhill Professor of Music Michael Marissen will present a course titled *Mozart: Musician, Social Critic, Religious Thinker, Humorist* on Tuesday evenings.

In Manhattan, Sara Lawrence Lightfoot Professor Emeritus of English Literature Charles James will teach a course on the *Harlem Renaissance* on Wednesday evenings.

Courses in New York are open to alumni, their adult family members, and partners. The on-campus program also welcomes residents of the greater Philadelphia area.

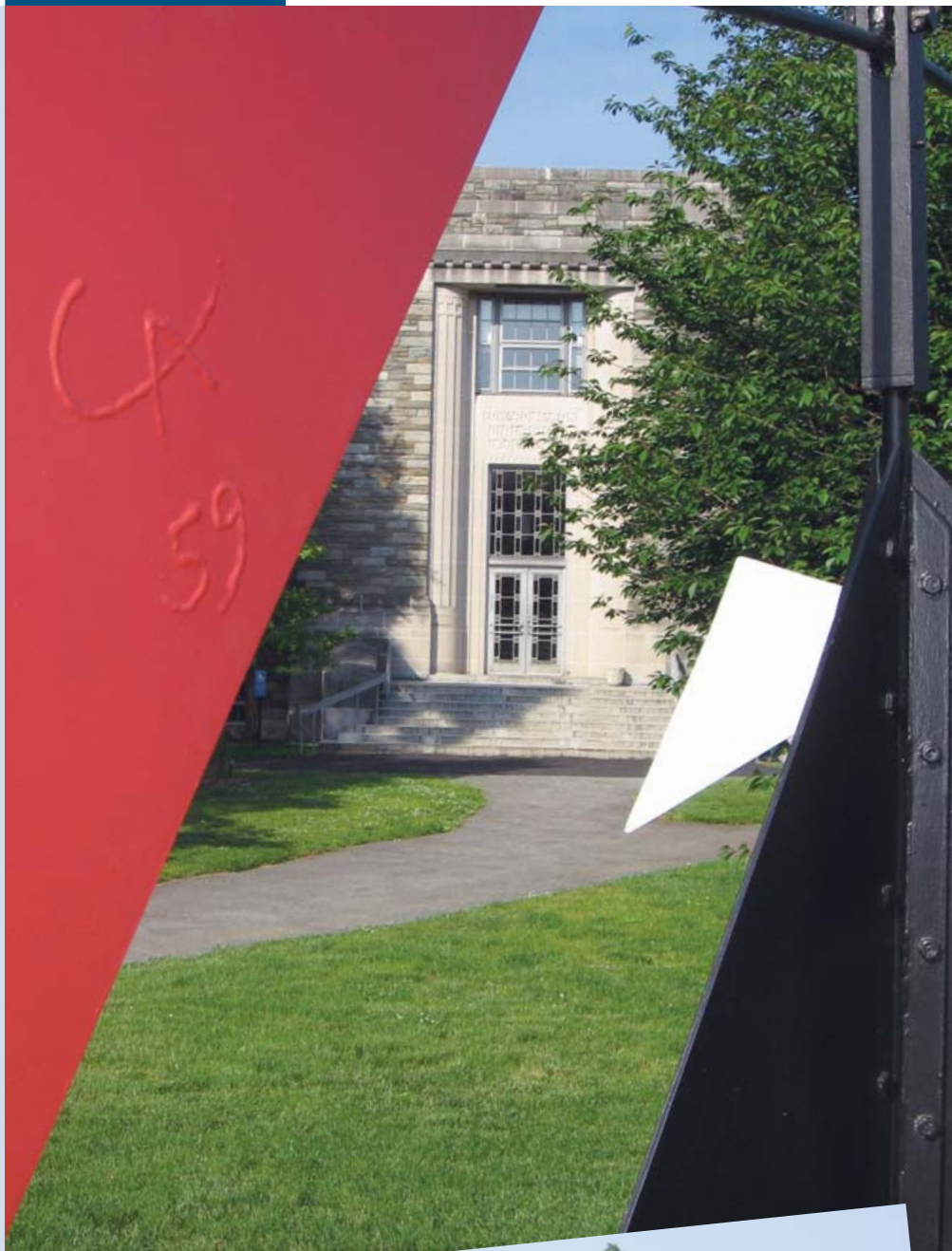
For more information about schedule, cost, and course descriptions, visit

[www.swarthmore.edu/lifelonglearning.xml](http://www.swarthmore.edu/lifelonglearning.xml)



NOW IN NEW YORK CITY

ISTOCKPHOTO.COM



*Back from Rio*

has a new home.

The Alexander Calder stabile/mobile, which stood near Pearson Hall for nearly 40 years, was recently restored by Swarthmore artist Chris Ray and moved to a prominent campus location directly in front of Martin Hall, where it is visible from both Kohlberg Hall and the science center. The work was given to the College in memory of William Brown Jr. (1924–1966), who was a member of the economics faculty from 1955 to 1966.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFFREY LOIT

# Educational Intrapreneur

WALTER CLARK '54 SURROUNDS STUDENTS WITH NEW ENGLAND LANDSCAPES AND LITERATURE.



NICK CHIN

"The challenges of the NELP environment jolt people awake and offer the opportunity to mobilize new energies," Clark says.

Imagine being able to spend 6 1/2 weeks reading Hawthorne, Frost, Brown, Emerson, Dickinson, and Thoreau.

Imagine a place with no TVs, computers, cell phones, telephones, VCRs, newspapers, iPods, radios, alcohol, or drugs.

Imagine hiking through snow drifts on Franconia Ridge in New Hampshire; or canoeing the wilderness route Thoreau describes in *The Maine Woods* and then reading passages from the book around a camp fire; or reading Hawthorne's *Roger Malvin's Burial*, based on the 1725 Indian defeat of a group of Massachusetts bounty hunters, before climbing Mt. Chocorua within sight of the encounter.

The place you imagine is real. It exists in the form of the New England Literature Program (NELP). NELP was co-founded in 1974 by Professor Emeritus of English Walter Clark '54, of the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor and his colleague Professor Emeritus of English Language and Literature Alan Howes.

Guided by 12 staff members, 40 students spend parts of May and June in small classes dedicated to reading, discussing, and journaling their thoughts on New England writers. Other authors have included Frederick Douglass, Louise Gluck, Sarah Orne Jewett, Galway Kinnell, and e.e. cummings.

Although the setting may be pastoral, journal entries and active participation in discussions are integral to determining a student's grade. The program is open to college students around the world.

"When one is taken out of one's accustomed habitat, there is a disorientation and reorientation very conducive to new learning," Clark says. "The opportunity to read literature in the environment where it was written, or in a landscape described in the work, is significant."

Students travel in a caravan of minivans from Ann Arbor to Camp Wohelo on Lake Sebago in Raymond, Maine—a location, Clark points out, that is just a mile from where Hawthorne lived in his youth. Housing is in unheated cabins, but there are heated spaces for discussions or reading. The prohibition of any distractions—such as electrical devices and alcohol—is important. "We want nothing here that can divide people," he says.

Along with the academic sessions, students are able to take non-credit classes where they can learn about nature, canoeing, art, or camping. Meal preparation and the cleaning of common areas are done by students and faculty together.

Clark says his education at Swarthmore and a subsequent graduate seminar with Israel Scheffler, a Harvard philosophy professor, gave him insight into the importance of small classes, and the significance of eye contact with and among students in the classroom.

"A class where students face each other in a circle can have a substantial impact on the quality of discussions," Clark says. "We pick up inaudible cues from one another."

When Clark first proposed the idea of NELP, which is funded through the University of Michigan's English Department, his peers were skeptical, but 32 years later, the program is thriving.

Jessica Pulver '02, an English teacher at a private language school, participated as a staff member last year. She says, "Students come to NELP primarily seeking a personal challenge. The students tend to be introspective and self-aware from the outset, and this comes to the fore as they record their experiences in their journals. The journals are what I think the students take away from the experience most. They have a hard time parting with them at the end of the program when staff members take them away to grade. Abstractly, I think the students take with them a sense of maturation, a feeling of having been stretched and prodded to assess what is important to them in many different ways."

Although Clark retired from teaching in 1993, he still occasionally teaches a NELP course. His impact on the program and the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, upon whose ideas he founded the program, remain evident. In Whitehead's words: "The justification for a university is that it preserves the connection between knowledge and the zest of life, by uniting the young and the old in the imaginative pursuit of learning."

In this, Clark and NELP succeed.

—Audree Penner

Thomas Preston '55, *Patient-Directed Dying: A Call for Legalized Aid in Dying for the Terminally Ill*, iUniverse, New York, 2006

Tom Preston leaves few dry eyes as he portrays the dying process of four terminally ill patients in his newest book. Taking us into the homes and thoughts of these patients and their families, Preston describes their suffering and their often thwarted attempts to experience a peaceful death. He describes them as caught up in “medical dying,” hooked up to machines in futile attempts to deny death.

Although about three-quarters of us report that we would like to die at home surrounded by loved ones, most of us die in the hospital undergoing aggressive last-ditch efforts to keep us alive. This gap between how we, as a society, envision the humane death and the reality of the modern death experience needs to be closed. As Preston notes, if more of us saw the conditions under which our loved ones die, we might be more supportive of instituting legal measures to help the terminally ill achieve a peaceful death. But during medical emergencies, the layman is usually escorted out of the hospital room. This book helps to educate the public.

One of the greatest contributions of *Patient-Directed Dying* is its challenge of the more commonly used phrase “physician-assisted suicide” to describe what exactly these terminally ill patients are seeking. As Preston argues, suicide carries terrible connotations in American society. When we hear “suicide,” we envision the tragic death of someone who had a future. In the cases Preston describes, these patients have fought the good fight, but they are in every sense terminally ill. This is why he argues for our using the term “patient-directed dying.” There is no question that these patients are dying. He is calling for society and the medical profession to help these patients choose how and when to die when all further attempts to extend life are useless. But why is palliative care not enough? Don't we have morphine and other drugs that help relieve the suffering of the dying? Dying is often a difficult process. Even those heavily sedated sometimes suffer unbearable pain and extreme shortness of breath. More needs to be done.

Preston also helps us to understand why doctors are reluctant to help their terminally ill patients die—even if this would require little more than writing a prescription for sleeping pills that patients would take at a time of their choosing. Doctors are driven to save lives. The idea of aiding death is completely antithetical to their medical training and worldview. Preston also describes the unfortunate abandonment of some terminally ill patients by their physi-

## Seeking a Peaceful Death



JANUSZ KAPUSTA@IMAGES.COM/CORBIS

cians once it becomes clear that there is nothing more that can be done or when patients refuse to undergo one more medical procedure that is unlikely to help.

Why does the doctor run away? The fracturing of the doctor-patient relationship that has accompanied many structural changes in the delivery of medical care helps explain some of this behavior. Fewer close personal ties between doctors and patients facilitate this kind of distancing. Some doctors also argue that their time is better spent helping nonterminal patients. But it is also true that distancing, as death draws near, is a coping mechanism for physicians. As Preston makes very clear, it is not easy to watch another human being die. And for the physician, the death may be a very direct and painful reminder of a failure to save this patient. We need to understand better how we can train physicians to both save lives and help the terminally ill die. This is an area that needs more attention from the profession of medicine and the public.

We also need to understand better why patients seek the help of doctors to die. Couldn't these terminally ill patients tell their doctors that they are having trouble sleeping, without saying that they intend to end their lives, to get a prescription for sleeping pills? These patients are looking for more than just a way to end their lives. They are looking for society and the medical profession to recognize and legitimize their decision to die. They are themselves recognizing their interconnectedness with the wider society, even as they face the reality of soon leaving that society. We need to hear their cries for help and act now. Preston has heard and is trying to help.

—Virginia Adams O'Connell  
Visiting Assistant Professor of Sociology

## Books

**Roger Abrahams '55**, with Nick Spitzer, John Szwed, and Robert Thompson, *Blues for New Orleans: Mardi Gras and America's Creole Soul*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006. The authors present the return of Mardi Gras to New Orleans as a symbol of the region's return to vitality and its ability to express and celebrate itself.

**Virginia (Stern) Brown '49**, *In Transit: A Memoir*, XLibris Corp., 2005. With wit and sensitivity, the author recounts her journey through the 20th century.

Tom Graham and **Rachel Graham Cody '94**, *Getting Open: The Unknown Story of Bill Garrett and the Integration of College Basketball*, Atria Books, 2006. More than "just a basketball book," this volume tells the story of a major breakthrough in sports and civil rights.

**Daisy Fried '89**, *My Brother Is Getting Arrested Again*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006. The poet's second collection celebrates the contradictions and quandaries of contemporary American life.

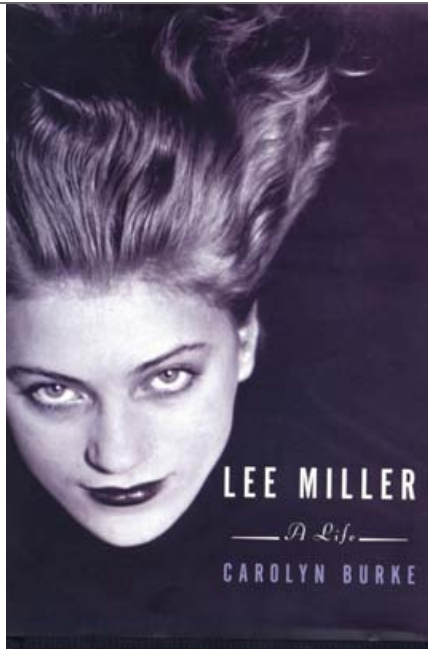
Guiomar Borrás, **Stephen Henighan '84**, James Hendrickson, and Antonio Velásquez, *Intercambios*, Nelson, 2006. This introductory Spanish language textbook is the first to be designed especially for Canadian students, using examples specific to Canada and Canadian society.

**Marc Elihu Hofstadter '67**, *Shark's Tooth*, Regent Press, 2006. A collection of poems, divided into five thematic sections, provides a kaleidoscopic view of a gay man's life.

**Jacob Howland '80**, *Kierkegaard and Socrates: A Study in Philosophy and Faith*, Cambridge University Press, 2006. This book examines the relationship between philosophy and faith in Søren Kierkegaard's *Philosophical Fragments*.

**Jane (Stallmann) Jaquette '64** and Gale Summerfield (eds.), *Women and Gender Equity in Development Theory and Practice*, Duke University Press, 2006. In this collection, contributors reflect on the connections between women's well-being and globalization, environmental conservation, land rights, access to information technology, employment, and poverty alleviation.

**Madeleine Kahn '77**, *Why Are We Reading Ovid's Handbook on Rape?: Teaching and Learning at a Womens' College*, Paradigm Pub-



**Carolyn (Goldberg) Burke '61**, author, art critic, translator, and teacher, is currently on a book tour for her latest work, *Lee Miller: A Life*, Alfred A. Knopf, 2005. This biography of the early photojournalist was featured in *The New York Times* daily and Sunday review sections, picked as the editor's choice, and nominated for the Biography Award by the National Book Critics Circle. In 2007, it will be published in French translation by Autrement. Burke is also the author of the critically acclaimed book *Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy*. She has taught at Princeton; the Universities of California–Santa Cruz and Davies; the Universities of Western Sydney and New South Wales, Australia; and at the Sorbonne and the University of Lille, France.

lishers, 2005. Kahn raises feminist issues in a way that reminds people why they matter.

**Scott Kugle '91** (trans.), *The Book of Illumination (Kitab al-Tanwir fi Isqat al-Tadbir)*, Fons Vitae, 2005. This translation of a classic work of Islamic spirituality has been described as "unique," "lucid," and "lyrical."

**Christopher Lehmann-Haupt '56**, *The Mad Cook of Pymatuning*, Simon & Schuster, 2005. This chilling novel about a boys' summer camp in the 1950s is reminiscent of *Lord of the Flies*.

**Jenny Lombard '85**, *Drita, My Homegirl*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2006. In this novel for mid-

dle-graders, the author tells an urban multi-ethnic story of two girls from different cultures who develop an unlikely friendship.

**Jennifer Ruth '91**, *Novel Professions: Interested Disinterest and the Making of the Professional in the Victorian Novel*, The Ohio State University Press, 2006. This work offers the reader a new way to view the role of professions in establishing definitions of value in Victorian literature.

**Mary Ann (Tomkins) Segal '62**, *Getting Through the Wilderness: The Fuel Crisis, Global Warming, and the Hydrogen Frontier*, AuthorHouse, 2006. This book will enlighten and empower readers about the benefits of alternative energy.

**Mike Sharpe '50**, *Thou Shalt Not Kill, Unless Otherwise Instructed*, North Castle Books, 2005. In this collection of poems and stories, the author uses humor to illuminate the horror and agony of the Iraq War.

*Requiem for New Orleans*, North Castle Books, 2006. In a further poetry collection, the poet laments the destruction of a great city, expresses scorn for those who allowed the devastation, and meditates on man's ability to overcome loss.

**Katherine Stanton '94**, *Cosmopolitan Fictions*, Routledge, 2006. This work proposes "cosmopolitan fiction" as both a descriptive term for a literary genre that probes states of feeling, modes of belonging, and practices of citizenship in a pluralized cosmos and as an interpretive lens that allows us to glean new insights into works that thematize migration, exile, and diaspora.

**Richard Valeyly '75** (ed.), *The Voting Rights Act: Securing the Ballot*, CQ Press, 2005. In this collection of essays, scholars explore the origin, development, and consequences of this landmark legislation.

**Brenda Webster '58**, *The Beheading Game*, Wings Press, 2006. In this novel, the author crosses the classic medieval poem "Gawain and the Green Knight" with a contemporary love story between two men.

## Theater

**Laurie (Daniels) Blazich '63**, *Signs of Peace (and the Star in the East)*, Actor's Theatre of Sacramento, 2005. This is the second play by longtime social worker Blazich. Last year, the author received an Ellie Award for her first drama, *Backwater Park*.

# Transformations

AS NEW UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON PROVOST, PHYLLIS WANG WISE '67 SEEKS TO BROADEN ITS MISSION.



MARY LEVIN

In considering changes at the University of Washington, Provost Phyllis Wise is drawing on her years at Swarthmore in the 1960s.

When Phyllis Wang Wise '67 walked into her first Swarthmore classroom in fall 1963, coming from a high school twice the size of Swarthmore, she anticipated a more intimate educational experience.

From the first day, it was. "About 10 percent of the students were missing," she recalls. "I found out that they had been arrested for demonstrating against George Wallace." The Alabama governor, then a leading segregationist, had spoken in Chester, Pa., the night before, and many Swarthmore students had protested his visit.

"It was a strong illustration of living your beliefs. But I came to realize it was the essence of Swarthmore," she says.

Today, Wise is the provost and vice president for academic affairs at the University of Washington (UW) in Seattle, where she runs the academic and budgetary sides of a large, public research university. UW has six Nobel Prize winners on its faculty and receives more federal research money than any other public university in the nation. After just 9 months at the 145-year-old institution, Wise is looking for ways to improve the already great university. She recently appointed a committee to examine whether the current organization of colleges and schools best serves learning experiences for stu-

dents—undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral—and if it could more effectively serve interactions in interdisciplinary research programs. This analysis complements the work of a committee appointed in her first quarter at UW to improve the undergraduate experience, which has already led to substantial changes.

In considering change at a huge university (its student enrollment ranks 15th in the nation), she is drawing on her experience at Swarthmore during the 1960s. "That experience totally transformed me," she says. "I learned the virtue of learning for learning's sake, and this has remained an important value. I believe we can take some ideas of how smaller institutions provide a quality experience and translate that into part of what we provide our students." Her goal is for all UW students to "take advantage of the incredible richness that a large research university can provide while also experiencing the intimacy of small group learning experiences."

Although Wise cherishes her undergraduate years, her subsequent academic career took her to large research universities. She got master's and doctoral degrees in zoology at the University of Michigan and was on the faculty at the University Maryland–Baltimore and chair of physiology at the University of Kentucky. Before coming to Washington, she was dean of biological sciences at the University of California–Davis.

Her pioneering work on hormones, particularly estrogen, has won her many awards. *Parade* magazine put her on its cover for an issue recognizing "America's Quiet Heroes."

"A hundred years ago, the life span of men and women was roughly 50 years, so most women never had long, postmenopausal periods in their lives," she explains. "What we are realizing now is that estrogens are more than just reproductive hormones; they play a large role in our overall well-being. They affect the heart, the immune system, brain, bones, metabolism, and more." Her work studies how estrogen levels affect learning and memory. "Estrogens play an important protective role in making the brain function properly," she notes.

At Washington, Wise isn't letting go of her research entirely—she has two postdoctoral students and shares a lab with a renowned physiologist. But research is a side dish to the main course of leading the academic side of UW.

Occasionally, she gets advice from another Swarthmore graduate—her son, Andrew '92. Now a lawyer in private practice in Washington, D.C., Andrew Wise started his legal career interning with a Swarthmore graduate who was a public defender. Andrew later spent 5 years as a public defender himself.

"He got a full dose of the Swarthmore experience, too," she says. "It's an educational experience that transforms lives."

—Tom Griffin

Tom Griffin is editor of *Columns Magazine*, University of Washington, Seattle.



# Balancing the Budget

ECONOMIST ANTOINETTE SAYEH '79 IS WORKING HARD TO GET LIBERIA BACK ON ITS FEET.



AP PHOTO/MANUEL BALCE CENETA

In May, Sayeh reported a government revenue increase from January to April of 26 percent over the same period last year.

Requests for an interview with Antoinette Sayeh these days may well be met with the response, delivered in her beautiful, melodic voice: “Sorry, I don’t have time to talk this evening. I have to balance the Liberian budget by tomorrow morning.”

One night last January, Sayeh, a high-ranking economist at the World Bank headquarters in Washington, D.C., was awoken by the trilling of the phone in her Rockville, Md., home. The caller was recently elected Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. She invited Sayeh to become minister of finance in the new Liberian cabinet.

Aware that Sirleaf had been talking with World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz about a possible role for her in the reconstruction of the Liberian economy, Sayeh was nonetheless unprepared for the offer of a ministerial position.

The decision for Sayeh, a single parent, to leave her son during his senior year of high school and to give up her prestigious position at the bank was not easy. “As a minister, you can’t simply take a leave of absence. You have to give up your career, you have to resign—make that leap of faith.”

In return for these sacrifices, Sayeh would inherit the daunting task of healing the economy of a country that she describes as “very broken.” Ravaged by civil war from 1989 to 2003 and plagued by a history of government corruption, the Republic of Liberia is one of

the poorest countries in the world. Its unemployment rate is 85 percent, and foreign debt is \$3.5 billion. There is no running water and no electrical power except from oil-powered generators. Roads are badly damaged or have been completely destroyed, rendering many areas of the country inaccessible. The country’s current fragile state of peace is maintained only by the presence of 15,000 United Nations troops stationed in the country.

Encouraged by her son and two of her sisters willing to care for him in her absence, Sayeh accepted the job. The daughter of a comfortably well-off native Liberian family, Sayeh was educated in Switzerland, where she gained an international perspective and an interest in public policy. After earning bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees in economics from Swarthmore and Tufts, she worked for 4 years for the Liberian Ministries of Planning and Finance and then for 17 years in several departments at the World Bank.

Sayeh’s new workplace is on the ninth floor of the 10-story Ministry of Finance, one of the tallest buildings in Monrovia, Liberia’s capital. “Like most buildings in Monrovia right now, it’s pretty dilapidated,” she says. “Water, even for use in the toilets, has to be trucked in. But I have a beautiful view of the ocean in the distance and of the St. Paul River, which runs through the city.”

Among Sayeh’s highest priorities is clearing the country’s external debt arrears and obtaining debt relief. “We believe that it’s absolutely imperative to get our financial house in order and restore credibility with our international partners,” she says. In April, she attended the spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in Washington, D.C., hoping that the IMF would approve a staff-monitored program to help Liberia re-establish control over its economy. Creating a strong track record of reform by remaining committed to the actions and measures prescribed by the program will enable Liberia to convince its donors that it deserves debt relief, she says.

Domestically, Sayeh is focusing on increasing government revenues. “We’ve been doing quite well in these first few months simply by plugging a lot of obvious holes, like collecting overdue taxes,” Sayeh says. “We’re trying to get revenues up to the point where we’re not just paying salaries and covering our current expenses but also making a contribution to our own development.”

A further priority is to create jobs. “It’s bad enough that the war destroyed the infrastructure and the economy—but even worse is the destruction of moral values, the deterioration of education, and what that has done to our young people,” Sayeh says. By initiating labor-intensive rehabilitation programs, the government plans to provide employment for the many young men currently idle, convinced that jobs will revive hope and, thereby, consolidate the peace.

“If we can get some of these things done, the future of Liberia will take care of itself. So I’m trying to focus like a laser right now.”

—Carol Brévart-Demm

# For Now, They Struggle

A PHYSICIAN VISITS FAMILY MEMBERS IN WAR-TORN IRAQ.

By Dahlia Wasfi '93

"Dahlia, come here," my father called.

I was upstairs in my parents' house, during winter break of my sophomore year at Swarthmore. On the East Coast, it was 5 p.m., Jan. 16, 1991. In Iraq—my father's birthplace and homeland of my paternal family—it was 1 a.m., Jan. 17. I went to the balcony overlooking the family room.

"They started bombing," he said.

Fear and sadness came over me because my relatives were among the millions of Iraqis who had no say in their government's actions but would pay dearly at the hands of the most powerful military force in the world. Once the initial shock of the news passed, I found myself nervously humming. I soon realized the song was R.E.M.'s "It's the End of the World as We Know It." And it was.

My father was born in Basrah, Iraq. He earned a government scholarship to study in the United States and completed graduate work at Georgetown University. While in DC, he met and married my mom, a nice

unacceptable, no matter who is directing the tanks? Why was the anti-war sentiment drowned out at this "liberal" institution? I condemned the hypocrisy of militancy on a campus that purported to reflect Quaker traditions. But the hypocrisy I truly despised was within me, for I was continuing my life, business as usual, while bombs rained down on my family.

Although more than 100,000 Iraqis perished during the 42 days of Gulf War I, my blood relatives survived. The worst was yet to come, however, because our aerial assaults had purposely targeted Iraq's electricity plants, telecommunication centers, and water treatment facilities. In a matter of days, life became desperate. There was no potable water; no electricity; and, with draconian economic sanctions in place, no means of rebuilding. And it was summer: heat of 115 to 140 degrees as well as humidity, with neither fans nor air-conditioning. I knew I had many relatives suffering under these conditions. But I had only faint mem-

I condemned the hypocrisy of militancy on a campus that purported to reflect Quaker traditions. But the hypocrisy I truly despised was within me, for I was continuing my life, business as usual, while bombs rained down on my family.

Jewish girl from New York. Her parents had fled their homeland of Austria during Hitler's *Anschluss* and emigrated to the United States. Was it love at first sight? I don't know, but my sister was born in 1969, and I arrived in 1971. To pay back his scholarship, my father taught at Basrah University from 1972 to 1977; thus, my early childhood was in both Iraq and the United States. For me, the bombing of Basrah was equivalent to bombing Yonkers.

Upon returning to campus for the spring semester, I was dumbstruck by the pro-war atmosphere. Sports teams sewed American flags onto their uniforms. More flags and pro-military banners hung from Parrish Hall. What was going on? Why didn't the best and brightest understand that war is

ories of aunts and uncles, and most of my cousins were born after we left in 1977. I condemned the hypocrisy of my government for starving the Iraqi people while claiming to punish Saddam Hussein. But the hypocrisy I despised was within me. I continued my life, business as usual, graduating in 1993, and moving on to medical school, with a sadness I couldn't explain.

After medical school at the University of Pennsylvania, I began a surgical residency, first at the University of Maryland, then back at Penn. After 3 grueling years—unconscious of the contradiction fueling my unhappiness from within—I believed that changing fields would bring me contentment. I switched to a training program in anesthesiology at Georgetown University



AP PHOTO/JEAN-MARC BOUQU

Hospital, where I began working in June 2000. My experiences there would be the final straw.

Most residencies are abusive, and this one was no different. But the environment became even more hostile following Sept. 11, 2001.

"I don't want to operate on any Middle Eastern people," one attending physician said.

"We should blow up the countries of each of the hijackers," another said.

These were my supervisors—medical professionals who had taken the Hippocratic oath. But I continued to work under them, business as usual.

By early 2002, we had invaded Afghanistan, and our administration was telling lies to build support for invading Iraq. My relatives, from whom I was still separated, had been starving under sanctions for more than 12 years. Now, we were going to shock and awe them. My tax dollars would help foot the bill.

"We should just nuke 'em," my attending physician said.

In September 2002, overwhelmed by the hypocrisy without and the painful conflict

age from bombing raids was omnipresent. Iraq had been liberated from electricity, security, and potable water. “Democracy” meant sewage in the streets, rolling blackouts, shooting, and explosions. Basrah was much the same, except that the damage appeared to be more extensive; this city had been destroyed during the Iran-Iraq and Gulf wars, and sanctions and neglect had thwarted rebuilding.

Despite the desperation, the novelty of a visit from an American cousin brought us all joy. Getting to know each other for the first time, my cousins and I were like little kids, giggling and joking, whether the electricity was working or not. My stay was short because of the unpredictability of a country without law and order. I had to return to Amman via Baghdad to make my flight home, but I promised my cousins I would return for a longer stay soon, we hoped, when things were better.

But conditions continued to deteriorate. Electricity and water became scarcer, as did jobs. Then, the horrors of Abu Ghraib came to light. Then, came the April 2004 siege, October 2004 assault, and November 2004 massacre in Fallujah. At that point, fearing for my safety amid the widespread anti-American sentiment, my family said, “Don’t come.” But after another year, with no end to the chaos in sight, we decided I would visit again, before the situation worsened.

On Dec. 11, 2005, because the road from Amman to Baghdad was now exceedingly dangerous, I planned to fly to Kuwait and take a taxi to the border. However, elections were only days away, and Iraq had so much freedom that occupation forces had to close the borders to contain it. I arrived in Kuwait City on Christmas morning, and although the landscape was clear on the drive to the border, Iraq’s road to Basrah was still littered with bombed-out civilian cars and tanks.

On my first day in Basrah, we lost electricity completely. On the second day, we lost water. On the third day, we lost telephone service. “I think tomorrow, we lose air,” one cousin said. Despite suffering the hardships of war and occupation their entire lives, my cousins still have a sense of humor. “Do you have electricity in the United States? Can you drink water from the sink without throwing up?” Iraq was a First-World country reduced to Third-World status by American foreign policy. But upon

seeing “advancements” like Pepto-Bismol and space-saver travel bags, another cousin said, “I’m in the 15th World!”

Electrical service is now so poor that most families own a generator (which requires gasoline). Water must be pumped to most homes from a reservoir, so when electricity cuts, so does water. In one phone conversation, my mom tried to distract me from this ridiculousness with news that basketball star Kobe Bryant scored 81 points in a game. “I don’t care! There’s no water!” I responded, with little calm. Even when available, this water is not potable. RO [reverse osmosis] stations exist around the city, where drinkable water can be purchased. Although it won’t make you sick, this water is hard, with a metallic taste, and is likely contaminated with depleted uranium. My cousins rely on bottled water for their young children, predominantly imported from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Speaking of children, epidurals for childbirth are simply not available in Iraq, and many women choose to deliver at home because the hospitals are dirty.

Life goes on in the hope that, one day, circumstances will improve. For now, however, they struggle. One cousin with an economics degree changes oil. Another with a degree in education stays at home. Still another with a biology degree is considering joining the police force.

Iraq is a country that my tax dollars have helped to destroy. Government officials reap profits from war. For example, nine out of 30 members of the Defense Policy Board, a Pentagon advisory group, had ties to companies that won more than \$70 billion in defense contracts in 2001 and 2002. Meanwhile, ordinary families pay the price, from Iraq to Palestine to Southeast Asia to Latin America to the United States. My life has directed me to know my family; I would do anything for them. My medical career is on hold, so I can speak out on the realities of war and occupation. I have family in Iraq. You have family in Iraq. And Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Arlington Cemetery. New Orleans. Planet Earth.

What would you do for your family? What will you do? ☹

*Dahlia Wasfi returned from 3 months in Iraq at the end of March 2006. She is currently a speaker with Global Exchange. For more information, visit [www.globalexchange.org](http://www.globalexchange.org).*



within, I couldn’t continue business as usual. I burned out. I was hospitalized.

From that time on, there was no room for anything but honesty in my life. After rest and recuperation, I understood what my heart had been saying for years. I needed to know my family.

In February 2004, I made a 19-day journey to Iraq. I flew to Jordan and made the 10-hour car ride to Baghdad, whose airport was (and is) controlled by our military. In Iraq’s capital, a year after the invasion, dam-



COURTESY OF DAHLIA WASFI

*Top: A hooded Iraqi prisoner comforts his 4-year-old son while they were detained by U.S. forces in 2003.*

*Above: While visiting Iraq, Dahlia Wasfi connected with family members, including an uncle and two of his grandchildren, Dahlia’s cousins.*

# Why Is Allison Dorsey Still Rising?

"TELL ME WHAT YOU EAT, AND I'LL TELL YOU WHO YOU ARE."

By Alisa Giardinelli

Because this associate professor of history was selected to participate in the National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute on American Civil Rights at Harvard this summer. Because her term as coordinator of Swarthmore's Black Studies Program—one in which she would like to see more students pursue an honors minor—begins this fall. Because she has been asked to write about her experiences teaching African American history for her field's leading journal. Because she appears in an upcoming PBS documentary about Booker T. Washington. Because she assigns items such as pumpkin seeds and chili powder to students in her freshman seminar. Because she was the only person of color in her graduate program for 8 consecutive years. Because she started graduate school with a 2-year-old and had her second son 6 months before her Ph.D. exams. Because, for her, "the light switch went on" about history's relevance while working on the Martin Luther King Jr. Papers Project at Stanford. Because she sits on the board of Girls Inc. of Greater Philadelphia, dedicated to making all girls "strong, smart, and bold." Because she finds it odd, although not bad, that she isn't teaching more "kids like me—little black girls from the projects." Because, 2 years ago, she published her first book, suffered a house fire, saw her youngest son graduate from high school, and traveled to Gambia, West Africa—all in 1 month. Because that book, *Building Our Lives Together: Community Formation in Black Atlanta, 1875–1906*, led to her "rock star" moment, when Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Leon Litwack asked her for a copy.

*Why did you go to Gambia?*

I went because I wanted to see cassava growing and to learn how people there eat and understand it. I discovered they understood it as an ancient, traditional food of Africa. And it's not, it's from the Amazon basin. Although the Portuguese brought it to West Africa, I suspect the knowledge of how to grow and process it is the work of West African women. They were the conduits that transformed it from an exotic South American food into something "African" in a very short period.

*Where did your interest in food as a way into history and culture originate?*

It was born in an Indian restaurant in the early 1980s when I was trying to make sense of why there were white potatoes in East Indian food. With no research, I decided, "The British did it." Actually, the potatoes were there before the British. So the inquiry begins there. I began reading about food origins but not understanding it as a field of study.

*And now you teach a freshman seminar, *The History of Food in North America*.*

In the second week, I give everyone a different, unidentified food item. They have to name it, determine its origin, develop a bibliography about it, and write about how it has been marketed, developed, and adapted. It requires a certain amount of imagination. Those who really get into it include myths and folklore. For our last class, we have a dinner where everyone brings something they've made with their food.

*What is your idea of earthly happiness?*

A couple of bottles of Argentinean Malbec; good bread; great cheese; my husband, Brian; and 8 or 10 friends and neighbors outside on a hot August afternoon.

*What is the lowest depth of misery?*

Facing a struggle without the support of loving family and friends.

*When do you feel most indulgent?*

When I'm in my kitchen, wearing my apron, baking anything with chocolate.

*Who are your heroes of fiction?*

The Count of Monte Cristo because he frees himself and claims his life; and Janie from *Their Eyes Were Watching God* because, when faced with a brutal choice, she chooses her life.

*Who are your real-life heroes?*

Toni Morrison and my mother.

*What is the quality you most admire?*

Fortitude.

*What is the quality you admire least?*

Stinginess.

*Is there an overrated virtue?*

Patience. I'm thinking of King's *Letter From a Birmingham Jail*, when he says why we can't wait.

*What is your most treasured possession?*

A gold necklace that says my name in Arabic. It was a gift from my father, and it keeps his spirit and adventures with me.

*What talent would you most like to have?*

The ability to sing. I'd give my right arm to carry a note in a bucket.

*If you could give your students one piece of advice?*

Swarthmore offers unbelievable opportunities, vast resources, and amazing faculty. Act like you are entitled to all of it, and take advantage.

Associate Professor of History Allison Dorsey scoops pumpkin seeds at The Nut Connection in the Lancaster County Farmers' Market in Wayne, Pa.



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