What Remains

A Vietnam pilot’s daughter and her fight for answers
Good-Bye, Atlantis

By Margaret Lazarus Dean ’94

Mourning the end of the space-shuttle program, a writer looks back at her love of space flight, its particular poetry, and the melancholy of knowing that our children no longer have an American spacecraft on which they can dream of flying.

What Remains

By Jennifer McFarland Flint

Colleen Shine ’86 battled government bureaucracy for decades, in search of the truth about her father’s fate in the Vietnam War. Now, she continues the fight for other families.
Life of the Mind
By Lisa Scanlon ’99

Wellesley’s neuroscience program may be relatively new, but its dedicated faculty and cutting-edge research opportunities leave students clamoring to get into the intro course. Then they get hooked.
his morning, on this December day just before the College closes for the winter holiday break, an item in my Facebook feed caught my attention. It was a post from an alum in Connecticut: “This is on my ‘to do’ list,” she said, and then gave a link to an online article about the 26 Acts of Kindness campaign.

Journalist Ann Curry—searching for something she could do after the tragic Sandy Hook Elementary shootings—posed a question on social media: What would happen if we all committed 20 random acts of kindness to honor each of the children killed in Newtown, Conn.? Her Twitter followers boosted the number to 26, to commemorate the adults who also lost their lives at the school, and soon the idea went viral, with thousands of people taking part. Even a quick glance at Twitter shows many results: flowers left on a random windshield in a parking lot, volunteer time spent reading to children in a shelter, a note of thanks to a school principal, new shoes for a janitor whose boots had been held together by tape. New York Times op-ed columnist Nicholas Kristof called it “a rampage of kindness.”

From my perch in the editor’s chair of this magazine, I often witness similar things happening within the Wellesley community, with its concentric circles reaching around the world. Today, I’ve been remembering the alumna and her family who fled their home in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina—and the college roommate in Pennsylvania who took them all in. Countless other examples come to mind: of older alums mentoring younger ones in the workplace, of classmates caring for others after surgery or the death of a spouse, of young alumnae raising funds for homeless women as they gather to share a Thanksgiving meal. There’s even the story in this issue (“What Remains, page 26), about the quest of Colleen Shine ’86 to learn the fate of her father, a fighter pilot who went missing in Vietnam—and the lovely twist that brought the support of Ann Webster Bunch ’86, a forensic anthropologist, to her side as his remains were returned. All acts of kindness within the Wellesley community.

But are they random acts of kindness that come in fits and starts? I don’t think so. Rather, they represent a steady flow of generosity, and judging by my 16 years in this community, this is the norm, not the exception. This despite the tremendous diversity in the community, both on campus and off—36,000 alumnae, several thousand students, faculty, and staff, from all backgrounds and walks of life. There are many differences to be bridged, but it does happen, and very regularly.

This stream of compassion may have partly to do with the fact that most members of the community have internalized the College’s motto, Non Ministrari sed Ministrare. Today’s students think seriously about “making a difference in the world,” whether in an internship in Cambodia (see page 6) or supporting a roommate through a tough time during midterms. But it may also be that generosity begets generosity, and being open to the presence of good magnifies it.

Which leads me to just one question: Why stop at 26?

—Alice M. Hummer, editor
Letters to the Editor

Wellesley welcomes short letters (a maximum length of 300 words) relating to articles or items that have appeared in recent issues of the magazine. Send your remarks to the Editor, Wellesley magazine, 106 Central St., Wellesley, MA 02481-8203, or email comments to magazine@alum.wellesley.edu.

MULTIFACETED WELLESLEY

As a young alum figuring out what being a Wellesley graduate means to me, I do not always relate to the public narrative of Wellesley. However, I found myself really excited about the fall ’12 Wellesley magazine. This edition did a particularly great job of highlighting the multifaceted nature of our Wellesley community and making me feel connected in new ways.

I really appreciated that the various alumnae showcased came from a variety of professions (“Insider Information”). The invitation to continue discussions about stress and definitions of success made me really hopeful (“Seeing Stars”). The careful modifications made in layout, content, photos, and illustrations all seemed to communicate that not all Wellesley community members are alike, but we’re all pretty awesome.

This edition made me feel a particular sense of belonging to my Wellesley sisters and siblings. Producing a publication that appeals to the entire Wellesley community must be incredibly challenging. Thank you for considering our diversity. I hope the theme of displaying the multiple narratives of Wellesley continues!

MJ FRIEDMAN ’12
Jamaica Plain, Mass.

FROM A ‘CERTIFIED CURMUDGEON’

What a splendid-looking magazine. Through its various design changes over the years, I have been happy, unhappy, frustrated (what’s with strange color backgrounds, I have grumbled, that make the text unreadable?), irked, mollified, etc. The recent issue was legible, attractive, inviting—leading readers swiftly into the stories. And the content was superb as usual. Brava.

That having been said, being a certified curmudgeon, I feel I should ask, Hey, don’t you like your writers? Especially on the profiles, why the teeny bylines hidden at the bottom of the stories? Most writers, I gather, are alums, so readers likely are interested in who they are. And why the boldface on profiles? Boldface and sans serif, which I especially hate in large blocks. Ugly.

BARBARA CARLSON ’50
Branford, Conn.

THE ESSENCE OF WELLESLEY

Just a quick note to share my appreciation for the fabulous magazine redesign! It has captured the essence and values of Wellesley perfectly, and my congratulations to the entire team that made it happen. And of course it goes without saying that the articles and quality of information in the magazine are as amazing as ever. I just learned that I can access the magazine online as well, an added bonus. Keep up the fantastic work, and I can’t wait to receive the next issue!

NAHZ ANVARY ’98
Davis, Calif.

ABOUT THAT COVER...

I think the new format is smashing. The cover, particularly, is very different and at first I wasn’t sure. But the more I think about it, the more I realize just because it is so different. Congratulations to everyone involved. Also, I was very interested in the piece on Pat Shevlin ’71 (“Making the News,” fall ’12) because my husband and I have switched to CBS for network news; they stand out for remaining true to quality news reporting and analysis. Hooray for Pat—I should have known there would be a Wellesley woman behind that!

ANNE MITCHELL MORGAN ’57
Kittery, Maine

ANOTHER NEWS PIONEER

We enjoyed the article about Wellesley women in the business of news, especially hearing about the job Pat Shevlin ’71 is doing on the CBS Evening News With Scott Pelley (“Making the News,” fall ’12). But we hope that people will remember the trailblazer who led the way for all the rest—Joan Richman ’61. We were disappointed that she was not mentioned in the article. She joined CBS in 1965 and during her career became an executive producer and the CBS News vice president and director of special events. She also received the Wellesley Alumnae Achievement Award in 1973. You can read a brief biography on the Alumnae Association website in the section on Achievement Awards.

Joan was warm, witty, wise, and philanthropic. We were privileged to know her!

SYBIL SCHUYLER BRUEL ’61
Hingham, Mass.

JoAN COCKCROFT TINKER ’61
Barrington, Ill.

CORRECTION

In “21 Liters of Outer Space” (fall ’12, “Window on Wellesley”), we erroneously stated that the temperature in the ultrahigh vacuum chamber being built at the College will get down to –20 degrees Kelvin. The temperature will get down to approximately 20 degrees Kelvin. Wellesley regrets the error.

TWEETS TO THE EDITOR

@Wellesleymag, @bust_magazine and the Athleta catalog just all came on the same day. I feel way too empowered.
—@erinjudge (Erin Judge ’02)

I had no idea @State’s Dear Prudence, aka Emily Yoffie, is a @Wellesley alum. I love reading her column! Swells is everywhere. @Wellesleymag
@leahsoo (Leah Driska ’08)

Thanks @wellesleymag for including me on page 31 (#networking article). A dream come true for this 80er! #wellesley
—@BrynJohnson (Bryn Johnson ’89)

@Wellesleymag I really appreciated your memorial of Dr. Marvin, my first art history professor! It did justice to her humor & warmth.
—@chapeaudelfe (Sarah Dickerson ’10)

@Wellesleymag I like the HKBottomly stipple portrait. It lets me make believe I’m a person who reads the Wall Street Journal.
—@realyingwang (Ying Wang ’09)

Continued on page 81

CONTRIBUTORS

JENNIFER MCFARLAND FLINT
is an associate editor at Wellesley. “What Remains” (page 26) is the second feature she has written about a daughter who lost her father in a plane crash, then fought for an honest accounting (see “Secrets and Lies,” spring ’04).

MARGARET LAZARUS DEAN ’94
(“Goodbye, Atlantis,” page 18) first became captivated by space as a child watching an IMAX film about the space shuttle Discovery. She now writes on space travel from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

LSA SCANLON ’99
(“Life of the Mind,” page 34) is an associate editor at Wellesley. An English major who dabbed in the sciences, she wishes NEUR 100 had been offered in the mid-’90s.
Students Who Belong Here

LAST FALL, Wellesley welcomed first-year students to campus and introduced them to our community in a new and important way. Over the summer, each student received a copy of Half the Sky: Turning Oppression Into Opportunity for Women Worldwide, by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, along with a welcoming letter by former Secretary of State Madeleine Korbel Albright ’59. In September, WuDunn visited our first-year students at Wellesley and delivered a lecture. Additionally, students met in small groups, led by student mentors, to discuss this important book.

The lecture was a hit. The discussions were engaging. And our first-year students experienced—in only their second week of classes—the true nature of Wellesley’s intellectual community.

Over the course of last semester, I reflected on why this approach to introducing our youngest Wellesley sisters to our community was so successful. Certainly, the event was thoughtfully planned, both the book and WuDunn were highly engaging, and the discussions led by the student mentors were intimate and thought-provoking. But I think another part of the success can be, and should be, attributed to our first-year students themselves. Who are these young women? What motivates them? And what do they bring to our community?

These are the very questions that the Board of Trustees’ Committee on Admission and Financial Aid discussed last fall as they reviewed the results of the recent entering-student survey. This annual survey paints a more complete picture of our first-year class beyond the typical statistics and test scores. (Of course, as I wrote to alumnae in my State of the College email last fall, those statistics and test scores were once again very strong.)

This survey shows us that the class of 2016 came to Wellesley with experiences that complement and benefit our on-campus community. For instance, two-thirds of the class report that in high school they often had serious conversations with individuals who differed from them politically, religiously, economically, or ethnically, and nearly all had reconsidered their beliefs or assumptions after evaluating others’ arguments. Additionally, 87 percent said it was very important or essential to them to be part of an on-campus community with individuals whose backgrounds and experiences differ from their own. These numbers are a clear statement about what this class brings to our intellectual community!

The class of 2016 also had an impressive array of cross-cultural experiences and backgrounds before coming to Wellesley: 70 percent had traveled abroad on vacation, nearly half of them had traveled abroad with a class or another organization, and one-third had participated in a study abroad or exchange program during high school. Not surprisingly, given these experiences, nearly all believe it is very important or essential that Wellesley provide opportunities for them to gain a global perspective.

What these data tell me is that from the moment our first-year students set foot on campus—and even before that—they were poised to contribute to the Wellesley community in important ways. It also tells me that Wellesley is the right fit for them—they belong here.

Indeed, one of our institutional priorities has been, and will continue to be, recruiting and retaining the kinds of students who belong here. Our financial-aid policies enable us to admit and enroll the very best and brightest from around the country, and around the world, regardless of their financial backgrounds. These priorities and policies are essential to ensuring that Wellesley remains a strong and diverse community of individuals who value the open exchange of ideas and who thrive in a liberal-arts environment.

H. Kim Bottomly
When the Houghton Memorial Chapel was built in 1899, it’s not likely that anyone at the College would have imagined it as the setting for the construction of a sand mandala by six Tibetan Buddhist nuns. “But today, this is exactly what is imagined for this space,” said Victor Kazanjian, dean of intercultural education and religious and spiritual life.

For a week in October, the only sounds in the chapel during the day were those of chanting and sand being guided through metal funnels. The mandala they created (above) represents the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, who in turn represents the energy of compassion. “Our world is going through such great change,” says Ji Hyang Padma ’91, Wellesley’s Buddhist advisor. “This gift of awakened compassion that the nuns bring can revitalize our own vision of the sacred world in the here and now.”

The nuns, among the first women trained in the ancient, sacred art of mandala construction, came to Wellesley from the Keydong Thuk-Che-Cho-Ling Nunnery in Kathmandu, Nepal. It was their second trip to Wellesley to construct a mandala.

At the end of the week, sands from the mandala were cast into Lake Waban, “reminding us that all things are in flux...including ourselves,” says Ji Hyang.

—Lisa Scanlon ’99
“It’s really like Wellesley, a sisterhood of girls who come from all over Cambodia to become future leaders of Cambodia. They become sisters for life.” —Cabrina Kang ’13

WHEN CABRINA KANG ’13 returned last summer from an internship teaching English to young women in Cambodia, she had gained much more than an interesting experience to add to her résumé. “I left with 35 new sisters,” she says, as well as a completely different plan for her life.

An English major with a minor in economics, Kang was considering law school after graduation. Then in fall 2011, at a friend’s recommendation, she signed up for an MIT course called D-Lab: Development, which seeks to design appropriate technologies for developing countries—technologies that are “low cost and use materials that are local,” Kang explains, and that “will make people’s lives better.” As part of the course, teams of students traveled to developing countries over the January 2012 break and worked with local organizations to implement specific projects. Kang was assigned to the Cambodia team and led an educational project designed to better equip young people to solve their own technological challenges.

In one lesson, for example, students learned how to make a flashlight from local materials while also learning relevant English vocabulary words. Kang’s students—who were “exceptionally bright,” she says—were kids from a youth shelter who had formerly picked garbage out of dump sites to make money.

Kang calls this Cambodia trip “the most insane, awesome experience that I have had during my four years at Wellesley.” Eager to do more, she applied for and received a global engagement grant through the College’s Center for Work and Service to return to Cambodia this past summer and complete an internship with the Harpswell Foundation, an organization dedicated to educating and empowering women. Universities in Cambodia do not offer student housing, and many women from rural areas are prevented from attending for the simple reason that they have nowhere to live. (Men are able to live in Buddhist temples.) The Harpswell Foundation therefore operates two dormitory and leadership centers in Phnom Penh, Cambodia’s capital, for women to live in while attending college.

For 10 weeks, Kang taught intermediate English to these women and lived with 35 students in one of the dormitories. “It was really different than my experience in January,” she says, enumerating some of the challenges she faced—including getting lost in the city many times, adjusting to a limited range of food options, and contending with a mysterious insect bite that took a month to heal. At the same time, however, Kang loved becoming close with her students, and she expanded her teaching to include swimming and guitar lessons. “It’s really like Wellesley,” she says, “a sisterhood of girls who come from all over Cambodia to become future leaders of Cambodia. They become sisters for life.”

Kang gave a presentation about her internship in October 2012 at Wellesley’s Tanner Conference, which provides a forum for students to share their off-campus learning experiences. She now plans to pursue development work with a focus on education after she graduates, and she encourages other undergraduates to broaden their class choices and to consider serving internationally or locally. “It just really changes your life,” she says.

—Liz Johnson ’01
GIVEN THE LARGE NUMBER of regions of the world represented and the spectacle involved, it’s no surprise that the 2012 Slater cultural show, called “Pass the Torch,” had an Olympic-related theme. More than 100 Wellesley students performed in 23 different acts, ranging from belly dancing and samba to bossa nova and a Latin American poetry recital. Asian martial arts were represented by Nicole Tay ’14 (wushu, above) and Sookyo Jeong ’14 (kendo, below right). Iglika Atanassova ’15 organized a Bulgarian folk dance act (below left).

Get Cultured

WHEN THE NUMBER OF regions of the world represented and the spectacle involved, it’s no surprise that the 2012 Slater cultural show, called “Pass the Torch,” had an Olympic-related theme. More than 100 Wellesley students performed in 23 different acts, ranging from belly dancing and samba to bossa nova and a Latin American poetry recital. Asian martial arts were represented by Nicole Tay ’14 (wushu, above) and Sookyo Jeong ’14 (kendo, below right). Iglika Atanassova ’15 organized a Bulgarian folk dance act (below left).

Full-Immersion Language Study

STUDENT: Sydney Zander ’14
MAJOR: East Asian Studies
HOMETOWN: Atlanta
STUDYING IN: Hangzhou, China

Tell us about your program.
I am studying with Middlebury’s yearlong program in Hangzhou, China. The three coolest things about this program are having a Chinese roommate, the “language pledge” to speak only Chinese at school, and the freedom to go out and explore the city. I chose this program because of its rigorous curriculum (all classes are conducted in Chinese) and its reputation for being strict with grammar and pronunciation.

What was your first impression of the country?
One of my first impressions was the feeling of being overwhelmed. There seemed to be a lot going on all around, but I later learned that Hangzhou is considered laid back and relaxed compared to the larger cities!

What other activities have you been doing this year?
I’ve taken belly-dance classes at a Chinese studio, gotten involved with a local church, and participated in an extracurricular cooking class.

What are some things you have learned outside the classroom?
The most important things I’ve learned are survival skills, including finding my way around when lost, communicating effectively with locals, and general public etiquette. For example, pushing and squeezing to get into a line, which would be considered rude in the US, is very normal here. Spending time in the city also helps me to observe firsthand some of the social behaviors and customs that I have been studying in the classroom.

What is your favorite part of your daily routine?
Eating out and ordering food. It’s a great combination of cultural exposure, language practice, and delicious food!

Why should a Wellesley student study abroad in China?
There is no substitute for full-time immersion and having millions of people around you to practice the language with. Studying abroad in China is sure to stretch you and make you grow in surprising ways. For me, it has been an invaluable experience learning how to live and survive in the biggest city I’ve lived in thus far. Studying abroad has also boosted my linguistic and overall confidence.

—Sidrah Baloch ’14
ON A FALL DAY LAST SEMESTER, the Wellesley community engaged in a mass exercise of fill-in-the-blanks. Three open-ended statements appeared on computer kiosks in buildings across campus—from the Science Center to the trade shops west of the sports center—inviting responses:

I feel included at Wellesley when _________.
Wellesley would be a more inclusive community if _________.
A small act of inclusion I can do today is _________.

Students, union workers from maintenance and food service, administrators, and faculty members all accepted the invitation to provide answers, which were as varied as the respondents. For example, I feel included when: “… people smile and say hello on the paths”; “… I am not described by my relative age by my colleagues”; “… staff are mentioned with faculty and students as part of the College.”

This “question campaign” was part of the rollout of an initiative called “Be Inspired by Difference: Create Community,” a renewed effort to build a more inclusive campus. Launched with a community lunch on Oct. 16, 2012, the day included a variety of activities, from workshops (for example, on minimizing our unconscious biases) to a “diversity wall” (an exhibit of past and present efforts for inclusivity on campus) to a “community tree” (a place to post ideas for creating a more inclusive campus—such as “encourage more cross-departmental communication and interaction”).

In order to have “a more equitable, more inclusive environment,” says Robbin Chapman, associate provost and academic director of diversity and inclusion, “people [need to] feel like they belong to something and they’re all working in a way toward a common purpose.” For Wellesley, she says, that common purpose is promoting a culture of success for students. But in order to belong, people first need to know one another. One of the important goals of the initiative, Chapman says, is to foster new or deepened relationships among constituencies that don’t normally come into contact. Table seating at the launch luncheon deliberately mixed people who didn’t know each other, with students sitting and working on an activity with a Motor Pool garage mechanic and the College’s CIO, for example.

Chapman lists several other goals for the initiative:
• To promote “a greater self-awareness” in individual members of the community—“who they are, their identity, and actually noticing other people, actually seeing them”;
• To provide “tools and ideas for how to work with other people, especially people different from themselves”;
• To raise awareness of the diversity and inclusion work that has already been done at Wellesley;
• To learn from the community.

Throughout the afternoon and evening of the launch, community members mingled in Tishman Commons and Alumnae Hall, working at computer kiosks and attending workshops, “which were packed,” says Chapman. “We had to pry [people] out with crowbars. [We’d say] our time is up, and they just kept talking. … Everyone wanted more.”

Events—whether workshops and films or simply opportunities for people from different sectors of campus to get to know each other, say, on a campus walk—will continue throughout the year. Chapman points to one early measure of success: Union staff are reporting that for the first time in a long while, students and others are making an effort to acknowledge them.

—Alice Hummer

To learn more about the “Be Inspired by Difference” initiative and view various resources that were provided for the community, visit new.wellesley.edu/diversityandinclusion. The initiative is sponsored by the Partnerships for Diversity and Inclusion, which are spearheaded by Chapman (representing the faculty) and two colleagues: Victor Kazanjian, dean of intercultural education and religious and spiritual life (representing the students) and Carolyn Slaboden, interim co-director of human resources and director of employment, diversity, and inclusion (representing the administrative and union staff).
The Question Campaign  
This effort, Chapman says, provided valuable information about what already makes people feel included in the community, and what can be done to help others feel supported and valued. The Partnerships for Diversity and Inclusion, which sponsored the day’s events, created a word cloud and a video from some of the community’s answers to the three questions (watch it at bit.ly/SVz8yA). A sampling of the responses:

I feel included at Wellesley when ________.
… someone thanks me for cleaning the bathroom or when they hold the door open and don’t pretend that they don’t see me. —Union staff member
… people ask me questions about my faith or about who I am or what I’m interested in just from a political-science perspective, which is my major. —Student
… there’s an event that I’m going to and someone’s thought about access, leaving a door open, having seats removed so I’ve got an accessible space to sit in. —Staff member who uses a wheelchair

Wellesley would be a more inclusive community if ________.
… we all remembered a little more consistently to give each other the benefit of the doubt. —Staff member
… [people] knew how to distinguish me from others and didn’t confuse me for [other] Asian-American [faculty] on campus. —Faculty member
… people were more open to striking up conversations. —Student

A small act of inclusion I can do today is ________.
… say hello to someone I might not have ever spoken to before. —Student
… smile. —Union staff member
… really open up myself and listen to people’s stories. —Faculty member

A Permanent Rebellion

IN ONE OF HER EARLY WORKS, Cutting Out the New York Times, writer and artist Lorraine O’Grady ’55 sought to find meaning in the random by piecing together clippings from the Sunday Times into poems that reflected her personal sensibility. “This could be/The Permanent Rebellion/that lasts a lifetime,” declares one of the poems in bold, inky newsprint.

Now that O’Grady has given her papers to the Wellesley College Archives, a record of her rebellion will last many lifetimes. O’Grady’s papers are the first major alumnae archives to come to Wellesley and include correspondence, exhibition records, drafts of writing, notes, journals, interviews, and audiovisual materials.

“We have great resources in Special Collections with their old manuscripts, and we have wonderful resources about the institution, but we just realized that there’s a huge hole in between those that would really help scholars, as well as the Wellesley community, in their research,” says Jane Callahan, assistant archivist.

O’Grady, who was born in Boston to Jamaican immigrants, had a wide-ranging career before finding her calling. She worked as an intelligence analyst, a translator, and a rock critic before discovering the conceptual and performance art world in New York City. She realized that this kind of art is “a way I can understand my life, I can understand my world,” she says.

O’Grady’s introduction to the New York art scene was as her persona “Mlle Bourgeoise Noire” (Miss Black Middle Class) in 1980, through which she urged black artists to take more risks in their work. The Davis Museum’s recent exhibit A Generous Medium: Photography at Wellesley 1972–2012 included these two photographs from “Sisters I–IV” (above), which strikingly juxtapose a portrait of O’Grady’s sister Devonia with an image of a sculpture of Nefertiti. The artist’s work has also been in such exhibits as the Whitney Biennial and the Triennale de Paris.

O’Grady hopes that through the archives, Wellesley students will see “that there are different ways of being a Wellesley woman … I wanted to say, ‘I’m here, too.’”

—Lisa Scanlon ’99
To the Point

“Going at someone with a metal sword,” says Courtney Collins ’14, makes for “a nice break in the day.” Of course, the co-captain of the fencing team explains, the sport is based more on speed and strategy than sheer aggression: “People say it’s like physical chess at 100 miles per hour.”

An architecture and American studies major, Collins advanced to the NCAA Regionals her first year but was sidelined last year with an elbow injury that made it difficult even to write, let alone hold a weapon. “Thankfully, I’m back,” she says, “and I’m really excited for this season.”

Weapons of Choice

Fencers specialize in one of three weapons: foil, épée, or sabre. Foil fencers have the smallest target—the torso—and must be patient and precise. Épée fencers tend to be taller because they target the entire body, while sabre fencers run quickly at their opponents, using a slashing motion to target the torso, head, and arms.

Medal Round

“One of my brothers used to watch the fencing scene in a James Bond movie over and over,” Collins remembers, and with his encouragement she joined their school team in seventh grade. In eighth grade, she switched from foil to épée, and began bringing home the medals. She hasn’t looked back since.

Touché

Five touches win a bout; if neither fencer scores five touches within three minutes, the fencer with more touches wins. (There are special provisions in case of a tie.) The team fences nine bouts per weapon for a total of 27 bouts, and must win 14 of them to win a match.

My Dinner with Épée

The 12-woman team (nine starters and three alternates) practices together every weekday afternoon and then heads over to the campus center for a group dinner. The team graduated eight seniors two years ago and is still rebuilding, but Collins is confident that “we have a few individuals who are really going to shine this year.”

Advance Work

Fencers must be exceptionally quick to score touches without getting hit, and must move along a strip that is 14 meters long and 1.5 meters wide. The Wellesley team therefore spends a good deal of time practicing advancing, retreating, and lunging—a fast, attacking movement, “like pouncing like a cat,” Collins says.
The 6,700-Mile-Wide Classroom

THINK OF IT AS ONE CLASS—on two continents. For the fall 2012 semester, half of the 22 students in POL 219, The Politics of Human Development in Pakistan, were on campus in Wellesley; the rest were at Fatima Jinnah Women University in Rawalpindi.

The course pushed the facilities in Pendleton East to a new level: For the first time, every session of a course was conducted by live videoconference. But please don’t call it online learning. Rather, as Christopher Candland, associate professor of political science, tells it, the technological connection is in service to a human connection.

The course grew out of Candland’s frustration that the US State Department’s de facto ban on student travel to Pakistan means that a generation of American students is losing the opportunity to make a personal connection to Pakistan. The country captured his imagination as a teenager. But the kind of travel he did as a young man is no longer possible for young Americans.

Professor Candland team-taught POL 219, offered for the first time last semester, with his friend and colleague Fayyaz Baqir, director of the Akhter Hameed Khan Resource Centre in Islamabad. Baqir also runs the United Nations Human Development Programme’s grant program in Pakistan. The course also featured a parade of high-level guest speakers, such as I.A. Rehman, chair of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, and Khadija Haq, widow of the architect of Pakistan’s original economic development policy and a scholar in her own right. “It was amazing all they opened up for us,” said Susan Shaw CE/DS ‘14, one of the students in the class.

With three cameras and plenty of microphones, the Wellesley students gave their Pakistani counterparts a good audiovisual experience. Production values from Pakistan weren’t quite so strong, but the Wellesley students could still see and hear their counterparts easily.

Each group learned from the other—it was news in Rawalpindi that Americans don’t all hate Pakistan and aren’t all “rich and happy.” Jessica Walker ’14, an international-relations major interested in pursuing “smarter solutions” to development challenges, called the class “great” and praised its practical bent.

The technical support provided by Jarlath Waldron, director of instructional media for the College, drew rave reviews from the students as well as Candland. “The engagement of the technician makes all the difference,” he says.

There were some hiccups. Skype filled in one day when the normal audio link went haywire. Lights sometimes dimmed in the classroom in Rawalpindi. But the jerkiness that so often plagues videoconferencing was only minimal—perhaps because of light network traffic at the early hour when the course met: 8:30 A.M. in Wellesley.

For the final class, each student was paired with a partner from the other country to consider together—via Skype or other connection—a list of questions about what they had learned. Several answers suggested that this was the kind of course that changes career plans.

And at the final class meeting, it was clear that some real bonds had been formed. “We became friends on Facebook,” one of the Wellesley students observed of her partner, “and in real life, too.”

—Ruth Walker
“I THINK IN SOME WAYS EDX will change the world.” Those are President H. Kim Bottomly’s words on Wellesley’s new “grand experiment” in online learning. The College announced on Dec. 4, 2012, that it would be joining edX, a consortium founded by Harvard and MIT, to offer online versions of their courses free of charge to anyone with the requisite internet connection—including, of course, alumnae. The first “WellesleyX” offerings are expected this fall.

Launched in May 2012, edX has already picked up some prestigious universities as partners. But Wellesley is the first liberal-arts college, and first women’s college, to sign on. This is drawing interest, but also questions. After all, at many large research institutions, students are used to being one among literally hundreds in a lecture hall; how could taking a MOOC—a massive open online course—be much different? The heart of the Wellesley experience, on the other hand, is the small-class experience, with lots of interaction among students and their professors. How can that be represented online? And even if online courses are offered for no academic credit, as is the plan for now, won’t their availability as an alternative to on-campus education inevitably devalue the Wellesley degree?

At this point, there are more questions than answers. But both President Bottomly and Andrew Shennan, provost and dean of the College, speak of edX in terms that make clear their desire to see Wellesley put its imprint on a development that is occurring anyway.

“We think that we do undergraduate education as well as anyone in the world,” Shennan says, “and so it seemed right that we should find a way for our creative, dedicated faculty to get access to this new model so that they can experiment with it, and, we hope, enhance it, develop it in ways that might not have occurred to people teaching within a university context.”

Participation in edX will be a major investment for the College, and in large part, Shennan says, an investment in the Wellesley faculty, among whom he senses “a high level of interest” in the new venture.

Wellesley’s edX offerings will reflect the College’s identity as an institution for educating women. If Wellesley has a commitment to the small liberal-arts college approach to higher education, it also has a commitment to women. Access to education remains an issue for women and girls in many parts of the world, and often the issues are less technical than social and cultural. It’s not hard to imagine online learning becoming a force for change in such places.

—Ruth Walker

“A LOT HAS CHANGED about Café Hoop since it was founded in 1981, most noticeably its location: It’s now on the lower level of the Lulu Chow Wang Campus Center instead of in the basement of Billings. But it is undeniably the same funky, colorful student-run cooperative as in the days of old, and it still satisfies late-night cravings with its most popular menu item: nachos.

“Cheese on literally every chip. Hoop Nachos = Perfection as always,” a student raved on the Hoop’s Facebook fan page recently. Apart from cheese, toppings include bean dip, black beans, jalapeños, olives, guacamole, sour cream, and salsa. They come in three sizes: mini nachos, regular size, and “supernachos” that are good for a crowd. “It’s a recent phenomenon to have the mini nachos turn into super mini nachos, so you have this incredibly precarious task of arranging a huge amount of ingredients on a tiny little plate,” says Laura Marin ’13, a “Hoopie,” as the café staffers call themselves.

Customers are lured into the Hoop by the tasty snacks, but Hoopies are drawn to the organization for the camaraderie. “It’s not like other campus orgs, where it has to do with a certain theme,” says Hoop General Manager Nicole Kukulka ’13. “It’s just about together-ness and community … and making really great friendships at Wellesley.”

We stick together like nachos. Gooey, gooey nachos.”

—Lisa Scanlon ’99
President H. Kim Bottomly spoke last fall at the luncheon launching the College’s diversity and inclusion initiative (page 8). She described how she felt included at the beginning of her presidency:

“When I came to Wellesley College, I was different from Wellesley’s most recent previous presidents. I wasn’t an alumna. I didn’t attend a small liberal-arts college. And I didn’t go to a women’s college. I came from a big research university, and my home base there was in a medical school. … On my first day on campus, I decided to take a walk. It was raining and so, without thinking, I grabbed an umbrella at random and enjoyed my walk along the then-unfamiliar paths. Not long after that, a group of student leaders gave me a care package. The care package included a Wellesley umbrella with a note that said, ‘President Bottomly: You can’t be walking across campus with a Yale umbrella!’ The students had noticed my faux pas, and they did something about it with grace and humor. I was grateful, and amused. The care package also included a sign for me to use on my first Marathon Monday. It said, ‘Kiss me. I’m the President.’ I have never used the sign, of course, but still cherish the gift and the good-humored, inclusive thought behind it.”
Dan Sichel is as handy with a hammer as he is with measures of gross domestic product. By day, he is the newest professor in the Department of Economics, where his research focuses on macroeconomics, productivity and economic growth, technology, and economic measurement. In his free time, he builds Arts and Crafts-style bookcases. “It’s a very nice counterpoint to the more academic stuff I study,” says Sichel.

Oddly enough, in pursuit of both his passions—carpentry and macroeconomics—Sichel has counted out more than a few nails. He’s put together data on their price going back to the 1700s, tracking how it declined by a factor of 10 or more as the Industrial Revolution progressed. “The state house in Maryland was built in the 1780s, and the dome was put together with wooden pegs and iron straps because nails were scarce and expensive,” explains Sichel.

As a contemporary economic indicator, computers play a comparable role. Sichel studied their economic impact in his book The Computer Revolution, which he completed while a research associate at the Brookings Institution in the mid-’90s. But increasingly, he’s interested in economic value that is much harder to quantify: Walmart’s supply-chain expertise, for example. “In a modern economy, knowledge and intellectual property—‘intangible capital’—is just as big as tangible capital, and measuring it is hard,” he explains.

Prior to joining the Wellesley faculty this fall (as a tenured professor, no less), Sichel spent 20 years in public policy, primarily at the Federal Reserve. There, he had a front-row seat to some of the biggest economic developments of the past two decades: the internet bubble, 9/11, and the 2008 global financial crisis. “I wasn’t a policy maker, but I was one of the people helping to provide those folks with the information they needed to create decisions. In fall 2008, there was a remarkable stretch when daily or weekly a new problem would arise—a new firm about to go under—and policy makers were scrambling to respond to that. It was really hard, really tiring, really rewarding intellectually.”

As exciting as all of that was, Sichel was looking to make a change when he came to Wellesley. So far he has had ample opportunity to draw on his policy experience. This fall, while teaching a 300-level seminar on macroeconomic policy, he assigned a group exercise to stabilize the US debt at 60 percent of GDP by 2021. Moreover, he insisted his students produce a compromise plan that three-fifths of them could agree on—a threshold equivalent to a supermajority in the US Senate. “It came down to the wire, but the class did agree upon a plan: a mix of tax increases and spending cuts. In addition, there’s a carbon tax and a modest value-added tax. While this plan likely differs in some ways from what the president and Congress might agree to, the spirit of compromise sets a useful example for the nation’s leaders.”

Sichel is careful when he discusses what economists bring to the national discussion. “We all know less than we think we know. Being intellectually humble is really important.” Perhaps not surprising, then, that he keeps a Magic 8 Ball on his desk. “Every forecaster ought to have one of those.”

—Sarah Ligon ’03
Discipline. “Not everybody thinks of peace studies as a legitimate field of study. They think it is normative that we have an agenda,” she says. “We do, but it’s not like other departments don’t.”

Still, her association and experiences at Wellesley so far have been good. “The students are just so curious and enthusiastic about changing the world,” she says. Not unlike a girl sitting in a class in Brescia, Italy, many years ago.

—Sarah Ligon ’03

Catia Confortini can still remember the day her “activist gene” was switched on. She was a middle schooler in Brescia, Italy, and her teacher, a nun, was having students put together care packages for her coreligionists in Africa, while “teaching about … what in Catholic liberation theology was called the ‘preferential option for the poor.’”

Pretty radical stuff for a small town in central Italy in 1970s. But that combination of activism and instruction took root in Confortini. Now an assistant professor in the Peace and Justice Studies program, she combines her academic interests in peace studies and feminism with a busy activist career, most notably as the current US representative to the board of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom. (She has also just published a book about the WILPF, Intelligent Compassion: Feminist Critical Methodology in the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom.)

The mission of the organization, founded at the outbreak of World War I, was—and still is—to bring about permanent disarmament and gender equality. It now has special consultative status at the United Nations.

It was Confortini’s interest in WILPF that led her to a position at Wellesley. “One of my intellectual heroes was Emily Greene Balch, who taught at Wellesley and was a founder of WILPF,” says Confortini. “She was professor of sociology and economics and was fired because of her pacifism.” (The trustees later apologized, and Balch went on to win the Nobel Peace Prize in 1946.)

Although pacifist academics such as Confortini are now welcome on Wellesley’s campus, she says there is still some way to go before Peace and Justice Studies is fully accepted as an academic discipline. “Not everybody thinks of peace studies as a legitimate field of study. They think it is normative that we have an agenda,” she says. “We do, but it’s not like other departments don’t.”

Still, her association and experiences at Wellesley so far have been good. “The students are just so curious and enthusiastic about changing the world,” she says. Not unlike a girl sitting in a class in Brescia, Italy, many years ago.

—Sarah Ligon ’03

For Assistant Professor Smitha Radhakrishnan, sociology and dance are happy partners. A student of Indian classical dance since childhood, she has found that her art form has opened doors for research on ethnicity, race, and femininity. At Wellesley, Radhakrishnan teaches sociology classes on topics ranging from gender to nationalism. In her time off, she performs Bharatanatyam and Mohiniyattam, two forms of classical dance from South Asia, professionally.

How would you characterize your performance work?

[Bharatanatyam and Mohiniyattam] both combine rhythmic foot and body work that is abstract with mimetic, expressive work that communicates stories. For the last four years, I have taken my engagement with combining the rhythmic/abstract with storytelling to a different level through my work with Navarasa Dance Theater, a Boston-based professional dance company that creates original works borrowing from Indian dance forms, Indian martial arts forms, theater, and yoga. So I don’t just dance on stage. I also talk, sing, and occasionally swing from ropes or march in military formation, according to the demands of the production.

What does this demand of you as a dancer?

Physical fitness, a willingness to be humbled every time you try to do something, emotional openness to try to go to a place you’ve never experienced before. And as a reward, I get the unique exhilaration of performing, a high that is especially amazing when you’re doing it in a group that you’ve worked hard with.

How does dance feed your academic life?

Dance is the one thing in my life that has not been subjected to thorough academic scrutiny. But it inevitably happens in lockstep with my academic life. When I lived in South Africa as a grad student, for example, being a dancer offered me incredible access to the South African Indian community I was studying. At that time, rehearsal and performance was also fieldwork. And in my most recent period of fieldwork, being in India allowed me to study dance with a teacher I could not have otherwise learned from. Dancing keeps me sane enough to be an academic, and academia allows me the flexibility to keep dancing!

—Alice Hummer
Unlikely Soul Mates on the Nile

The Twelve Rooms of the Nile by Enid Steine Shomer ’65 evocatively envisages what might have happened if Florence Nightingale and Gustave Flaubert met while traveling down the Nile in 1850. Interweaving historical fact with imaginative speculation, Shomer’s first novel is smart and sensual. An established author of six books of poetry and two short-story collections, she writes with a lyric sensibility that elevates the potentially weighty wealth of the historical material on which she draws. Selectively working from letters, diaries, and biographical fact, Shomer intricately pulls us into the complex inner worlds of two very different geniuses, while remaining attentive to the often exotic material realities and cultural practices of mid-19th-century Egypt.

Virginal but strong, radical but naive, Florence, fresh from a broken relationship, travels to Egypt with a protective entourage. Meanwhile, Gustave and his peripatetic friend Maxime Du Camp document ancient Egyptian monuments while wantonly partaking of as many sensual pleasures as possible. Suffering from seizures and reeling from an abysmal response to his first novel and a failed attempt at law school, Gustave struggles to realize his ambitions. While his sensibility is very different than Florence’s—she is “like an English sparrow, short of wing, busy with purpose,” while he bears resemblance to a “flirtatious, feathery bird of paradise”—they quickly find themselves drawn to each other. Freed from the confines of their usual Western lives, they speak frankly about issues of ambition, gender, and class, and shared experiences of depression, shame, and regret.

In telling a tale about historical figures before they became famous, Shomer’s The Twelve Rooms of the Nile foreshadows how Florence and Gustave traverse thorny issues of sex, power, and independence in their quest to change both themselves and their historical milieu. Though brief and never consummated, their passionate friendship, as Shomer imagines it, plays a role in their evolution into the prominent figures they will eventually become: a religious radical who would refuse the roles of wife and mother to become the founder of

When Normal Has Flown the Coop

THE BEST THRILLERS make you gasp and compel you to read quickly, but they also make you think. Malinda Lo ’96 accomplishes this feat with Adaptation, a novel that combines imagery reminiscent of Daphne du Maurier’s The Birds with conspiracy theories worthy of The X-Files. This is Lo’s third young-adult novel, after Ash (2009) and Huntress (2011).

Seventeen-year-old Reese Holloway and her debate partner, David Li, are in the Phoenix airport when they hear of a shocking crisis: Around North America, countless airplanes are crashing after colliding with birds. The airport is in a state of chaos, so their debate coach rents a car to drive them home to California. On the road, the danger increases. Reese and David eventually get to San Francisco—but only after a mysterious stay in a classified government treatment facility, where they are subjected to who-knows-what-all kinds of tests. (Their memory from this time...
Beyond Saris and Dowries

Mishi Saran ’90 was born in India and lived there until she was 10. But China captivated her at Wellesley, and this self-described “Indian woman with a China craze” moved to Hong Kong in 1994 and Shanghai in 2006. Her first book, Chasing the Monk’s Shadow, followed the travels of a 7th-century Chinese Buddhist monk along the Silk Road from China to India. Now her first novel, The Other Side of Light, returns to India.

What was the inspiration for the novel’s narrator and her three friends? I used to be quite a fan of Sex and the City but always wished the women were less vacuous and talked about more than just the men they were involved with. There are far too few novels about modern Indian women, and I got seriously sick of reading about Indian women solely in the context of saris, chutney, mangoes, henna, dowry—you get the picture.

The novel’s backdrop is India’s sociopolitical turmoil of the 1980s and 1990s. What are your memories of those times? I only have very vague memories of the political events in India as a child. I left India in 1978 and after that, I only visited about once a year. Having been largely absent from that arena … I drew on Ramachandra Guha’s excellent history, India After Gandhi. I am fascinated by the way ordinary people’s lives are fingered by wider political dramas that otherwise may have only been distant bits of news on the TV.

What was it like to write a novel as opposed to a travelogue? The experience of embarking on the Silk Road for a year-long journey—pretty much into the unknown—was terrifying. Launching into fiction was no less frightening. To paraphrase somebody, writing fiction is like jumping off a cliff and building wings on the way down.

By Amy Yee ’96 | Yee is a journalist based in New Delhi.

Bibliofiles

Why has China captivated you so? My love affair with China began at Wellesley in 1987, during those 8 a.m. language classes with professors Ruby Lam and Theresa Yao. Those Chinese characters! The stories! It was all so different to anything I’d come across before, and it blew my mind. Starting in the summer of 2006, my affair with China began a slow metamorphosis and became a love affair with Shanghai … Maybe just like me, Shanghai fits nowhere.

Freshink

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—Escucha Means Listen, e-book, Musa Publishing
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SUSAN R. ANDREWS ’71 — The Tears of God: Jesus as Passion and Promise, Cycle C Sermons for Lent and Easter Based on the Gospel Texts, CSS Publishing Company
MARTHA SHIPMAN ANDREWS ’68 — Out of the Shadows: The Women of Southern New Mexico, Rio Grande Books

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ANNE HENDREN ’73 — A Dream of Good and Evil, Ring of Fire Publishing
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WHEN THE SPACE SHUTTLE THUNDERED INTO THE SKY FOR THE FINAL TIME, A WRITER PONDERED THE POETRY OF SPACEFLIGHT.

GOOD-BYE, ATLANTIS

BY MARGARET LAZARUS DEAN ’94
ILLUSTRATIONS BY STUART BRADFORD
**I**

**ATLANTIS, JULY 2011**

I wake up at 4 a.m. in a motel room near Cape Canaveral, Fla. I turn on the TV and dress in the dark. This motel room is familiar to me by now—its ’70s-era brown color scheme, its strong smell of air freshener barely covering cigarette smoke, faint mildew, and, underneath that, the smell of the ocean. I have come to associate this room, this smell, with the sensation of waking in the dark after only a couple of hours of sleep, as this is my fourth time here. A space shuttle is scheduled to launch later this morning. It will be the last space-shuttle launch for all time.

On the TV, a newscaster reports from the Kennedy Space Center. Over her shoulder, the launchpad is lit up with floodlights in the predawn dark. Atlantis is stacked there, poised nose-up, ready to go. Because I have stood where that reporter is standing, I know she is being bitten by many vicious mosquitoes and pretending not to be. The huge countdown clock continues marking the time left until launch by hundredths of a second in huge orange numbers. It’s now T minus seven hours.

I gather my things and head out the door, making sure my press badge is securely attached to me. Without it, I will not be able to get into the press site where that newscaster stands. When I go outside and slip into my car, it is already hot and humid. Primitive insects clamor in the trees. Out on the causeways, strings of red taillights light up like fireflies, other people already heading for the Cape.

**II**

**THE DREAM IS ALIVE, SUMMER 1985**

The interior of the space shuttle Discovery is both cozy and industrial, its every surface covered with drawers, tools, airlock hatches, knobs, rivets, and strips of Velcro for keeping small objects from drifting about. The camera pans around the cockpit, with its thousands of beige switches and its small, oddly shaped windows. No one seems to be there. The camera floats around to the mid-deck. Still no one. Along the wall, two large, bright blue bundles float horizontally. The camera approaches one and finds in it a sleeping man.

Now we move in on the lower bundle, where we discover a woman of surprising beauty, her dark curly hair floating about her. This is Judith Resnik, astronaut. She sleeps, or pretends to sleep; her long lashes rest on her cheeks. Her tanned arms linger in the air before her, and the look of peace on her face is captivating. Judith Resnik sleeps in space.

I am a child in an IMAX theater at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. I know very little about spaceflight, but I have just fallen in love. The film I am watching with my father and brother is *The Dream Is Alive*, made up of stunning shots of space shuttles launching and landing, footage captured by IMAX cameras sent up on three shuttle missions, images of the gorgeous blue Earth endlessly rolling by underfoot. What I love best are the scenes of sweetly mundane domestic life lived inside the spaceship: smiling astronauts in shorts and sock feet, working, eating, chatting in their headsets with Houston, floating companionably together. Judith Resnik sleeps in space, and my fascination with her will be undiminished by her death on Challenger not long after. I don’t particularly aspire to be an astronaut, but at the same time I want to be Judith Resnik when I grow up—I want somehow to be involved with all this.
III
HOW TO WATCH A SPACE-SHUTTLE LAUNCH, 1981–2011

I
Get to your viewing spot anywhere between five and 10 hours in advance of the launch window. Bring a lunch, a book, caffeinated beverages, sunscreen, bug repellent, sunglasses. Bring a radio (or, in later years, a smartphone) for listening to the launch announcer, crew chatter, and countdown. Bring notebook and pen to record the strange and revealing utterances of your fellow space fans.

II
Understand the meaning of the term “launch window.” Understand the difference between a slip and a scrub. Understand the difference between solid and liquid fuel, a day launch and a night launch, a polar orbit and an equatorial orbit. Understand the history of the space shuttle, its accomplishments, its compromises, its disasters.

III
If you listen closely to your radio or phone, you may get to hear the launch director doing a launch status check of the managers responsible for each aspect of the flight.

“OTC?” “Go.”
“LPS?” “Go.”
“Houston Flight?” “Houston is go.”
“Safety Console?” “Go.”

This is known as “polling the room,” and it dates back to missile launch procedures from the early days at Cape Canaveral. Last polled is the commander of the mission, the astronaut strapped into his or her seat at the top of the steaming stack. “CDR?” “CDR. We are go.”

To me, this sequence is a poem, part of the poetry of spaceflight.

IV
Count down along with the NASA announcer. Ten. Nine. Eight. Seven. When we reach six, the announcer will say, “Main engine start,” and when she does you will see a light on the horizon. But the launch can still abort at this point. Once we reach zero, the solid rocket boosters ignite, and we know the astronauts are going to space, ready or not. The solids can’t be shut down.

This countdown has the same emotional effect on just about everyone. We can’t help feeling a tingle of suspense when we hear it, a tiny triumph at zero. The countdown to zero is also part of the poetry of spaceflight.

V
Even from the best viewing sites, it takes a few seconds for the sound of the launch to travel the distance from the launchpad to your ears. For this reason, the first few seconds of launch always have a silent-film majesty. The space shuttle lifts itself silently and slowly at first—impossibly slowly. The light emanating from a space-shuttle launch is different in color, quality, and intensity from any other kind of light. Photographs and films can only approximate it, can only serve as a souvenirs of the strange sensation, the combination of beauty

and near-painfulness of that specific brightness in the sky.

Then the sound comes—indescribable—a low rumbling spreading itself out across the landscape and into the beating of your heart, a rumbling accompanied by a crackling that may remind you of fireworks, or of firearms. The sound reminds us that these machines were missiles before they were repurposed for the peaceful exploration of space. And if you have become too emotionally involved with the American space program, this sound can make you cry.

VI
All of the above knowledge is useless now, like the defunct knowledge abandoned by past generations—how to navigate a ship by the stars; how to compute logarithms with a slide rule. I knew it would soon become useless; still, it breaks my heart.
unlike me, followed her desire to study astronomy. Pamela Melroy ’83 went on to earn a graduate degree at MIT, became a military pilot, served in the Gulf War, then became a test pilot. She was selected as an astronaut candidate in 1994 and flew on three space-shuttle missions—twice as pilot and once as commander. Melroy got to answer the launch status check, “CDR is go,” and then she went to space.

We like to tell young people they can do anything they set their minds to, yet I feel quite certain I could not have done the things Melroy did, no matter how hard I had tried. There is a special type of envy, one that others have written about, an envy that comes of watching others travel in space. It’s not an unpleasant feeling. It’s integral to the experience of watching other humans soaring into the heavens while we, with pen and paper, are stuck on the ground.
What I remember from the last launch of Atlantis is disbelief at the moment the solid rockets lit up, because I had convinced myself that the launch would scrub due to weather and that I would have another day at the Kennedy Space Center, another chance to see it all again. As Atlantis slowly separated from the launch platform, struggled against gravity, and pulled itself into the sky, I glanced over at the countdown clock. T plus 10 seconds. T plus 20 seconds. Atlantis hadn’t even achieved orbit yet, but already I mourned the fact that there will never be another space-shuttle countdown again.

Atlantis would return to Earth safely in two weeks, and I would be back here at the Kennedy Space Center to see it. After punching back through Earth’s atmosphere with a double sonic boom, Atlantis would make a perfect landing on the runway and come to a stop while we onlookers clap and cheer. Later that morning, I would see Atlantis being slowly rolled back to its hangar while a group of soon-to-be-laid-off space workers walked alongside, as slowly as a funeral procession.

I’m left to sort out what it means that my country has achieved so much in spaceflight, and what it means that we aren’t going to be doing it any more.
I am back on the Space Coast, back in my familiar brown hotel room. Today we are here to see Atlantis roll out of the Vehicle Assembly Building and down the street to its final resting place as a display at the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex. The journey is 10 miles, but on its special ground transporter, sort of an enormous flatbed, Atlantis moves at barely a crawl. With many pauses for turns and course adjustments and stops to have its picture taken, Atlantis will be on the road all day. I follow along with it, taking pictures and meeting other space fans, and toward the end of the day Atlantis is joined by a group of veteran astronauts, including some from Mercury and Apollo. The astronauts wear their blue flight jackets and wave gamely. Most of them have gray or white hair, even the shuttle astronauts. We clap and cheer.

“I keep hearing people use the term ‘bittersweet,’” the NASA administrator says in his speech. “For me, today isn’t a bittersweet day. Today is a great day.”

Yet without another spacecraft to replace the shuttle, I have trouble feeling his optimism. American children no longer have an American spacecraft on which to dream of flying.

As the sun sets, fireworks erupt over Atlantis where it is parked just outside its new museum home. When it’s all over, we stumble back to our cars in the dark, media and space workers and space fans. While I’m waiting at a red light to leave the Visitor Complex and meet some space friends for dinner and drinks, I catch sight of the back end of Atlantis as it eases the last few feet into the museum building, its enormous tail fin and main engine nozzles. Slowly, it disappears from my view. Then, just as my traffic signal changes, the lights of the flatbed switch off. Its driver climbs out—his reflective vest catches my headlights in the dark—and, finished with his day’s work, he salutes his buddies, looks up at the spacecraft, then slowly walks away.

Margaret Lazarus Dean ’94 is the author of The Time It Takes to Fall, a novel about the space shuttle Challenger disaster, and Leaving Orbit: Notes From the Last Days of American Space, a book of creative nonfiction due out in 2014. She teaches English at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.
Colleen Shine ’86 had been consumed by the fate of her father since the day his A-7 fighter jet disappeared in the clouds over Vietnam in 1972. Certain that planes and their pilots don’t just “disappear,” she fought for answers, both for her family and others like them. The year 2012 marked the beginning of the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. As of Veteran’s Day of last year, 1,655 Americans were still unaccounted for, their families still awaiting answers.

O n the decades-old X-rays projected on the wall, Colleen Shine ’86 could see exactly where her father’s two front teeth had been chipped in a college football game, then restored with porcelain on the front, gold on the back. The dentistry clearly matched the teeth in a piece of jawbone on the table before her in the Central Identification Lab in Hawaii (CILHI). Lt. Col. Robert Temple, an odontologist at the lab, explained the bone’s chain of custody to Shine and her brother, Shannon, with quiet respect, as Ann Webster Bunch ’86 stood by.

Bunch was a forensic anthropologist at the lab, which has a mission to “search for, recover, and identify US personnel missing from past military conflicts,” but her role that day was primarily that of friend. She clarified points here and there, but the evidence would be obvious to a layperson: The jawbone on the table belonged to Anthony Shine, and he could not have survived without it. It was 1997, almost a quarter-century after his plane vanished in 1972, and at long last his fate was clear.

Colleen and Shannon walked out of CILHI with their father’s remains tucked inside a handsome wooden box decorated with the US Air Force emblem. They left with the certainty that they were seeing their father, “though not in the way you had hoped for so many years,” she says. And they left with an undiminished resolve to “do all we could to promote an honest accounting … for the many other [cases] the CILHI scientists were working on at the time and in the future.”
The Knock on the Door
Capt. Anthony Shine was a strapping Norman Rockwell footballer type who towered over his 30-year-old wife, Bonnie, and their three children in 1972. He was nearing the end of his second tour of duty that December, when he radioed to his wingman from the cockpit of his A-7 fighter jet that he was descending through a thick cloud cover to get a better look at a North Vietnamese supply convoy near the border of Laos. The wingman didn’t hear from or see Shine again. No parachutes were observed, no emergency signals received. Although other aircraft reported a ground fire and possible crash site, a search-and-rescue team turned up nothing. Anthony Shine was listed as missing in action on Dec. 2; his case was assigned reference number (REFNO) 1950.

Colleen Shine remembers the knock on the door that announced the news. She was 8, her brothers 10 and 3. Details of the day are seared into her memory: the snow at their upstate New York home, the look on her mother’s face, and the sofa where she sat her two older children to share the raw truth—that they just didn’t know what had happened, whether he was alive. Patriotism and military service run deep in the family; Colleen Shine “knew what war was, even as a child. But we had a lot of hope,” she says. They put away their Christmas presents, deciding to celebrate when Tony came home.

They learned nothing for 14 years. Bonnie Shine, not knowing if she was a wife or widow, focused her energy on advocating on behalf of the POW/MIA issue, as did her father-in-law. They printed thousands of postcards with Tony’s name and information to drop over Southeast Asian countries, hopeful that they might learn something. They collected signatures for petitions and lobbied for laws requiring more government accountability and openness, “adamant that this is an issue our country needed to make right,” Shine says. But given the raging controversy over the war, the cultural climate was far from supportive. “People threw Coke bottles and spat at [my mother], called her husband a baby killer,” Shine says. The government urged the family to keep quiet. “It was a very isolating experience, particularly for my mom,” she says. But they kept at it, because what else could you do?

‘Sister-Like’ Friends
On the first day of orientation at Wellesley in the fall of 1982, Ann Webster Bunch ’86 unpacked her bags and the standard-issue freshman insecurities in Tower Court East room 316. “The first day of college is intimidating,” Bunch says. “I wasn’t sure how much in common I’d have with anyone there.” Until she met Colleen Shine, settling into the room across the hall. “It was instantaneous,” Bunch says. “I felt we would be good friends.”

She noticed Shine’s silver POW/MIA bracelet, inscribed with her father’s name. The bracelet was “a part of me,” Shine says. Since the age of 8, she had worn it “as a public-awareness tool to let people know about the plight of men like my father and families like mine.” For Bunch, who grew up without any exposure to the military or the POW/MIA issue, the story was an eye-opener and Shine’s courage an inspiration. Their friendship developed into one that both describe as “sister-like,” the sort that weathers adulthood and the gaps of communication that busy lives so often engender.

A year out of school, in 1987, Shine was PR director for the nonprofit National League of POW/MIA Families when the first report related to REFNO 1950 emerged. With the fall of Saigon in 1975, communication between the two countries had ended abruptly; Vietnam was silent about the 2,583 Americans who didn’t come home. It wasn’t until the Reagan administration, when US relations with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam eased, that reports and human remains started to find their way back home, through a tangle of politics. “This issue has been their bridge to political and economic progress, and bilateral relations with the US,” Shine says. “It’s been the biggest leverage they’ve had.” A few American families got answers; the Shines only found more questions.

The first communication related to REFNO 1950, relayed to the family from the Air Force Casualty Office, was a report from a Laotian refugee; it ultimately revealed nothing. More than a dozen others would follow—including one suggesting Tony Shine was alive.
and in captivity. Each one would lift and dash the Shines’ hopes in painful reprise. Colleen had taken over the family’s efforts, analyzing each dispatch and urging the Air Force Casualty Office to do more and better. “I’d say, ‘You need to go back and ask this question, ask that question, and has this person been debunked?’” With her PR savvy, she was able to use diplomacy and leverage the media at times to “compel more responsible action.” Shine says that government personnel handling these cases suffered from high turnover and, at times, apathy; she was dogged and meticulous. “I needed them to do it well, and I knew it better than they did,” she says. “He was my father, not theirs.”

On the Ground in Vietnam

In the early 1990s, investigators from the Joint Task Force–Full Accounting located a crash site about 15 kilometers from the Laotian border. The team interviewed villagers, one of whom, a Mr. Quynh, remembered seeing two aircraft fly overhead around the time of Anthony Shine’s disappearance. The villager showed them a helmet he had recovered from the area shortly after the incident. The investigators found “no identifying markings” on it, Shine says, and no human remains substantial enough to test for DNA.

Satisfied that they had done what they could, the Defense Department assigned REFINO 1950 a “pending” status, effectively dropping the case. “They said any other remains would have been washed away by floods or destroyed by acidic soil, and airplane parts would have been scavenged by villagers for scrap metal,” Shine says.

So she flew to Vietnam. It was February 1995, before the full normalization of relations; she went with the attitude that “if there’s anything further I can do on the case, I will. And if there isn’t, I’ll have to come away knowing I have to move on with my life, that I don’t want to spend every minute of the rest of my life trying to do this,” she says.

On arrival, Shine navigated thick layers of Communist bureaucracy, hired a Soviet Jeep and driver, and bumped along the country’s rudimentary roads, carsick, wondering if the potholes had been cut by bombs her father had dropped. In the remote hamlet of Huu Kiem, she found Mr. Quynh. With flip-flops on his feet and a machete in hand, he led Shine and her government minders up the mountain, thick with growth, just as he had led the investigators before them. The crash site sat at the top of a steep ravine; pieces of wreckage lay scattered on the ground. Shine filled several bags with debris. Investigators had previously done a “very cursory” digging of the spot where they believed Anthony Shine had been buried. Colleen Shine sat down, her feet in the grave, her heart full with the realization that there was more to be learned there.

On her visit to Vietnam in 1995, Shine found Mr. Quynh and his wife in the hamlet of Huu Kiem. He gave her the helmet, which was instrumental in bringing about a resolution for her father’s case.
After tea in Mr. Quynh’s hut, she asked to see the helmet. Turning it over in her hands, Shine looked inside. “I almost fainted,” she says. In faded but legible black ink, “Shine” was written by hand. The American investigators had taken “23 pictures of the helmet and never saw this big name inside,” she says.

The helmet didn’t leave her possession again until she got back to the US, where it caught attention. Shine met with officials from the State and Defense departments, President Bill Clinton, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. John Shalikashvili. She testified before Congress, using the helmet as a tool to urge for better handling of all POW/MIA cases. She also met with a general who headed the Joint Task Force—Full Accounting. He looked at Colleen Shine, who is as petite and blonde as she is articulate and assertive, and he said, “Tell me, did you write the name in this helmet?” Shine remembers she nearly “levitated out of my seat” with anger in that moment, but she is surprisingly magnanimous about the whole trial: “It doesn’t matter if it’s ignorance, incompetence, or mal-intent. The bottom line is this is a case that we could get more answers on. I felt really glad to be able to use [the helmet] as an example, because other families had not had the opportunity.”

The Defense Department sent a team of investigators back to Vietnam for a full-scale excavation a few months later. The grave appeared to have been looted by then, but they found a piece of the plane’s wing with a serial number and enough bone particles—fragments of finger bones, clavicle, vertebrae, among others—to test for DNA.

**Into the Lab**

Ann Webster Bunch was mailing résumés around this time in 1995, in her final year of teaching at the University of Kentucky. She had received her M.A. and Ph.D. in anthropology at the University of Chicago, where she had researched animal bones from South American archaeology sites. She saw a posting for a forensic anthropologist at the CILHI and thought she might have a shot, given her osteological research.

In a phone call with the lab’s scientific director, Tom Holland, Bunch happened to mention that the father of a close friend was among the missing. “Who’s your friend?” Holland asked. A heavy silence fell when he heard the name; Shine was well-known at the lab, as a result of her active involvement. From that point forward and after landing the job, “The fact that I knew Colleen—I tried not to play that up,” Bunch says. But she continued to follow the case closely.

She traveled constantly for the new job, conducting fieldwork in Southeast Asia, camping in jungles, and fending off the occasional land leech—all in the name of helping to identify the remains of Americans lost to war. The personal connection to the Shine family served as a poignant reminder of the value of her work. One day she turned on the TV in her Hanoi hotel room, and there was Colleen Shine on CNN International, pressing for international cooperation on the POW/MIA issue. Bunch marveled at the convergence of their paths, the unexpected turn of their friendship.

Shine flew to Vietnam. It was February 1995, before the full normalization of relations; she went with the attitude that ‘if there’s anything further I can do on the case, I will. And if there isn’t, I’ll have to come away knowing I have to move on with my life. …’

When Bunch joined the lab, forensic anthropologists were analyzing fragmentary remains thought to be those of Anthony Shine. They turned a sample over to the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory in Maryland for mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) analysis. A relatively new tool at the time, mtDNA analysis would become a standard for MIA identifications. Mitochondria are the structures of a cell that produce energy, and mtDNA is passed down along maternal lines. Its analysis is far from foolproof and not as exacting as nuclear DNA analysis. But sometimes it is the best tool available, particularly when combined with other forensic evidence.

Scientists at the Armed Forces laboratory matched two sequences from the bone fragments to blood samples from Anthony Shine’s mother and siblings. The longest sequence was compared against the lab’s database, where it occurred in fewer than 4 percent of their records (which then included only 715 individuals). It was a weak statistical probability, but the lab declared it a match. The helmet and handwriting were also determined to be Tony Shine’s.

Colleen Shine has about 20 POW/MIA bracelets bearing her father’s name that were worn by others and returned over time. Lt. Col. David Chaney wore this one for 24 years, until he retired from the Air Force in 2011.
One Family’s Resolution

The Casualty Office prepared to present the family with a collected body of evidence, including findings from all the labs, as their investigation concluded. As part of the process, CILHI would have to return remains related to the case. In a break with the professional distance Ann Bunch had maintained on the case, Director Holland asked her to inventory the bones before their return to the family. “I think he knew I had a vested interest in getting it right for Colleen,” Bunch says. As she held each bone in her hand, such an unusual intimacy, “It was kind of a spiritual experience,” Bunch says.

The Casualty Office’s case file review arrived, together with the bones and physical evidence, in the summer of 1996; the Shines gathered in upstate New York to make their determination on whether to accept the findings. Of all the siblings, aunts, uncles, and parents, Colleen was the person closest to the case, the evidence, and the scientists. “It was a tremendous amount of weight on my shoulders to be the one … to say, OK, I recommend we accept this as the fullest possible accounting,” she says. Even with many pieces of the puzzle still missing, they felt they could accept this answer.

For Today’s Soldiers

On a cold, overcast morning in November 2012, Colleen Shine visited her father’s grave in Arlington National Cemetery. It was a month before the 40th anniversary of his death, a date that coincided with her daughter’s 10th birthday—a bittersweet convergence of “heavenly” and “earthly” birthdays, as she says. The grave lies in section 60, where many of today’s war casualties are buried and where the grieving process is raw and visible.

Shine has been an instrumental advocate for veteran-related organizations, serving on the staff and board of the National League of POW/MIA Families and throwing her PR and fund-raising know-how behind many others that support Vietnam veterans, their families, and the Wall.

In October 1996, Bonnie Shine walked alone behind the horse-drawn caisson to the burial at Arlington National Cemetery; her children followed. Four F-15 fighter jets flew overhead in a missing-man formation. Family and friends, scientists and government officials honored the life and sacrifice of Anthony Shine, who had been posthumously promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel. Colleen placed her POW/MIA bracelet in the casket, which was buried with a full uniform and a plastic bag of bone fragments. With “a truth to face and move forward from,” however incomplete, Shine says, the grieving could begin.

Four months later, a partial jawbone was turned over to the US Embassy in Vientiane, Laos. Records of Anthony Shine’s dental work superimposed against this mandible were indisputable. “I remember crying when I got the phone call that his jawbone was found, because then the pressure was off,” Shine says. “Then it is science revealing truth. Period. The end. Total clarity.” She and Shannon flew to Hawaii, where they met with Bunch and Temple. They brought their father’s remains home to New York, and buried them privately with family.

Jennifer Flint is an associate editor at Wellesley.
LIFE OF

BY LISA SCANLON '99
THOUGH WELLESLEY’S NEUROSCIENCE PROGRAM IS NEW AND SMALL, IT HAS QUICKLY ATTRACTED A LARGE NUMBER OF MAJORS, THANKS TO ITS STELLAR FACULTY, CUTTING-EDGE RESEARCH, AND STUDENTS’ NEVER-ENDING FASCINATION WITH THE BRAIN.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD HOWARD

BRAIN IMAGE: © GETTY IMAGES
It won’t hurt, we promise!” the lab manual reassures. Still, the students in the NEUR 100 practicum—a kind of a mini-lab that’s part of the class—are skeptical as they slowly extend their tongues and make contact with leads attached to 9V batteries. “Oh!” one says, surprised at the sensation. “Your big brother never told you to stick your tongue on a 9V battery? Mine did!” says neuroscience laboratory instructor Ginny Quinan, who is guiding students through the lab along with lecturer Deborah Bauer ’03. If anyone was sleepy in this post-lunch lab, she isn’t anymore.

“It’s much more of a playground than a structured learning environment,” says Bevil Conway, an associate professor of neuroscience who spearheaded the creation of NEUR 100: Brain, Behavior, and Cognition. But of course, this practicum, which centers on building electronic circuits, is practical. Electronic circuits are the foundation for contemporary models of brain function, and for students who have no idea how batteries or resistors or capacitors work, the lab helps them develop an understanding of how those concepts relate to neural function.

NEUR 100 is a very unusual class: Most students don’t get to take an entire course devoted to the nitty-gritty of neuroscience until well into their college careers. In fact, it’s very unusual for a liberal-arts college to have this kind of program at all. “We don’t know of any other college that has a dedicated neuroscience faculty, meaning that we’re appointed into the program,” rather than into a biology department, for example, says Barbara Beltz, the Allene Lummis Russell ’46 Professor of Neuroscience. “That means we’re totally devoted to the neuro students; we aren’t shared with other departments or students from other departments.”

The demand is there; in fact, almost more than the six faculty members can handle. As of January, according to the Registrar’s Office, 80 students on campus were declared neuroscience majors, making it the sixth most popular major. Students clamor to get into NEUR 100 even though there are three sections each year. Beltz, who has been director since the founding of the program, estimates that about 20 percent of the student body takes NEUR 100.

Why is neuroscience so hot at Wellesley? “Neuroscience is this field where hard science is meeting some of our most fundamental human questions about our nature as conscious or even spiritual beings, if you use that language,” says Michael Wiest, assistant professor in the department. “It’s these questions we’ve been banging our heads against the wall over for thousands of years.”

It’s also a field that has seen tremendous advances over the past two decades and has gotten a lot of media attention as a result. “It’s in our face…. It’s hard not to be exposed to the nervous system, more than most sciences, I think,” Beltz says. Also, she has discovered through class polls that the majority of her students have been touched by neurological diseases personally: a friend with depression, a grandparent who has Alzheimer’s, a diagnosis of ADD. “People have this intellectual curiosity and try to take an academic approach to a disease that affects their life,” Beltz says.

These are all excellent reasons to sign up for the intro course, but when students are asked why they decided to become majors, they all point to their professors. “I’m sure everybody says this, but [the faculty are] absolutely phenomenal,” says Colleen Isabelle ’13. “I think just the breadth of their expertise in different subjects is really unique…. We have everyone from Marc Tetel in neuro endocrinology to Barb Beltz in neuro development to Bevil Conway in vision. And it means that the classes that they can offer are really varied, which is huge for a small college.”

"WE DON’T KNOW OF ANY OTHER COLLEGE THAT HAS A DEDICATED NEUROSCIENCE FACULTY, MEANING THAT WE’RE APPOINTED INTO THE PROGRAM." BARBARA BELTZ, ALLENE LUMMIS RUSSELL ’46 PROFESSOR OF NEUROSCIENCE
MIND-BLOWING FACTS FROM THE NEUROSCIENCE FACULTY

ESTROGENS DO SO MUCH THROUGHOUT THE BODY: THEY REGULATE REPRODUCTION, KEEP OUR WEIGHT DOWN, MAINTAIN BONE STRENGTH, AND MAY EVEN PROTECT AGAINST ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE. AS ONE STUDENT IN MARC TETEL’S CLASS PUT IT, “WHAT DO ESTROGENS NOT DO?”

UNTIL 15 YEARS AGO, SCIENTISTS THOUGHT THAT ADULT HUMAN BRAINS DID NOT MAKE NEW NEURONS. IN FACT, WE’RE MAKING NEURONS ALL THE TIME, AND THEY APPEAR TO BE INVOLVED IN LEARNING AND MEMORY MECHANISMS. PROFESSOR BARBARA BELTZ STUDIES THE PROCESS, CALLED ADULT NEUROGENESIS, IN CRUSTACEAN BRAINS.

SHARON GOBES AND HER COLLEAGUES UNCOVERED AN ORGANIZATION IN THE BRAINS OF SONGBIRDS SIMILAR TO THE AREAS OF THE HUMAN BRAIN THAT CONTROL SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PROCESSING. SONGBIRDS LEARN THEIR VOCALIZATIONS IN INFANCY BY IMITATING THEIR CAREGIVERS, MUCH LIKE HUMAN INFANTS.

IN A PSYCH ER, IT’S ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOMEONE WHO’S ON PCP AND SOMEONE WHO’S HAVING A FIRST BREAK OF SCHIZOPHREНИA WITHOUT DOING A DRUG TEST. LECTURER DEBORAH BAUER ‘03 FOUND THAT THE NEUROTRANSMITTER GLUTAMATE, WHICH IS BLOCKED BY PCP, IS LIKELY TO BE FOUND IN EXCESS IN SYNAPSES IN THE BRAINS OF PATIENTS WITH SCHIZOPHREНИA.

THERE IS A DEVICE CALLED A LICKOMETER IN MIKE WIEST’S LAB. IT’S A WATER SIPPER TUBE WITH A LASER BEAM THAT DETECTS WHEN A RAT TAKES A LICK. WIEST USES IT TO STUDY HOW DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE RAT’S BRAIN COORDINATE WITH EACH OTHER WHEN THE RAT IS FOCUSED ON DRINKING.
HUMANS AND OLD-WORLD MONKEYS HAVE THREE CONE TYPES (PHOTORECEPTOR CELLS) IN THEIR EYES, BUT SOME MARINE CRUSTACEANS HAVE 13 OR MORE DIFFERENT CONE TYPES. THEY CAN THEREFORE SEE COLORS WE CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE.
Before the current program was formed in 2007, neuroscience was an interdisciplinary major, and there was only one core neuroscience course for majors. “It was a great course, but it was once a semester,” Beltz says. “Some students would graduate with that being their only real neuro course.” No longer. Now neuroscience majors must take three core courses: neur 100; neur 200: Neurons, Networks, and Behavior with Laboratory; and neur 300: Capstone Seminar in Neuroscience. In addition, they have a wide range of 300-level classes that focus on the faculty members’ areas of expertise.

“One of the unique challenges of a neuroscience curriculum at an undergraduate institution is how to get to the exciting, interesting stuff and not be mired in the background [information],” says Conway. So the faculty decided to emphasize problem-based learning in neur 100, where students start with an interesting question or problem and then build up the physics, chemistry, and biology as they need it.

For example, one set of neur 100 practica involves case studies of actual patients who have serious neurological conditions. Every week, each small group of students is given more information about its case. “We would discuss what could be wrong with them and why that might be. So if they have tremors, it could be because of this reason, or that part of the brain could be malfunctioning,” Isabelle says. “So we would come to conclusions and have questions at the end of one week, and then the next week we’d get more information.” It was like solving a mystery, she says.

Neur 200 builds on the 100-level concepts and gives students the experience they need for the upper-level classes. “That’s the course that really sealed the deal for me in terms of being a neuro major,” says Isabelle. “We did a whole bunch of electrophysiology with crayfish … using electrodes to record action potentials in neurons and stuff like that. So really sophisticated equipment [with] sophomores using it.” In another neur 200 lab series, students were provided with a mouse with a genetic mutation that affected motor ability, as well as a normal control mouse. Over the course of several labs, students studied the mice’s behavior and anatomical differences to figure out what the mutation was and its molecular basis. Isabelle was so taken with the way her sectioned and stained mouse brain turned out—a lovely purplish blue, with visible cell structures—that she printed large versions of the images and has hung them in her dorm rooms ever since.

The capstone course, neur 300, focuses on scientific literature and cutting-edge research. The authors of the articles the class studies are invited to campus to deliver...
a lecture on their research and then meet the Neur 300 students in the classroom or over dinner. Students also write a National Institutes of Health-style grant on a topic of their choice. Associate Professor Marc Tetel comments that some of the students’ Neur 300 grants are “better than ones that I review for professors.” The class also discusses careers in neuroscience; students are asked to interview someone who has their “dream job” 10 years out of college. “Pretty much everyone in college thinks that everyone goes from point A to point B in a straight line, and so we show them that no, most people don’t take a straight line,” Tetel says.

**LAB LIFE**

Four out of five research faculty in the neuroscience program have substantial federal funding for their research through the National Science Foundation or the National Institutes of Health (Assistant Professor Sharon Gobes, who has been at Wellesley for only a year, is in the process of applying this year for federal funding). “That is a very unusual thing, especially at a college,” says Beltz. “I think even at universities, you don’t [often] get a nearly 100 percent rate of funding. So I think that’s indicative of the quality of work that’s going on in the labs.”

Kia Salehi ’13, who subscribed to *Scientific American Mind* as a high schooler, knew that she wanted to get into the lab as soon as possible. “I wanted to go into research because it seemed like the alternative to med school, and because it was underlying all the neat discoveries that I so enjoyed reading about,” Salehi says. She decided to work in Mike Wiest’s lab, where he studies the physical basis of consciousness in the brain. “I like to tell students that’s the ultimate question of ‘life, the universe, and everything,’ to steal a phrase from *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy,*” says Wiest. The way his lab gets at this cosmic question is to study attention and perception in rats, specifically how different parts of the brain coordinate with each other when paying attention to a stimulus.

Salehi clearly remembers the first time she got the result she was looking for. She and Linnea Herzog ’12 were looking for whether the brain waves from different areas of rats’ brains were matching up while they were paying attention to a stimulus. It was a tricky thing to accomplish, “You’re working with maybe a dozen rats, and then most of them don’t learn the task, and of the few that do, some of the data doesn’t always get saved, or accidentally gets messed up, or it’s not really good in the first place because there was noise on the electrophysiology recording,” Salehi says. She had gotten to the point where she almost didn’t expect there to be a result,)
‘FOR AN UNDERGRAD, EVERYTHING THEY DO IS THE FIRST TIME, AND IT’S EXCITING TO GET DATA, EVEN IF IT’S A SMALL EXPERIMENT. AND THAT FIRED BACK IN A POSITIVE WAY TO ME, JUST SEEING THEIR EXCITEMENT ABOUT WHAT WE’RE DOING. THAT REALLY KEEPS YOU GOING.’ ASSISTANT PROFESSOR SHARON GOBES

when suddenly, “Boom, up pops this figure… right where we expected it to be in this particular frequency, and it was just suddenly, ‘Wow, it really is all worth it.’”

Working with the students to create these kinds of moments is rewarding for the professors, too. Gobes has been busy setting up her lab, where she uses songbirds as a model system to study auditory memory formation and vocal learning. It’s been an adjustment, being the only person in the lab who has experience—even using a scale is something that needs to be explained, she says. “For an undergrad, everything they do is the first time, and it’s exciting to get data, even if it’s a small experiment,” she says. “And that fired back in a positive way to me, just seeing their excitement about what we’re doing. That really keeps you going.”

Rosa Lafer-Sousa ’09, a neuroscience major who now helps run Bevil Conway’s labs at Wellesley and at Harvard Medical School, emphasizes the astonishing array of new things that students learn. As part of their research into the neural basis of color, students run experiments, analyze data, use power tools to construct rigs, build circuit boards, code in MATLAB, and train animals. And if they’re at Harvard, they spend time with Nobel Prize-winning neuroscientist David Hubel. “That’s one of the rules. If we’re at Harvard, we have to have tea with David,” Later-Sousa says.

Working in neuroscience labs was a huge part of Lafer-Sousa’s own Wellesley experience. The night before her 20th birthday, she had just completed one of her experiments. Whereas many students would be in their dorms having cake at midnight, Later-Sousa and her friend Colleen Kirkhart ’09 went up to the confocal microscope room. “Fifteen minutes before midnight, I realized I had to write some teen angst poetry,” Later-Sousa says. “I was like, ‘Colleen, Colleen, we have to write a little angsty poetry. It’s my last chance.’ And then we looked at the results of our experiment.” Not many people mark the end of their teenage years by versifying over crustacean brains, but for a budding neuroscientist at Wellesley, it seems like the perfect rite of passage.

Lisa Scanlon ’99 is an associate editor at Wellesley magazine.
Wellesley on the Lapel

LAST NOVEMBER, Susan Wunsch Rice ’67, managing director of Lloyds Banking Group Scotland and a 2011 Alumnae Achievement Award winner, attended Scotland’s International Awards, where former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright ’59 was the keynote speaker. Rice wore the gold oak-leaf pin that she had received at the Achievement Award ceremony on campus. As Rice was being introduced to Albright, the secretary, also an AAA winner, immediately noticed the pin and said with great warmth, “You’re my sister, my Wellesley sister.” Rice reports that Albright mentioned Wellesley in her speech, as did the event’s emcee and Rice herself. “Wellesley had quite an airing with this audience of about 700,” Rice says.

To see four more distinguished alumnae receive their oak-leaf pins, you can attend the AAA ceremony at 5:30 P.M. on Feb. 28 in Diana Chapman Walsh Alumnae Hall. The 2013 winners are Barbara Lubin Goldsmith ’53, Marilyn Koenick Yalom ’54, Callie Crossley ’73, and Diana Farmer ’77.

WE’D LIKE TO THANK THE ACADEMY…

PLEASE FORGIVE US if we pat ourselves on the back, but we are very happy to announce that Wellesley magazine received two Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) District I Excellence Awards for 2013: a gold for best writing and a silver for best design, in the category of print magazines with a circulation of 25,000 and above. Of course, we couldn’t have done it without all of you.

WCAA

News and information from the worldwide network of the Wellesley College Alumnae Association

2013 Alumnae Calendar

The Alumnae Association announces the following events for 2013. Unless otherwise noted, events take place at the College. For more information, call the Alumnae Office at 781-283-2331.

FEBRUARY

28
Alumnae Achievement Awards ceremony at 5:30 P.M., in Diana Chapman Walsh Alumnae Hall.

MARCH

14–18
Class of ’60 mini-reunion in New Orleans. For more information, contact Pat Wagner Thompson ’60 at patmums@aol.com or 973-543-4952.

23
Class of ’54 Ruhlman Conference mini-reunion luncheon, Wellesley College Club, 12 P.M. For more information, contact Donna Hieftje Tillotson ’54 at dhtw54@yahoo.com or 617-547-0871.

APRIL

9–13
Class of ’56 mini-reunion in Solvang, Calif. For more information, contact Ethel Larrabee Ilmanen ’56 at e.larrabee@verizon.net or 805-680-1991.

MAY

8
Stepsinging hosted by the WCAA

JUNE

6–7
WCAA spring board of directors meeting

7–9
Reunion for classes ending in 3s and 8s

To learn more about the activities of the WCAA, visit www.wellesley.edu/Alum.

Wellesley magazine is available online: new.wellesley.edu/alumnae/wellesleymagazine/online
CALL IT WELLESLEY REUNION, on the other side of the Atlantic. Every fall, a group of alumnae gathers in a German city for a weekend of good food, walking tours and museum visits, and of course, lots of heart-to-heart conversations. This year, they converged on Frankfurt — 21 Wellesley women from all over Germany and a few from Switzerland, Austria, and France. Their class years ranged from 1950 to 2011.

Although there is no formal alumnae club in Germany, the group has gotten together every year since 2002. They welcome everyone, from longtime residents to alumnae in the region for a year or two of work or study. Berliner Jane Friedman Helmchen ’61 came up with the idea for the get-togethers and has been one of the primary movers and shakers all these years. Wellesley asked her to share some tips for hosting such an event.

Who organizes the event?
It takes two alums to organize a weekend like this. One alum lives in the hosting city and acts as the hostess. She does all the local organizing: She finds and communicates with the hotel where we all stay; organizes the venues for meals; plans the program; and organizes the tours. To date, I have been the other alum. I basically do the background work: I keep in touch with the local hostess, make suggestions, etc. I also write all the letters, including an initial questionnaire, that are sent to the women on our address list. I keep track of who is coming; inform the alums who have signed up about the program, the hotel, the restaurants; and collect the participation fee.

Can you offer three tips for organizing a weekend like this?
* Try to find a theme typical of or appropriate to the meeting city.
* Try to keep the weekend expenses as low as possible. (Everyone pays for her own transportation and moderate hotel, which is organized for the entire group. We also figure out a participation fee that covers meals, entrance fees, tour guide, local transportation, etc. In addition, several alumnae have contributed to a fund; I use this money to subsidize some of the younger alums who would otherwise be beyond their financial means.)
* Try to organize activities appropriate for all ages.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 80
Katniss Everdeen was a cunning competitor in *The Hunger Games*, but were her togs ever this well ironed? We have our doubts.

Archery first appeared as a club sport in the 1907 *Legenda* and continued as such at least through 1979. Can you identify this archer or the era? Write to us at magazine@alum.wellesley.edu.

*Courtesy Wellesley College Archives*
Barbara Loomis Jackson ’50
1928–2012

I believe the first time I met Barbara Loomis Jackson ’50 was in the newly christened Harambee House. Barbara had just been named to Wellesley’s Board of Trustees—the first African-American trustee in Wellesley’s history. She was on campus for trustee business, and apparently had decided she wanted to meet some of the black students on campus.

A number of us came to meet her. She looked like a lot of our mothers—tweed suit, low heels, discreet jewelry (including the requisite set of pearls), and professorial glasses. She had a soothing alto voice that asked a lot of questions:

What’s life here like for you now? Why did you decide to come to Wellesley? What are you majoring in? What will you do with it? What do you like most about being here? Least?

What we thought would be a stilted, formal conversation turned into a lively give-and-take. She told us about being the only black student on campus—on campus!—for the first two years of her Wellesley life. (There were no more than six in the entire four years she was there.) Looking around Harambee’s high-ceilinged living room, she chuckled, “…so you can imagine how excited I am to be here today!”

Later, some of us invited her to lunch in our dorm—and she came. Looking back on it, in light of my own experience as an Alumnae Association board member, I can’t imagine that there was an actual block of time that would have allowed this—but I also can’t imagine Barbara not doing something she thought needed to be done. And she was really interested in the quality of life for black students at the time. (This was in the early 1970s, and diversity was yet to become the point of pride it is now.)

Like a lot of educated black women her age, Barbara spent a lot of time being first or only. First black alumna trustee. Only woman in her doctoral program in education administration at Harvard’s Graduate School of Education. The first person to be honored by the Society of Clinical Psychiatrists of Northern New Jersey for her significant contributions to mental health in her community. Work, supported by the Ford Foundation, in the public schools in Englewood, N. J., on comprehensive school reform, improvement, and integration. Stints at Morgan State University and Atlanta University and a tenured professorship at Fordham University in the Graduate School of Education. Author of Balancing Act: The Political Role of the Urban School Superintendent.

She could have retreated into a less strenuous life, but Barbara felt she had an obligation—a mission—to widen access to educational opportunities to all children. And she firmly believed that a diverse body of educated students would in turn benefit an America that was changing every year. To that end, she was a cherished mentor to many education majors and graduate students in education administration, especially women of color because, she said, they were so underrepresented in the field.

Barbara didn’t reject the notion of being placed in the position of educating her white peers about black life—she grasped it with both hands. From her freshman year, she was keenly aware that many of them had had little or no contact with blacks. Barbara took the time to answer questions, correct misperceptions, and open eyes. She made dear friends of all races and ethnicities, and felt that their friendships were mutually enriching—and enlightening. (She often said that being in the minority was excellent training for her 18 years of Wellesley board service—by then, she was accustomed to being the only black person in the room.)

In the record book for her 40th reunion, Barbara noted that like many of her classmates, she married her college sweetheart two months after graduating. She and Bill Jackson, a Harvard graduate, stayed married for 17 years before divorcing. They raised two children, Caroline and William, Jr., and she was immensely proud of both. Caroline’s daughter, Michaela Jackson-Smith, is on campus now as a member of the class of ’16.

Barbara received scores of honors over her accomplished life, but one that was deeply significant to her was Wellesley’s Alumnae Achievement Award, bestowed upon her in 2003. She returned to the campus she says transformed her, and that she helped to transform, that winter to receive the College’s highest honor.

Barbara died in Oberlin, Ohio, on Nov. 15, 2012, and it’s fair to say Wellesley would not be what it is today without her thoughtful contributions.

—Karen Grigsby Bates ’73

Karen Grigsby Bates is a Los Angeles-based correspondent for NPR News.
Bernice Steinberg Dworken Berkenfield ’36 died on Feb. 25, 2012, in Dayton, Ohio.

Our mother never forgot Wellesley’s positive life influence and thoroughly enjoyed her 70th reunion. After an M.L. in marketing at UPitt, she became a store buyer; a WWII Army driver in Washington; a member of garden, parent, service, library, art, investment, world affairs, and women’s organizations; and a founding member of Cleveland’s Suburban Temple. She also was an avid gardener; bridge, golf, and tennis player; interior plant lecturer and decorator; and world traveler. Both her husbands, Morton Dworken and Joseph Berkenfield, predeceased her.

She leaves two children, two stepchildren, four grandchildren, six step-grandchildren, and fifteen step-great-grandchildren.

Mort Dworken
Pat Saphir

Jean Heath AtLee ’38 died on Sept. 22, 2012.

After Wellesley, she went to work in New York as an advertising copy writer, writing live radio commercials for Lux soap on what would become known as “soap operas.” She married Dick AtLee in 1943 and raised two children, Joan and Bob. The family emigrated to Canada in 1958. Jean was a lifelong volunteer, active in everything from Cub Scouts to Meals on Wheels. Her love of the printed...
Evelyn Elizabeth Wicoff ’38 died on Aug. 30, 2012, after a brief illness.

Evelyn, a mathematics major and Phi Beta Kappa graduate, lived and worked in Princeton, N.J.—first for the Gallup organization, and subsequently at the Educational Testing Service. Throughout her life, she remained an active member of the First Presbyterian Church and the Historical Society in her hometown of Plainsboro, N.J.

Evelyn traveled throughout Europe and the Holy Land. Her favorite destination, however, was Saint Maarten in the Caribbean. She was dearly loved by her 41 nieces and nephews, who treasured her radiant smile, patience, keen wit, and genuine interest in their lives.

Anne Wicoff Carvaljal


Born in Manila, Philippine Islands, Barbara was recruited at Wellesley as a code breaker for the Navy during World War II. She taught Spanish at the University of Virginia, earned her master’s degree in counseling in her 30s, and traveled extensively while summering each year with her husband on the Isle of Raasay in Scotland. My longtime friend and neighbor on her Earlysville, Va., farm, Barbara was a lover of books and music, a magnificent hostess, and a caring professional colleague. She loved laughter, was sensitive and thoughtful, and her presence radiated quiet dignity, warmth, and gracefulness.

Jane Warner Ransom ’54

Renee Wormser Hack ’44 died on June 30, 2012.

She devoted her life to a large family, the arts, and civic beautification in Greenwich, Conn. Majoring in art history, she was active in II Circolo Italiano, costume designer for Barnswallows, and art director of Tau Zeta Epsilon, where she performed in piano recitals.

My mother had a gift for growing plants and arranging flowers, winning awards from the Garden Club of America. Her artistic passion was creating miniature rooms using objects collected on worldwide travels. She curated popular “Small Scales” exhibitions at the Bruce Museum and served on their board. Her beauty and talents inspired us all.

Gabrielle Hack Hall


A lifelong Wellesley, Mass., resident, Mom was a realtor in town for nearly 50 years. One coworker nicknamed her the “grande dame of Wellesley real estate.” She loved the business because she loved people; friends became customers, and customers became friends. She also loved music, played piano and guitar, and sang in the Wellesley Choral Society and the choir at the Wellesley Hills Congregational Church.

One of her favorite quotes was “love goes where it is sent.” She sent lots, and you were lucky if you were a recipient.

Robert S. Benchley

Mary Lamb Hoaglund-Vedder ’46 died on Nov. 1, 2012.

Mary led a life of service to better the lives of others, whether it was schoolchildren, immigrants, or those suffering from discrimination. After being widowed at age 60, she formed an organization to counsel other widows and dowagers. With her warm smile and friendly optimism, Mary made friends wherever she went. Although my father’s career led us to various parts of the country, my mother always knew she would find interesting, active, and welcoming friends at the local Wellesley Club. We treasure her spirit.

Nora Hoaglund ’72


Sylvia’s life was characterized by highlights: the Waves during World War II; art school in Zurich, where she met Heinz, her husband of 60 years; children Eve, Anne, Eric, and Paul; residence in Illinois, Harbor Springs, Boston, Spain, Key West, and Sarasota, Fla.; six grandchildren; many dogs; travel; music; gardens; painting; skiing; flying a plane; delighting in friends; hiking the Alps; cooking; reading everything; making jam. Just before her death in her beloved Harbor Springs, Sylvia hiked to the beach, swam in Little Traverse Bay, tended her garden, argued politics, and planned a wonderful summer menu.

Louise Pfender Taylor ’68

Natalie Luethi-Peterson ’48 died on Nov. 23, 2012, with husband Armin and their children and grandchildren nearby.

Natalie founded the Luethi-Peterson camps after graduation with Pavey Lupton Hoke ’48, bringing together young people from all over the world to work, play, sing, dance. The same effort persisted at the Ecole D’Humanité in Switzerland that she and Armin have headed for many years, with its atmosphere of international friendship. My own family has been marked forever by the Ecole, the camps, and Natalie. Her leadership, spirit, and passion will continue through those who knew and loved her. The world is a better place.

Nancy Aring Graham ’48

Jane Potter Keirnan ’49 died on Oct. 21, 2012.

In the summer of 1949, three of us—new jobless Wellesley graduates not from New England—joined Jane in the Boston apartment she had found. Having secured a position as a department store buyer, she assured us that we would also find work, which we did. A person who inspired confidence in others, Jane kept herself and her considerable talents largely in the background, where she contributed to the world throughout her life with few words but many thoughtful actions. Somehow, we felt she would last forever. We will truly miss her.

Elizabeth Insley Traverse ’49

Margaret Swering Sapega ’49 died on June 5, 2012.

Among our close friends, we could always count on Margo to try anything new and be there when we needed her. I remember the frigid January weekend she invited four or five of us to her family’s summer cottage in the New England woods to test whether or not we could spend two full days with no electricity, only a fireplace for heat, and an outside privy. We learned that, to keep from freezing, someone had to be responsible for tending the fire all night. That someone was Margo. We will always be grateful.

Elizabeth Insley Traverse ’49


She was a former president of the St. Louis Wellesley Club. She spoke fondly of her memories at Wellesley. She enjoyed traveling the world, often to remote and politically volatile areas, fascinated by the cultures. She loved gardening and was an avid bridge player.

Janet Holmes


Her enthusiasm for the college and the class of 1950 was lifelong. She followed all Wellesley developments with keen interest and special generosity. Several of us were able to join her frequently for lunch in Wellesley. Eleanor Stewart Mazzeo ’50 and Betty Weiner Vorenberg ’50 were part of the politically fired group. Joan managed to keep us in order, which occasionally was no small task! How she would have enjoyed this last election! She leaves her son, Richard, and many devoted friends.

Patricia Ellis ’50

M. Ellen Brumback ’50 died on Nov. 2, 2012.

Ellen came to Wellesley from Toledo, Ohio, via Abbot Academy. As freshmen in Eliot House, she and I often got each other’s mail since our last names were similar. Becoming roommates solved that problem, and Ellen’s twin brother at Princeton solved the problem of prom dates. After Wellesley, Ellen became secretary to the dean of Harvard Business School and then joined the staff of former President Herbert Hoover in New York City. Ultimately, she moved to Florida to be near family and became involved in Republican politics as well as numerous philanthropic organizations. She leaves two brothers, two sisters, nieces, nephews, and many friends.

Betty Brobach Bagger ’50
Barbara Kastner Kumble Ullmann ’56 died on Sept. 19, 2012, without warning, a blessing to someone who enjoyed life to its fullest.

Barbara began with our class of 1956 but graduated in 1957, having taken one year off for marriage. She loved saying she was the youngest in our class.

Barbara will be remembered, in addition to being one of the most beautiful women in our class, as an admired teacher and a successful executive recruiter, for her passionate interest in the lives of others, and for her love of the arts, travel, and her family. And exercise. She is probably still in a step class. I miss her terribly.

Merle Golden Bogin ’56

Mary Jo Feeney O’Donnell ’52

Ruth Bettman Kassel ’52

Patricia Honeker Snedeker ’52 died on Sept. 8, 2012.

In an unplanned scenario, Pat and we two were roommates for two years in Claflin. No doubt Pat’s quick wit and sense of humor saved us, since we all kept in close touch thereafter. Pat truly believed in continuity in life, which included 60 years of devoted marriage to Bob. Both were long involved in fund-raising for Wellesley and MIT, testimonials to their loyalty to both schools. We suspect she is running a reunion out there somewhere, cooking a gourmet meal, and laughing her memorable laugh.

She is survived by Bob, son Brian, daughter Lee Anne, and three cherished grandchildren.

Mary Lambert Fosnocht ’57

Mary left Wellesley junior year and flew alone, with wedding dress in hand, to marry Tom Fosnocht, stationed in Ramstein, Germany. After raising their five children, Mary completed her education at Penn, followed by an M.S.W. from Bryn Mawr. A product of a Quaker education, Mary recognized needs and developed programs to meet them: a sex-education curriculum for the school district; a field-hockey program for girls; in private practice and as director of out-patient social services in Paoli, Pa. Mary loved her life and personified Wellesley’s motto. Tom, children, and 15 grandchildren survive her.

Cantor McLean Eagleson ’57

Tina Corson Krause ’57

Patty Viener Conn ’57


In her mid-60s, my mother decided it was time to finally get her B.A. Buoyed by my experience at Wellesley, she applied and was accepted as a Davis Scholar. She lived in Tower Court and majored in architecture. She threw herself into campus life, and we enjoyed a brief overlap. Seeing her in this environment—adapting beautifully to a new situation, excelling academically, making lasting friendships, and loving it all—I was and will always be proud of her.

Jennifer Rosner Tennican ’88

How about things to avoid?

Do not plan activities that are only one-sided (for example, only contemporary art museums or only soccer games).

Make sure that no one is excluded because she cannot speak the local language.

Be aware if there are unspoken conflicts, problems in the group as a whole, and try to solve them.

Anything else to keep in mind?

We try to leave quite a bit of time open for conversation in small ad-hoc groups. There is very little small talk at these gatherings; generally we are in medias res almost immediately, and there is an unusual willingness on the part of most participants to be very open, even to talk about personal or family situations that might not reflect middle-class normality.

It always seems amazing to me that women of all ages (between 23 and 85!) and from all walks of life, nonetheless all seem to have something to say to each other along with the desire to listen as well. There must be something about the Wellesley experience that gives us a starting point and knits us together.

—Alice Hummer

How to submit a memorial

Wellesley welcomes memorials for alumnae written by friends or family members. Please contact the appropriate class secretary and/or the magazine staff (magazine2@alum.wellesley.edu or 781-283-2344) before writing or submitting a memorial.

Memorials in Wellesley magazine are limited to 100 words. The magazine does not accept eulogies or previously published obituaries for adaptation. All submissions may be edited.

Unlikely soul mates on the nile

Continued from page 16

modern nursing, and the celebrated author of the scandalous but legendary Madame Bovary. As their narratives unfold in alternating perspectives, we learn of Florence’s desire to break free of the pretty cage of Victorian femininity, a dull domestic world at odds with the worldly usefulness to which she aspires, and of Gustave’s ambition to craft a memorable masterpiece, which means transcending his own self-defeating, decadent impulses.

Together, they journey by camel across the shifting sands of the desert to the Red Sea and back. Shomer’s prose shines in rendering the richness of space and place, capturing both material details (the look of a kaffiyeh trimmed with yellow silk, the handiwork of a kilim rug) and sensory realities (the dizzying sublimity of the desert sun, the cadence of a camel’s rhythm, the tipsy warmth that accompanies the consumption of rakii). In rendering a compelling world founded on fact but animated by fantasy,
The Twelve Rooms of the Nile artfully draws on and deflects Orientalist fantasies: Shomer’s Egypt is a land of dizzying danger and myriad delights, a place both wild and civilized, sacred and profane, but always fascinating.

—Lisa Hinrichsen ’99

Hinrichsen is an assistant professor of English at the University of Arkansas.

WHEN NORMAL HAS FLOWN THE COOP

Continued from page 16

is suspiciously cloudy.) In San Francisco, they can’t shake the feeling that they’re being followed—plus, their bodies are acting weird. Reese’s best friend is convinced that these strange happenings all have to do with Area 51. …

Lo knows how to keep a plot moving—chase scenes, men in black, and double agents help with that—but her greatest success is how viscerally she captures Reese’s interior struggle. Not only is the teen connected to a massive government experiment, but she’s also experiencing her first romantic relationship, and that might be even more confusing. (Kissing is like “falling into the sea: Her body surrendered to the pull of the tide, buoyed by the saltwater, every breath tasting like the ocean.”) Readers will also appreciate how Lo realistically includes characters who are diverse in different ways. In particular, Lo writes poignantly about Reese’s discovery that she is attracted to another girl.

Adaptation is both emotional and exciting, with a twist at the end and a major cliffhanger. Luckily for fans, Lo is at work on a sequel.

—Eliza Borné ’09

Borné is a writer and editor in Nashville, Tenn.

MORE ADVICE?

I so enjoyed reading the “Insider Information” advice articles in the latest issue of Wellesley magazine. It was so entertaining to see the diversity of topics covered. Why not make this a regular feature of the magazine with one or two pieces every issue from a different corner of our talented alumnae pool?

Maria Savage Storm ’71

Branford, Conn.

Editor’s note: Great minds clearly think alike. We had the same idea. Keep an eye on future issues.

A REFRESHED MAGAZINE

I really like the new look, and the new content, especially “Window on Wellesley.” One thing I’ve seen in other alum mags that I’d love to see in Wellesley magazine: an annual “gift guide” of items made by alumnae.

Becky Warren ’00

Rockville, Md.

A SON’S LETTER

Editor’s note: The children of alumnae often have the sad job of notifying us of their mother’s death. This letter, letting us know of the passing of Margie Howe Stimson ’47, deserves a wider audience.

My mother always treasured her time at Wellesley College. After moving from Vermont back to the Boston area in 2004, she insisted that I drive her through the Wellesley campus every weekend, just so she could savor the place. Something about the air, the afternoon light, and the faces of today’s students scurrying about. Again and again, she found it magical.

The WCAA should discontinue sending the alumnae magazine to my post office. I truly wish I had a forwarding address for Margie, but I do not.

William Stimson

Wellesley Hills, Mass.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Continued from page 3

THE NEW DESIGN

I love the new layout! The paper is not so shiny, which makes it much easier to read. I also adore the section with advice/tips from alum-experts in the field (“Insider Information”)!

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Little Rock, Ark.
In the 1970s, Wellesley introduced an innovative hands-on policy in the Science Center that allowed students at all levels to use all laboratory equipment. This approach continues today, and students now have access to state-of-the-art equipment including confocal microscopes, a laser diffraction particle size analyzer, and a Fourier transform infrared spectrometer.
In our fast-paced world, Wellesley-educated leaders are driving advances in technology and science across myriad platforms. With your gift to The Wellesley Fund, you give your vote of confidence in all that today’s students will achieve. After all, nothing encourages bold new ideas like continued support from our alumnae—women who know the power of a Wellesley education.

[Website Link]
They exchanged 573 letters in all: the aspiring male poet and the female counterpart who dazzled him, even though she was confined to her London sickroom with only poetry and doses of opium to sustain her weary spirit.

"I love your verses with all my heart, dear Miss Barrett," wrote a 32-year-old Robert Browning in 1845. "So into me has it gone, and part of me has it become, this great living poetry of yours, not a flower of which but took root and grew." The following day, Elizabeth Barrett, age 38, replied, "I thank you, dear Mr. Browning, from the bottom of my heart.... Such a letter from such a hand!" So commenced one of history's great love stories, secretly recorded in sepia-toned ink by two literary giants of the Victorian era.

For nearly two years, Browning's letters poured through the brass mail slot at 50 Wimpole Street, London, where Barrett's controlling father sequestered her, forbidding her to marry. Through the clandestine correspondence, admiration blossomed into ardor: "Always with you in the spirit, always yearning to be with you in the body," wrote a feverish Browning in May 1846. "I have none in the world who will hold me to make me live in it, except only you," countered Barrett. The daily missives fueled the lovers' daring resolution to elope to Italy, where they remained wedded soul mates until death.

Ruth Rogers, curator of Special Collections at the Clapp Library—where the letters have been safeguarded since 1930—describes them as "among the most well-known ever written, of abiding interest to romantics and scholars worldwide." (The library also houses a much-loved curiosity: the actual mail-slotted front door from Barrett's Wimpole Street home.)

On Valentine’s Day 2012, Wellesley—in partnership with Baylor University, which is home to other significant Browning materials—unveiled the celebrated courtship correspondence in digital reproduction in an online repository. The images' astonishing clarity caught the interest of the press globally, with headlines proclaiming, “Devotion Goes Digital.” By autumn, they had garnered 140,000 views. Reading passionate words inked nearly two centuries ago raises the question: What have we lost with the near-extinction of the handwritten note? "I come from a time and culture where handwritten letters had a special place in our lives, waiting for the postman in a small town,” says Wellesley’s chief information officer, Ravi Ravishanker. “Such communication is reserved now for rare occasions by a handful of old-timers.” With the explosion of e-technologies, future generations may never know the intimate sensation of running one's fingers over a sender's familiar handwriting or the reward of reading a message penned in bygone times.

Emily Dickinson wrote, “A letter always feels to me like immortality.” Could the same be said of our hastily dashed-off texts, posts, and emails? Their sheer abundance renders them less special, and ever-changing digital formats undermine the likelihood of their long-term preservation. Unfortunately, you can’t tuck a tweet away in a drawer for posterity. Even if printed and saved, could an e-mail machined on multipurpose paper hold the same cachet as a perfumed letter crafted in a loving hand? Doubtful.

But despite impersonality and impermanence, digital communication—with its addictive power of instant connection—has rendered us all e-junkies. “If Robert and Elizabeth had been able to email each other continually instead of awaiting the twice-a-day mail delivery, they likely would have loved it,” Rogers speculates. “How much easier to hide their correspondence on a flash drive!” Now those hard-copy letters have already lasted far longer than any digital media developed so far. But they won’t last forever, and so they are being digitized. Ravishanker is hopeful that internet archives like Wellesley and Baylor’s might, in turn, succeed in extending the life of today’s digital stockpiles.

“We are all the richer for the survival of the Brownings’ physical letters; now richer still to see them online with every detail—down to a Victorian fingerprint—magnified,” Rogers says of the dual approaches to preservation.

So whether you favor keyboard or pen, do honor your Valentine with a tender message. It may even bring a tear to someone’s eye in 2213.

By Diane Speare Triant ’68

A Love Letter to Love Letters

Only to Be Here ...

For her independent study last fall, environmental-studies major Elli Blaine ’13 set out to make art from reclaimed materials. She enlisted artist and sculptor Willie Cole to assist with the project, as well as student, faculty, and staff volunteers. They suspended more than a thousand plastic bottles in the Lulu Chow Wang Campus Center’s impluvium, the glass channel running the building’s entire height. As they bubbled upward, the bottles evolved into fish. Blaine hoped the installation would prompt conversation about waste and value, community and sustainability.
Colleen Shine ’86 and her daughter, Chiara, visit the grave of Colleen’s father at Arlington National Cemetery. Chiara turned 10 on Dec. 2, 2012, 40 years to the day after Anthony Shine died in combat.
For more of Colleen Shine’s story, see “What Remains,” page 26.