

INSIDE: UNTIMELY/THE DAD WHO KNEW TOO MUCH/THE BEQUEST/BORN STILL

Pomona

COLLEGE MAGAZINE / Summer 2011

BIRTH



& DEATH

It Happened at Pomona: Art at the Edge of Los Angeles 1969-1973

This three-part exhibition at the Pomona College Museum of Art, running throughout the 2011-12 academic year, will document a transformative moment for art history that occurred on the Pomona College campus between 1969 and 1973. The exhibition is part of the Getty Foundation's *Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945 - 1980*, a collaboration of more than 60 cultural institutions across Southern California to tell the story of the birth of the Los Angeles art scene and how it became a major new force in the art world.

For more information, see the brochure bound into the center of this issue.

Part 1: Hal Glicksman at Pomona Aug. 30–Nov. 6, 2011

Focusing on the year 1969–1970, when Hal Glicksman was the curator/director of the museum, this exhibition features works by Michael Asher, Lewis Baltz, Judy Chicago, Ron Cooper, Tom Eatherton, Lloyd Hamrol and Robert Irwin.

Top (and back cover): Michael Asher installation, 1970. Pomona College Museum of Art. © Michael Asher. Photographs courtesy of the Frank J. Thomas Archives.

Bottom left: Lloyd Hamrol, *Situational Construction for Pomona College*, 1969. Balloons, lead wire, plastic sheeting, water, and colored light. Dimensions variable. Gift of Hal Glicksman. The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2009.M.5)

Bottom right: Tom Eatherton, *Rise*, 1970. Light environment consisting of incandescent bulbs, two layers of nylon diffusion material, and wooden support structure. Dimensions variable. Collection of the artist

Pomona College

Part 2: Helene Winer at Pomona Dec. 3, 2011–Feb. 19, 2012

This exhibition focuses on the cutting edge curatorial programs that Helene Winer presented at the Pomona College Museum from 1970 through 1972, including works by Bas Jan Ader, John Baldessari, Chris Burden '69, Ger van Elk, Jack Goldstein, Joe Goode, Hirokazu Kosaka, William Leavitt, John McCracken, Ed Moses, Allen Ruppersberg, Wolfgang Stoerchle, William Wegman and John White.

Top: William Leavitt, *California Patio*, 1972. Mixed media construction. Dimensions variable. Collection of the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Bottom left: John M. White, *Preparation F*, 1971. Photographs of performance at Pomona College Campus Center

Bottom right: Jack Goldstein, *Untitled*, 1969-71/2011. Wood. 101 1/2 x 24 x 21 3/4 in. Courtesy of the Jack Goldstein Estate and T301PE, Los Angeles

Part 3: At Pomona March 10–May 13, 2012

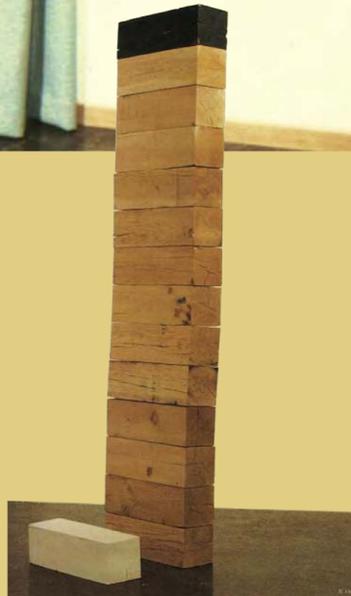
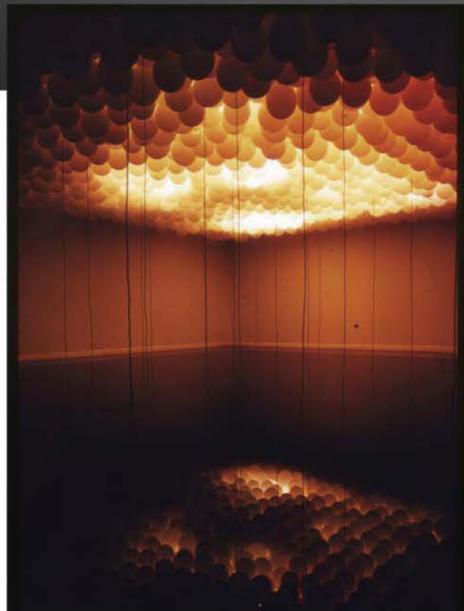
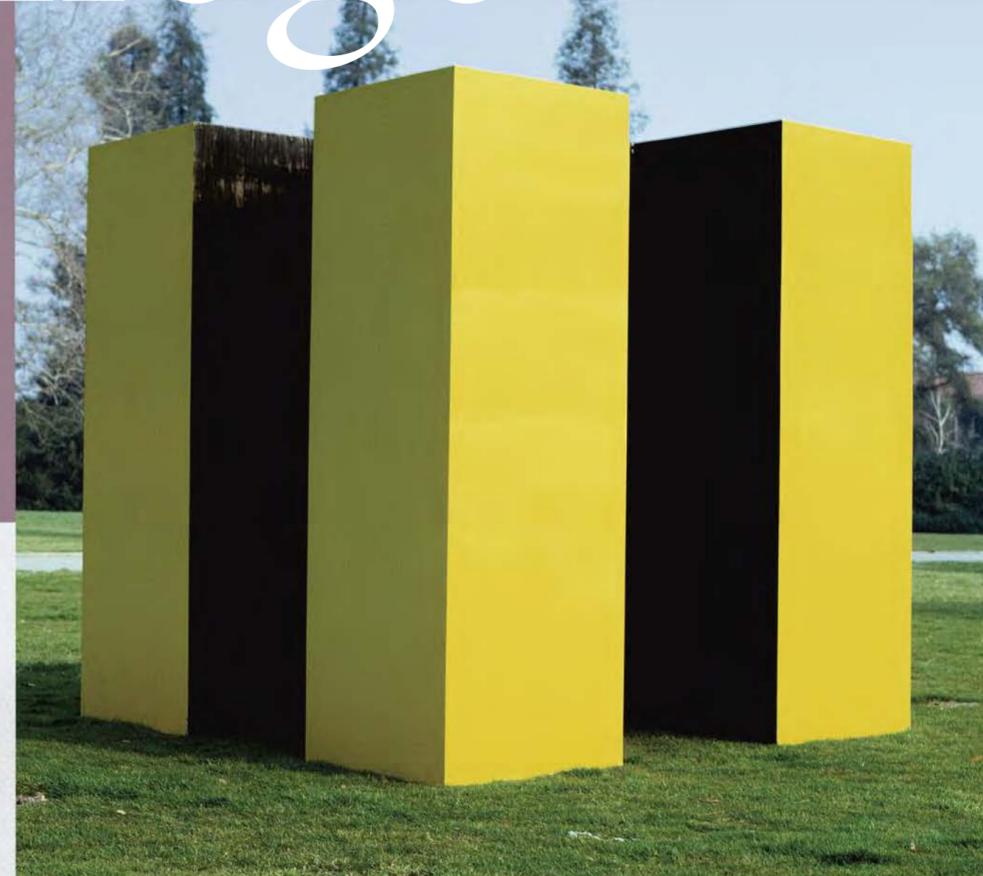
This exhibition focuses upon the vibrant atmosphere for the arts created on the Pomona campus by the exhibitions organized by Glicksman and Winer, featuring works by Mowry Baden '58, Lewis Baltz, Michael Brewster '68, Chris Burden '69, Judy Fiskin '66, David Gray, Peter Shelton '73, Hap Tivey '69, James Turrell '65 and Guy Williams.



Top: Chris Burden, *Untitled*, 1967. Oil on plywood. 72 x 72 x 72 in.

Bottom left: Mowry Baden, *Sect Belt Three Points*, 1970. Steel and nylon. 1.68 in. diameter x height of viewer. Collection of Steve C. Young, Lopez, Washington

Bottom right: Judy Fiskin, *Untitled* (from the *Stucco* series), 1972–73. Gelatin silver print. 7 x 5 in. Pomona College Collection. Museum purchase with funds provided by the Estate of Walter and Elise Mosher



Glimpses

Some things are simply too big to wrap our poor brains around. The best we can hope for is a lifetime's accumulation of telling moments, those small glimpses that we stumble onto now and then that seem to reveal something about the mysteries that bookend our lives.

Here are a few of mine.

I'm 6 or 7. My grandmother is dead, and I'm leaning against a tree outside a tiny Baptist church, hearing the rise and fall of the preacher's voice inside. My grandmother taught me to read, and after her first stroke, I walked with her as she showed me her two mailboxes, one at the end of the driveway and the other around the driveway loop. I tried to explain that they were one and the same, but it did no good. Now she's gone, and I'm trying very hard to cry while I sneak peeks beneath my arm at the children running and playing in the cemetery.

I'm in junior high school, and my brother has been diagnosed with bone cancer. I know he's going to lose his leg, that he has less than a 50-50 chance of survival, that my parents look haggard. Or rather, years later, I know these things, but I don't remember how I know them. It's as if every sensory detail of that time has been surgically removed from my head.

I'm a senior in college, and my advanced composition professor is chiding me for writing so glibly about death. No one my age, she claims, has any understanding of their own mortality. I argue passionately, but she interrupts my carefully constructed argument with a smile: "Did you hear what you just said? You said, 'if I were to die,' not 'when I die.' There's a world of difference between those two thoughts."

It's four years later. I've been a small-town reporter and photographer for less than a month when my editor sends me to cover the crash of a small corporate airplane. I can see the tunnel the plane carved through the trees as it angled in and smell the scorched earth around the wreckage, but I can't make out any of the bodies in the ashes until a state trooper stops to trace an outline in the air with one finger. I spend a day there without embarrassing myself. Afterward though, while processing the film, I'm surprised to discover that it's the two-dimensional starkness of the photographic negatives that makes me ill.

I'm a married man, soon to be a father. A doctor studies an odd mole on my left shoulder and suggests excising it for tests. Probably nothing, he says with a casual hand on my shoulder, but there's a small chance—no more than one in 20 or so—that it's a melanoma. During the two-day wait for answers, I find very little comfort in those odds. I try to imagine a world without me, a child who never knows me, but who can imagine such things?

I'm in a birthing room with my wife, feeling helpless as this long test of endurance becomes a runaway moment. I watch as a rosy, blood-streaked face emerges, composed as if in sleep, followed by a perfect body, cord trailing. "He's beautiful," I tell my wife as the doctor tends to the baby. "Better say 'she's beautiful,'" the doctor says over his shoulder. A few minutes later, I'm carrying her out into the hallway to meet her grandparents. My brother snaps a picture of the two of us, her eyes locked with mine as if we'd both gotten a glimpse of something beyond belief.

—Mark Wood

Pomona

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Pomona College is an independent liberal arts college established in 1887. Located in Claremont, Calif., it is the founding member of The Claremont Colleges.

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Brain Disorders Not for Laughs

Alexander Gelfand's story, "The Exploding Piano," about Kathleen Supove '73 expressed well Supove's excitement and joy in new music. The energy she brings to her "more inclusive, accessible vision of the piano recital" speaks well to her years of the experimental late '60s and early '70s at Pomona. But one recital reported didn't seem very inclusive.

Although I overlapped her, graduating as a music major in 1969, I don't remember Kathleen Supove. I suspect neither of us, at that time, would have blanched at "crazy" jokes. But the world is better and "more inclusive" now. I hope we are both better and kinder now, and that the description of the "show" in Montclair, N.J. where she "came on stage wrapped in a blanket, holding a broom as a pretend rifle, and proceeded to act like a crazy person," was merely media hyperbole.

One person's political correctness, is, I suspect, another's abiding grief. I have a mental illness, but don't like being called "crazy"; and my daughter, who has schizoaffective disorder, and acts paranoid occasionally, but able to tell a hawk from a handsaw, would not find such an impersonation funny. May we all come to the point where we don't find "crazy" jokes funny anymore, and where we treat those afflicted with brain disorders with the respect their courage deserves.

—Mary Elgin '69
Altadena, Calif.



Tower Article Rings Bells

Your article about the Smith Tower carillon ("Old Chimes, New Times") in the winter issue moves me to make a confession:

An acquaintance was running for freshman class president. A group of his supporters decided to hang a campaign sign atop Smith Tower. I said I could shoot an arrow over the tower, trailing a length of monofilament fishing line. My second shot was true. We started to haul up our nylon rope. Damn! The 6-lb. test line broke. One strand was not enough. We made an eight-strand monofilament hank, capable of supporting more than 47 lbs. The new plan: one strand over the tower with an arrow, then the eight-strand hank, then a rope, then the sign.

In the early hours of Monday, Nov. 13, 1961, we began hauling up our 47-yard long monofilament hank. Oh, no! The wind carried strands into the clock hands, which seemed to reach out and ensnare our makeshift rigging.

Pull! Tug! Yank! Nothing moved except the minute hand, which flexed ominously. Not wanting to leave evidence, we jerked once more. The minute hand suddenly ratcheted from two to six. Time to go! Worried, we dispersed at 2:47 a.m.

Events the next morning confirmed our worst fears. The carillon erupted with seemingly endless chimes. I could see several strands of monofilament wafting from the clock hands, glowing brightly in the fall

sunshine. I began to contemplate Life After Expulsion From Pomona.

Agonizing minutes later, I learned the real purpose of the carillon serenade. The previous night, Pomona had vanquished Washington and Lee University on the General Electric College Bowl TV program. Smith Tower was summoning all Sagehens to a rally for the team, which previously had demolished Amherst, Hood, U. of Washington and TCU. With five wins they had retired the huge silver trophy.

A few days later the monofilament disappeared. The clock was reset. I exhaled. The 47-year statute of limitations has expired, so I am now willing to share this story.

—Lew Phelps '65
Pasadena, Calif.

I enjoyed reading about the ringing of the Smith Tower chimes on the 47th minute of the hour. As a Smiley freshman I walked by the tower countless times on the way to and from Frary, and my friends and I frequently pulled on the heavy metal door in hopes of finding it unlocked. No such luck ... until one night, the door moved!

After dinner and under cover of darkness, Jody Wally '90 and I returned to the tower, sneaked inside and closed the door. It was almost pitch black, but we could make out a narrow, winding staircase attached to the wall, Vertigo-style. Unfortunately, a locked door on the stairs about 8 to 10 feet up blocked passage. The only way around it was from the ground, by boosting and pulling each other up through a small opening on the stairs beyond the door. After a successful bypass, we climbed the stairs all the way up, where they ended at a landing underneath a long ladder attached to the wall. The ladder took us up through a hatch and outside to the platform under the bell. The view was fantastic, and it was a thrill to be up there.

We found it curious that conversations and sounds from below sounded much closer than they were.

Who knows, maybe ASPC could hold a fundraising raffle for a guided tour of Smith Tower?

—John Kyl '90
Phoenix, Ariz.

Females in Frary

Regarding "Prometheus Refound" in the winter issue, it will probably come as a shock to you, but I and numerous female cohorts dined with Prometheus in Frary during 1944–45. Clark Hall housed women during World War II and I was one of them. How long women lived in Clark, I am not sure. We had a dorm mother in residence, and Dean of Students Nicholl and Mrs. Nicholl inhabited an upstairs apartment in Clark, too.

I think the winter 2011 issue was really outstanding.

—Patricia Collins Stanley '46
Fallbrook, Calif.

There's More to Spanglish

I am writing in response to the letter (winter 2011 issue) from Robert L. Dennis, Jr. '69 about Spanglish. As a Spanish major, not only have I read *Scenes from la Cuenca y otros Natural Disasters*, but I have also taken many classes with the author, Professor Susana Chávez-Silverman. Throughout my studies, I have become aware of many different definitions of Spanglish. While Dennis offers one of many older definitions, a more progressive and inclusive one can be found in Paul Allatson's *Key Terms in Latino/a Cultural Identity Studies*. Allatson states that Spanglish "designates the many Spanish-English dialects spoken by many millions of Latino/as." Its meaning in day-to-day practice is in flux, an ongoing discussion. However, it is clear that Spanglish exists on a wide "interlingual spectrum" in which speakers shift back and forth between Spanish-dominant and English-dominant grammatical structures and vocabulary. Therefore,

Chávez-Silverman's "foray into Spanglish" is not just a foray, but a political choice that forces members of the mainstream to accept and include what could be called a "hybrid language" into popular culture. Spanglish is not only used by mainly Spanish-speaking people affected by a "combination of dislocation, poverty, and [a] lack of education." It exists on a wider plane that Chávez-Silverman seeks to make visible. She makes Spanglish acceptable—not something to be ashamed of—which is something remarkable in and of itself.

—Gabrielle Kelenyi '13



47 Sighting

2011 is a landmark year for our favorite number. It was 47 years ago this summer that two intrepid mathematical pioneers, about to begin their first year at Pomona, set out to prove—with tongue in cheek—that 47 shows up randomly in nature more often than any other number. Since that time, 47 has taken hold of the collective imagination of Sagehens. This semester, the College celebrated the 47th anniversary of 47 with birthday cake, giveaways, general hoopla and a 47-second video tribute that you can see online at vimeo.com/pomona-college/47.

Alumni and Friends

are invited to send us their letters by email to pcm@pomona.edu or by mail to the address on page 2. Letters are selected for publication based on relevance and interest to our readers and may be edited for length, style and clarity.

Backstage / Featured Contributors

Sally Ann Flecker



("Untimely") has been a freelance writer and writing coach for 10 years. Prior to that, she was editor of *Pitt Magazine* at the University of Pittsburgh. She lives in Western Pennsyl-

vania with her husband and two sons, from whom she had learned many things, including generosity, patience, how to play chess and what the cerebellum is for. In her free time, she plays bluegrass and old-time music and has recently discovered the pleasure of quilting.

Nathanael Johnson



'01 ("The Dad Who Knew Too Much") is a freelance journalist based in San Francisco. A former newspaper and public radio reporter, he has contributed to *This*

American Life, along with *Harper's*, *New York*, *Outside* and *San Francisco* magazines. He is working on his first book, *The Heidi Hypothesis*, on the consequences of placing too much faith in either technology or nature, which is forthcoming from Rodale in 2012.

Mary Schmich



'75 ("Born Still") is a columnist for the *Chicago Tribune*. She won the Studs Terkel Award in 2004 for coverage of Chicago communities, and has twice been a Pulitzer Prize finalist. From 1985 until 2010 she wrote the *Brenda Starr* comic strip. She teaches yoga and plays piano and, since January, mandolin.

Correction / Wrong Name

A caption in the photo spread of the Campaign Pomona launch in the winter issue misidentified a student shown talking to Campaign Co-chair John Payton '73 and Emelia Asiedu '11 during the New York event. The student should have been identified as Niger Washington '12.

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A THOUSAND CRANES

Molly Hasegawa PI '13 and Chien-Wei Chen '11 pitch in on a student-organized Claremont Colleges project to fold 1,000 paper cranes—said to make wishes come true in Japanese lore—to send to Tohoku University in one of the areas hardest-hit by the quake and tsunami that struck Japan in March. The origami project was a way to "extend our profoundest hope for Japan's speedy recovery," says Professor Lynne Miyake, who hosted the students in Mason Hall.

—Photo by Siyao Xie '14



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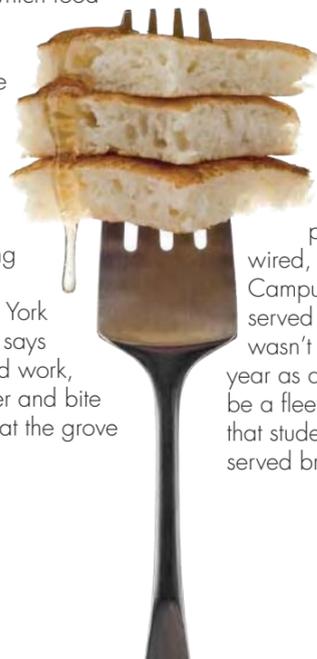
CAMPUS TIDBITS, TRADITIONS, LORE AND MORE

OrangeCrush

Sagehens of a certain age are sure to remember the days when orange groves stretched on and on across the open acres near campus. Sam Lewis '11 is bringing a whiff of that citrus-scented past back, by way of his 1982 Mercedes Benz 240 Diesel, which he crams full of the fruit he harvests each week at a leafy 10-acre oasis about 25 miles east of Claremont in the city of Rialto. After dropping off his \$10 boxes of mixed fruits to the homes of students living off-campus, he makes bigger deliveries to a few eateries, and if there happens to be anything left over, Lewis sells it to students on campus.

The century-old family grove is owned and operated by John Adams '66. When Rialto recently bought a strip of Adams' land to widen the street, the money allowed him to repair the irrigation and plant a wider variety of fruit trees, from avocado to apple. The College's Draper Center for Community Partnerships then connected him with an intern. Lewis, an environmental analysis major, was quick to see the value of Adams' local enterprise as an alternative to the "industrial food system" in which food is transported to market over vast distances.

The pair is promoting the grove as an urban agriculture education center—complete with fruit stand and "seasonal tastorium"—to attract school field trips, promote healthier eating and, hopefully, sell enough fruit to keep the grove going money-wise. Along with drumming up business and delivering produce, Lewis works on weekends harvesting fruit in the grove, which is quite a change of scenery for the student who grew up in New York City. "He's getting a big charge out of that," says Adams. And when Lewis finishes his weekend work, he'll sit down with Adams' 96-year-old mother and bite into a juicy orange as she tells him about what the grove used to be like in her day.



ShovelReady

More dirt: Troops of students have been spotted across campus digging and planting with gusto over the past few months, drawing their inspiration from a nature-loving alumnus of long ago. Members of the Ralph Cornell Society aim to make Pomona's landscape more sustainable by re-introducing native plants in some spots where water-hungry turf once took root.

Nik Tyack '11, one of the leaders of the society, modeled the group on the native landscaping principles of Ralph Cornell, class of 1914, who served as the College's landscape architect for more than 40 years. Tyack learned about Cornell in a class with Environmental Analysis Professor Char Miller, and his senior essay, "Ralph Cornell and the 'College in a Garden,'" addresses ways the College could apply some of Cornell's thinking today.

Holding their engraved trowels and shovels proudly, members of the society already have planted such native greenery as Hummingbird Sage and Pacific Mist Manzanita outside Brackett Observatory and Frary Dining Hall. And they have plans for transforming more patches around campus. "The goal is to perfect the college-in-a-garden idea in the 21st century," says Tyack.



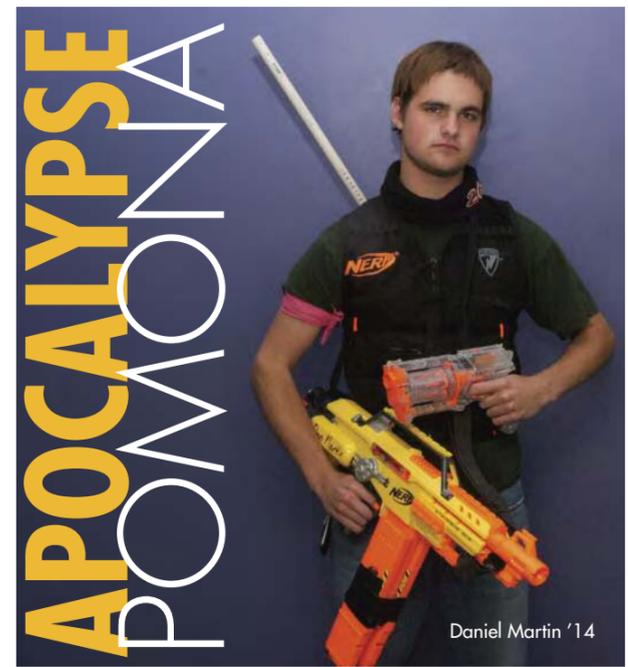
SyrupyBeginning

It's not the oldest Pomona tradition, but it has to be the sweetest. Twice a year, in the late hours of the Sunday night before finals week, administrators and professors serve up pancakes, French toast, fruit, and gallons of hot coffee to wired, tired students in the Coop Fountain. The opening of the Smith Campus Center in 1999 allowed the first Midnight Breakfast to be served in December of that year. Before the new building there just wasn't enough cooking space, says Neil Gerard, who is retiring this year as associate dean and director of the center. The feast may only be a fleeting respite from the rigors of finals week, but it's not every day that students can wear their pajamas to the campus eatery and get served breakfast by the president of the college.

Top 5: Intramurals

Aqua-fans are still plentiful, but basketball and soccer are now the most popular Pomona intramural sports, surpassing the chlorinated competition of once-No. 1 inner tube water polo. The quintessential SoCal sport of beach volleyball has gained players too, according to Intramurals Director Mike Gravagne.

What's next? While it didn't make the Top 5, intramural dodgeball also is picking up bounce, according to *The Student Life*, which reported this semester that "as the players have gotten larger, faster, and stronger, the speed and intensity of play have also increased proportionally." Better take cover. We see a Ben Stiller *Dodgeball* sequel coming.



Daniel Martin '14
—Photo by Robert Chew '14

For five days this semester, Pomona endured a zombie apocalypse, with shrieking students dodging the vicious blows of their once-human classmates.

Humans vs. Zombies has become a popular game at The Claremont Colleges over the past few semesters, drawing as many as 400 students—at least 100 of whom were Sagehens—this spring alone. In the game, one student is randomly assigned to be a zombie and must then start turning the humans by tagging them, creating more and more zombies.

The humans defend themselves with assorted Nerf toy weaponry that can stun the zombies for 15 minutes. Daniel Martin '14, who started playing in the fall game, began with just a small Nerf gun. "It became immediately apparent that I needed more weaponry," says Martin, who invested in a vest, more advanced Nerf weaponry and much more ammunition.

HvZ emerged out of a game created by Goucher College students in 2005. Now it is played at over 200 institutions across the nation, and has spread as far as Brazil and Australia. The game ends when all of the humans have been turned into zombies, or when all of the zombies have died from starvation after going more than 48 hours without tagging someone.

In Claremont, this spring's battle led to "lots of ambushing and battle cries and general epicness," says Martin. "Like one guy who ran out of ammo so he just kept pointing his gun at the zombies as he backed away, managing to hold off an entire horde with an empty gun."

This time around, the humans were victorious. But the zombies will be back.

They always come back.

—Ratna Kamath '11

CloseQuotes

"People often think, 'I gotta find the perfect job.' That's not how the world works. It's possible to find meaning and pleasure in just about anything you do."

—Laszlo Bock '94, Google's vice president of people operations, as quoted in *The Student Life* after speaking to students on campus at a career event in February.



8 minutes & 28 seconds with Bill Gates

Danny Low '11 was all set. He had practiced his presentation at least 10 times, made the last-minute switch to a more conservative tie and had just finished a try-to-relax lunch with a friend. And, then, shortly before Bill Gates entered the room, Low learned he would go fifth among the six students there to present their research to the Microsoft co-founder during his visit to campus. Low tried to tune in as his peers presented their findings on everything from laser-driven fusion to thin-film solar cells, but, really, he didn't absorb anything they said.

Finally, Low was up. He thrust out his hand and introduced himself to Gates, who wore a checkered shirt, sans tie or jacket, along with an engaged-but-informal manner. Low, who had a copy of his C.V. handy—you know, just in case—found his nerves quickly faded as he began to explain his work. He crisply laid out how he had first gone to Tanzania in 2009 to work with a charitable group doing HIV/AIDS education in rural areas. “After a few months, I really became hooked on global health [work]—that’s what I want to do,” he told Gates, adding that the Tanzania project led to his next opportunity, this time doing tuberculosis research in neighboring Kenya.

With his arms folded and his fingers stroking his chin, Gates scrutinized Low’s research poster as the anthropology major presented his counter-intuitive results, which showed patients at a Mombasa hospital who tested negative for tuberculosis actually had *worse* outcomes. Low also told how he went back to Tanzania with a grant to train student leaders to teach their peers about HIV/AIDS education, but when the time came for questions, Gates zeroed in on the TB research.



Bill Gates, the tech entrepreneur turned global health and education philanthropist, fielded questions before a full-house crowd of about 2,400 people in Bridges Auditorium in March as part of this year’s Pomona College Distinguished Speakers Series, established by a gift from the Broe family, and Harvey Mudd College’s Annenberg Speakers Series. Before the big event, he also met with students from Pomona and Harvey Mudd in smaller settings. —Photos by Kevin Mapp

“They had a negative sputum smear but then they were put on TB treatment?” Gates asked. Low replied that there often aren’t great diagnostic tools for TB in Kenya and sometimes people are treated based purely on symptoms. Gates pressed again: “It’s hard to think why a negative sputum smear would be associated with worse” outcomes. Again, Low was ready, explaining that it may be a matter of misdiagnosis: those with negative smears are still being treated for TB, but perhaps they really have something else that is going untreated. Or maybe patients truly do have TB, but the negative test result delays treatment, leading to more problems. Or it could be that people with HIV co-infection, a common situation, may show more diffuse symptoms that lead to negative test results.

Gates eventually moved on to ask whether Low had encountered many other Americans working in healthcare in East Africa—the answer, simply put, was “no”—and then he summed up Low’s work as “fantastic.” Low never did find the right moment to hand off his C.V., but meeting Gates left him with a college experience to remember. “He’s changed the way we live our lives probably more than any person I’ll meet in my life,” says Low.

—Mark Kendall



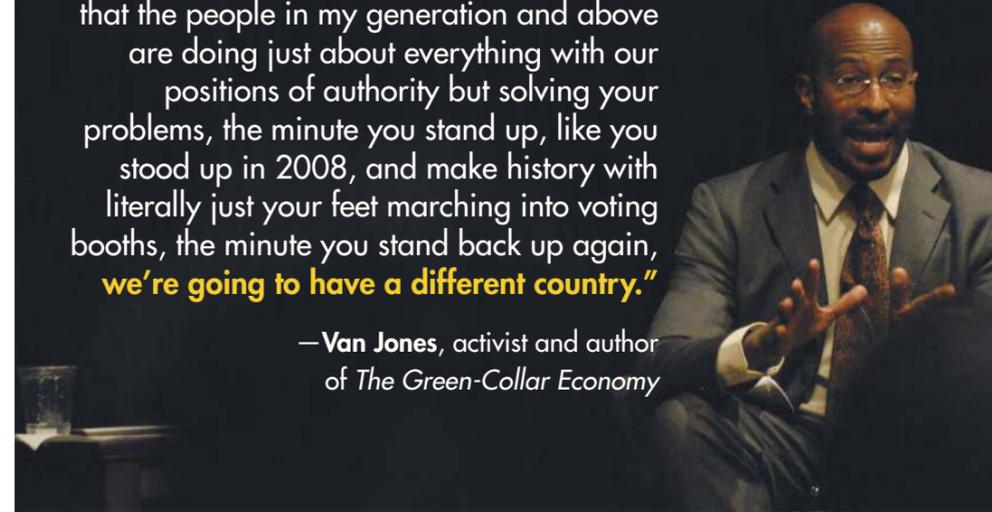
“THERE’S A TRUE SCHIZOPHRENIA where if you say to voters, you know, ‘Do you think the federal government spends too much money and they should spend less?’ They say, ‘Yeah, absolutely.’ Then you name specific things like Pell Grants for students and they say, ‘No, not that.’ How ‘bout NIH, medical research funding? ‘Nah, you really shouldn’t cut that.’ And pretty soon you prove that what the **American public is against is arithmetic.”**

—Bill Gates, philanthropist and co-founder of Microsoft

Stone spoke in Rose Hills Theatre in February after a screening of his documentary *South of the Border*. —Photo by Carrie Rosema.

“THE MINUTE YOU REALIZE that the people in my generation and above are doing just about everything with our positions of authority but solving your problems, the minute you stand up, like you stood up in 2008, and make history with literally just your feet marching into voting booths, the minute you stand back up again, **we’re going to have a different country.”**

—Van Jones, activist and author of *The Green-Collar Economy*



Jones spoke to students in Edmunds Ballroom in January as part of the Pomona College Distinguished Speaker Series. —Photo by Carrie Rosema.

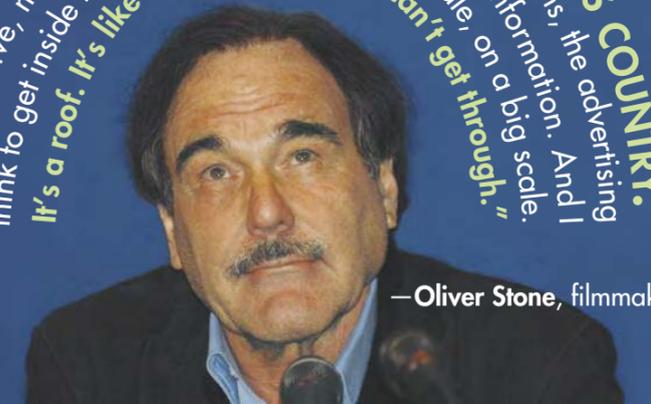
“I’VE ALWAYS BEEN AN ADVOCATE of going out and registering, finding like-minded people and getting them ready to vote and getting that voting bloc together and that is the way we’re going to change it. You can make as many rallies as you want ... you know, all the flag-waving and the rest. **And that didn’t get us anything, did it?”**

—Loretta Sanchez, U.S. Congresswoman



Sanchez, the congresswoman from Orange County, Calif., spoke in March at a Cesar Chavez Day event in the Smith Campus Center. —Photo by Siyao Xie '14.

“THE MEDIA IS LIKE ... A DOME THAT SETTLES OVER THIS COUNTRY.” We’re isolated in the sense that the media is controlled by corporations, the advertising is the objective, making money and also controlling the information. And I think to get inside that is impossible on a good scale, on a big scale. **It’s a roof. It’s like an Astrodome you can’t get through.”**



—Oliver Stone, filmmaker

Samantha Meyer '10:

HOW TO BECOME POMONA'S GREEN GROCER



1

Arrive at Pomona with thoughts of studying economics or English. Feel a part of an eco-conscious community for the first time, and settle on an environmental analysis major instead. Wind up working for Bowen Close '06, who directs the College's Sustainability Integration Office.

2

Help build a mobile solar station to provide energy for campus events, cultivate your own plot of land at the College's Farm, create an organic garden at the women's prison in Chino and become a leader of Pomona for Environmental Activism and Responsibility.

3

Attend the Real Food Challenge West Coast Summit the summer after your junior year. Learn how to assess where food came from and how it was grown or raised. Decide to scrap your original thesis idea and instead track every food item coming into Frary Dining Hall for a month. Determine most of it wasn't locally grown or ecologically sound. Write up a food assessment for your thesis, highlighting changes you think should be made.

4

Graduate with a job offer to become Pomona's sustainability and purchasing coordinator. Search out local farms for fresh produce, and work with a family-owned company to find sources of organic and humanely-raised food. Divert more than a ton of compost to the College's Farm each week. Provide healthy options at every meal. Have your eye on one day being able to do the same thing for low-income, urban schools.

Story by Ratna Kamath '11 / Photo by Carlos Puma



Sports Report: WINTER

Men's Basketball

9-16 overall, 4-10 SCIAC, seventh place
The team finished second in the conference in scoring defense. Xavyr Moss '13 finished first in 3-point field goals made and fourth in the SCIAC in scoring (13.9). Jake Klewer '14 finished first in offensive rebounds and third in the conference in total rebounding (7.5). Moss was named to the All-SCIAC first team.

Women's Basketball

4-21 overall, 2-12 SCIAC, seventh place
Emi Hashizume PI '14 was second in free-throw percentage (85 percent) and ninth in the conference in scoring (11.9). Emily Van Gulik '11 finished the season third in rebounds (8.6), 10th in field goal percentage (44 percent) and 17th in scoring (9.3). Neha Savant '14 finished fourth in assists (3.1) and 17th in rebounding (4.8).

Men's Swimming & Diving

5-2 dual meet record, third place
The team was led by Max Scholten '12, who finished first in the 100- and 200-meter backstroke at the SCIAC Championships and was also the runner-up in the 50-meter freestyle. Scholten went on to garner All-American recognition by finishing eighth in the 100-meter backstroke at the NCAA Championships. Other All-SCIAC performances were turned in by Tyler Oe '14 (three-meter diving), J.P. Cumming '13 (500- and 1650-meter freestyle) and by the team in the 200- and 400-meter medley relays, and the 400-meter free relay, which set a new school record.

Women's Swimming & Diving

5-2 dual meet record, fourth place
All-SCIAC performances included a third-place finish for Alex Lincoln '14 in the 200-meter freestyle. The team garnered a second-place finish in the 800-meter freestyle relay and finished third in the 400-meter freestyle relay, setting a new school record in the process.

The Sagehens closed their 2010-2011 men's basketball season with a home loss to cross-campus rivals Claremont-Mudd-Scripps, 59-44. Seniors R.J. Maki, Shawn Stephan and Bobby McNitt, playing in their final game for the Sagehens, were honored before the game. —Photo by Carlos Puma

LAURENCE POMMELLS' CHILDHOOD INTEREST IN FIGHTING SYSTEMS HAS GROWN INTO AN ACADEMIC PURSUIT AND A WAY OF LIFE.

MARTIAL AWE



Photos by Will Hummel '12

As a boy growing up in Chicago, Laurence Pommells '11 begged his mother for a year before she agreed to sign him up for martial arts lessons. Looking back, he doesn't begrudge her. She just wanted to make sure he would stick with it.

Mom needn't have worried. From the age of 7, Pommells has been wrapped up in the martial way of life, practicing, over time, tae kwon do, Shaolin chu'an fa kung fu, capoeira and more. "I kept at it because I enjoyed it," says Pommells, who has worked as an instructor at a Chicago-area kung fu studio. "I loved the form, I loved the discipline. It spoke to me, it spoke to my soul."

From the start, Pommells drew inspiration from the 1985 Berry Gordon film, *The Last Dragon*, in which a young Black man "goes on a quest to discover a master to take him to the highest level in the martial arts only to discover the master he was looking for was within himself." In his own life, Pommells went on to encounter a multiracial cast of instructors and students as he pursued various forms of Asian martial arts. Still, by the time he reached high school, a thought was hanging at the back of Pommells' mind: "Are there any African martial arts?"

Of course there are. History, he notes, is the story of war and conflict, and every culture has its fighting systems. As he settled in at Pomona College and settled on a major in Africana studies,

Pommells began to take a systematic look at the African continent's many forms of martial arts, which range from ancient Egyptian fighting systems to Zulu stick fighting. For a Summer Undergraduate Research Project, "Discovering African Martial Arts," he visited and interviewed instructors in Atlanta, Chicago and Detroit. Later, he attended a conference, put on by Detroit-based instructor Kylindi Lyi, on the relevance of African martial arts today.

Pommells is particularly interested in capoeira, an African-rooted fighting system that was introduced to Brazil by enslaved Africans. The use of music, an emphasis on improvisation and the absence of a definitive ranking system set capoeira apart from some other martial arts that are familiar in the U.S. "It is a different feeling when I practice capoeira," he says. "It makes me feel closer to my ancestors. My spirit—I can feel something welling up inside of me."

Graduating this year, Pommells plans to go on to graduate school for a degree in Africana studies—and he plans to keep at a mixture of martial arts to stay in the right frame of mind. "When I stop, my grades fall," he says. "When I practice, my grades rise again."

—Mark Kendall



Photos by Tom Bonner

HomeSuiteHome

Two new North Campus residence halls, the first to be built at Pomona in 20 years, opened in May for students on campus for summer research or work. Once the school year begins, Sontag Hall and the second residence hall will house 150 students, most of them seniors.

North of Sixth Street and east of Frary Dining Hall, the residence halls feature suite-style apartments with 3 to 6 bedrooms and shared bathrooms, living rooms and kitchenettes. Each floor also has a full kitchen and family-style lounge. Just outside is the reconfigured Athearn Field, which now tops a 170-car underground parking garage.

Sontag Hall, which was made possible by a lead gift from Rick HMC '64 and Susan '64 Sontag, has a rooftop garden, while the second Hall has a public lounge for campus gatherings and houses the Outdoor Education Center, Green Bikes Office and a rooftop educational exhibit about the building's energy-conserving features.

The residence halls were built to meet the gold LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) sustainability standard. The rooftops are lined with solar photovoltaic tiles, which will be used to heat water and provide some of the power to heat the buildings. Monitors in the lobbies will show energy use in real time, and students will be able to reduce the carbon footprint of the residence halls by using ceiling fans and operable windows in their rooms, and drying racks in the laundry areas.

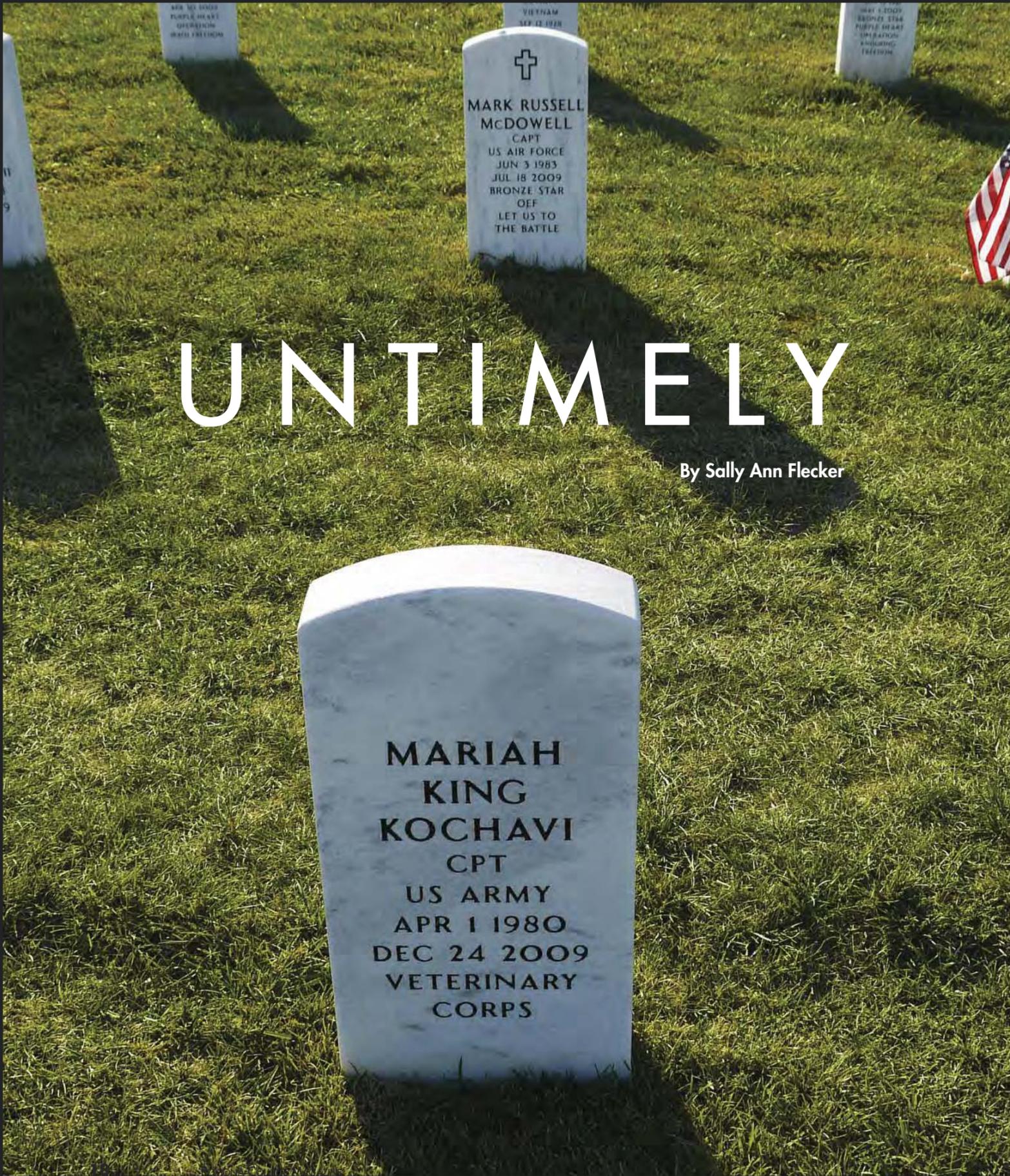
ABOVE: Sontag Hall was named in honor of the Sontag family, including the late Professor Fred Sontag. RIGHT: Open to campus-wide gatherings, the first-floor lounge in the second hall has a fireplace, drop-down movie screen and adjacent kitchen.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Looking across the plaza from the second hall toward Sontag Hall; educational exhibit on rooftop of the second building illustrates energy-saving and energy-producing features, including photovoltaic panels (foreground); Sontag Hall rooftop community garden; bedroom furnished with full-sized bed with drawers for storage, bookcase and desk; view across Athearn Field toward Sontag Hall; courtyard outside the second hall, landscaped with drought-tolerant and native California plants.

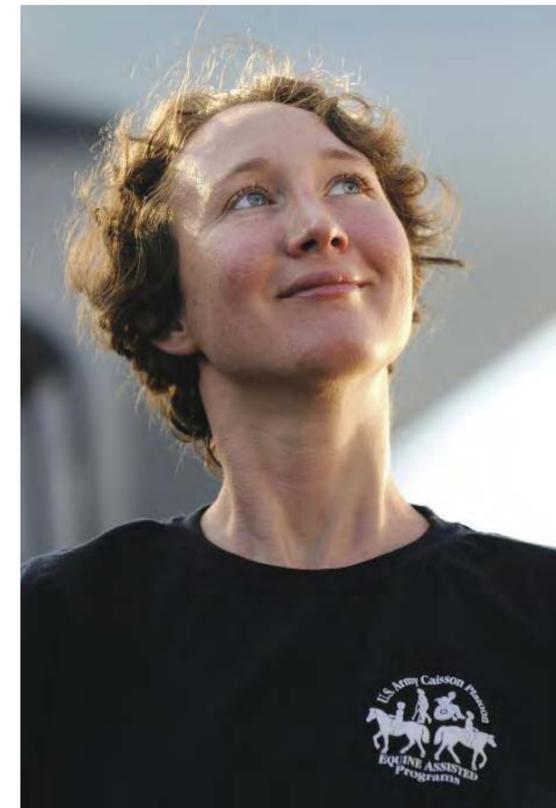




UNTIMELY

By Sally Ann Flecker

THE WONDERFUL LIFE AND UNTIMELY DEATH OF MARIAH KING STEINWINTER KOCHAVI '02



ON JUNE 15, 2008, THE DAY THAT EVERYTHING CHANGES COMPLETELY AND IRREVOCABLY FOR MARIAH KING STEINWINTER KOCHAVI '02, THE 28-YEAR-OLD ARMY VETERINARIAN IS AT A REMOTE MOUNTAIN INN IN THE ANDEAN HIGHLANDS. IT IS SUNDAY, HER THIRD FULL DAY IN PERU WHERE SHE HAS BEEN TREKKING FROM LODGE TO LODGE ALONG AN ANCIENT INCAN STONE-PAVED PATH. THE HIKES ARE BEAUTIFUL AND DEMANDING, UP AND DOWN ►

1. PORTRAIT OF MARIAH KING STEINWINTER AT AGE 8



1

2. MARIAH ENGAGED IN A FAVORITE ACTIVITY DURING A YARD PARTY



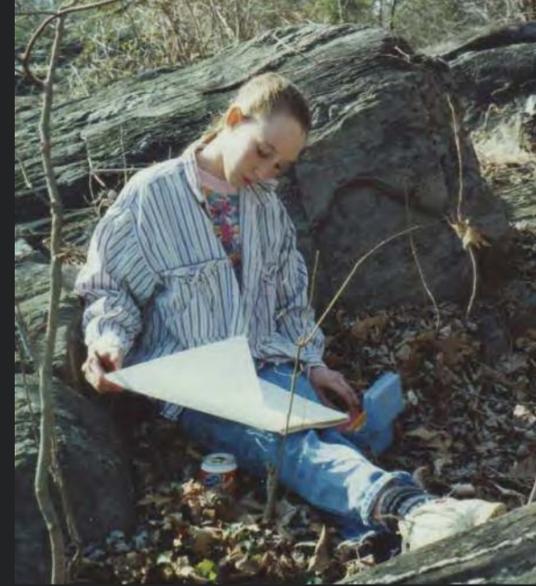
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3. MARIAH'S SIXTH BIRTHDAY, WITH A GIFT OF PUFFINS FROM HER FATHER



3

4. A TEEN-AGE MARIAH ENGAGED IN ANOTHER FAVORITE ACTIVITY, DRAWING FROM NATURE



4

steep slopes that will ultimately lead her group to the legendary city of Machu Picchu. Along the way, she is likely to see more mountains than people. It is a true getaway, marred only by the migraine that has nagged her since her arrival in Lima late Thursday night. Migraines are something Mariah has grappled with since childhood. This one is relentless, but she isn't about to let it hold her back.

Besides, everyone seems to think it is probably a reaction to the changes in altitude that will go away once her body adjusts to the thinner air. Mariah had flown in from Washington, D.C. (altitude 25 ft.) to Lima (5,079 ft.), then traveled the next day to the smaller town of Cusco (11,200 ft.) where the group she was with cooled their heels for a day to get acclimated. That Sunday, their hike takes them to 14,000 ft. Despite the powerful headaches, Mariah is out in front of her group. The evening before, she did take some Tylenol, but had shaken off the offer of altitude sickness tablets. She wants to tough it out. Part of the allure of the trip, you see, is seeing how her body performs in extreme conditions.

Mariah has been pushing her body to extremes since she put on her first pair of toe shoes in ballet class. After a dancing injury sidelined her, she took up taekwondo where she worked her way up the nine grades to a black belt, suffering through at least one broken nose. At Pomona, she hooked up with students who were in ROTC and took 5 a.m. boot-camp-style workouts with them. She was so sure of her physical prowess that when she applied for a highly competitive Army Vet Corps scholarship to pay for her last three years of veterinary school, she fantasized about the military awarding the scholarship based on the number of push-ups an applicant could do in two minutes.

This trip is a breather for Mariah at a stressful, but thrilling, time in her life. She has just completed her first army veterinarian post at Fort Meade in Maryland, about 30 miles from Bethesda where she had grown up. A few months earlier, she had separated from Ramon Kochavi, her husband of eight years, whom she met and married while she was still a student at Pomona and he was finishing up at Claremont McKenna College. Leaving Ramon was not an easy decision. "I feel like I just left my best friend," she

confided to her mother, Mary-O King. But the compulsion to be free was too great. Says King: "She wanted to soar like an eagle."

The Army had turned out to be an unexpectedly good fit for the young woman raised as a Quaker. She thrived on its discipline and loved the family environment of the military. She set her ultimate career sights on being head veterinarian at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology on the Walter Reed campus. In the meantime, she was about to be deployed to Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, where there are two multinational base camps and 30 observation posts. "My job will be to take care of some fifty to sixty 'mascots.' These are 'dogs' adopted by soldiers and 'trained' to 'guard' the observation posts," she wrote in an email shortly before her trip to Peru. "For all I know they are actually rabid foxes or rogue camel spiders—go ahead and google it—the soldiers trap for entertainment value." Her responsibilities were to include serving as camp veterinarian for public health issues ("i.e. rabid mascots and camel spiders," she wrote) as well as approving the farms and factories throughout Egypt and Israel that supplied food to the troops. The new job would be a challenge. That was the point.

When she left for her vacation in Peru, she was doing what we all do—fussing with the stubborn details of life that seem to matter so much at the moment. She had to figure out what to do with her Subaru, make arrangements for someone to take care of her dog Chai, get everything packed up and shipped to Egypt. Everything *is* about to change for Mariah. But it isn't the change she has in mind.

A YOUNG Mariah—she's 6—is hiking in Rock Creek Park in Washington, D.C., with her mother and younger brother Clay. It's a damp Saturday in March. Clay, who is not quite 4, is dragging his feet. Bunny—the nickname Clay gave Mariah before he could say her name—is way ahead. She has found a new walking stick and is holding a white balloon she had fished out of the creek. Eight riders on horseback suddenly appear in front of her, but Bunny isn't daunted in the least. She is determined to be the first one back. That's all that matters to her. Her mother remembers this particular day from 25 years ago. "Being way out in front is exactly

what she was doing on Machu Picchu," King says. "It strikes me we were all always trying to keep pace with Mariah."

The great themes of Mariah Steinwinter Kochavi's life surfaced—and merged—in childhood. This is no small point. Many of us follow along one path in life and eventually find that it leads to another, unforeseen one. We encounter moments where we make choices that change us, for better or worse, into a person we didn't exactly expect. Mariah, on the other hand, was like an acorn—always destined to become an oak tree. Looking back at her childhood, you can see present all of the elements that define her in adulthood. She had an acute intellect, which was matched by great physical ability. She was inordinately proud of both of these traits and subjected both brain and body to strenuous workouts.

"Once Mariah chose a path, she finished—and with gold stars," says her father, Mark Steinwinter. "Her M.O. her whole life was to be the best that anyone was in an area. Achieving things was huge for her." Paradoxically, achieving them quietly was equally important. After her parents divorced, her mother moved the family several times. If there was a basement room, she'd claim it for herself, says Clay. Even in childhood she was a deeply private person, disappearing for hours at a time into her little nest where she would read, or sketch, or paint—she was always working on something. She kept what she was working on to herself until she had perfected it. Not for show was the messy process of learning, of practicing something over and over until you get it right. "She would decide she was going to do something and develop it in private and in secret," Steinwinter says. "Then, when it was a *fait accompli*, she would expose it with a flourish."

Mariah's fascination with animals, particularly birds, goes all the way back to when she was in a playpen looking out into the back yard. Every time she saw a bird, she would bounce up and down and clap her hands. She would grow to observe nature keenly, drawing and painting birds and flowers in exquisite detail, and when she was only 8, her watercolor of a ruby-throated hummingbird landed on the cover of the Massachusetts Audubon Society's magazine.

She began rescuing animals at an early age, starting with two

baby robins whose nest was blown out of a tree during a storm. With the help of her mother, Mariah fed them almost round the clock, keeping them safe while they developed their pinfeathers. There were many more rescues—like the sparrow she saw fly into a moving car one day on Wisconsin Avenue in Bethesda. She begged her mother to step into the street to retrieve it after it lay limp on the ground, then Mariah sat under a tree holding it. Back home, she made a cage out of a box and some netting, poked sticks through a small hole for perches, suspended a piece of lettuce from a string, and named it "Survivor"—a testament as much to her own resolve as to the tiny bird's life force. She didn't give up on it. She never gave up on anything.

The idea of going to vet school didn't occur to Mariah until her final semester at Pomona, where she graduated with a degree in German studies and a minor in art. Actually, vet school was the brainstorm of Ramon, who believed Mariah would eventually become bored with her original career goal of becoming a scientific illustrator. Besides, being a veterinarian had been his own youthful dream. It's kind of funny the idea hadn't come up earlier, if only to spare the couple the vet bills for caring for the menagerie that shared the one-bedroom apartment with them—love birds, sugar gliders, ferrets, an iguana, a bunny and an umbrella cockatoo.

By then she had missed the application deadline for all the vet schools but the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts. She sent off her application, considering it a practice run for the following fall. With only 28 vet schools in the United States, getting accepted is even harder than getting into medical school. But on the very day of her graduation from Pomona, she received an acceptance letter from Tufts, giving Mariah and her family, who had gathered for the occasion, a double reason to celebrate.

Vet school offered Mariah the perfect combination of intellectual challenge and immersion in all things animal. She took to it like a fish to water. "My favorite new muscle (who has a favorite new muscle?) is the buccinator," she wrote in an email at the end of her first semester "You say it 'buxinator.' Just for comparison, my favorite muscle used to be the calf. I like doing calf raises while I brush my teeth. Now I've learned the muscle I thought all



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4



5

1. CARING FOR A PATIENT AS COMMANDER OF ARMY VETERINARY SERVICES IN WASHINGTON, D.C.
2. COMMISSIONED AS ARMY CAPTAIN IN BOSTON
3. A CAMEL RIDE IN ISRAEL
4. HIKING A 20-KILOMETER VOLKSMARCH IN GERMANY
5. MARIAH AFTER HER STROKE, WHEELING THROUGH THE STABLES OF FORT MYER —Photo by Carol Guzy, the Washington Post

along was the calf is the gastrocnemius and the superficial digital flexor along with it, if you're a cat but not a dog, the soleus. I can't summon the will to do gastrocnemius/superficial digital flexor/soleus raises while I brush my teeth."

Who could?

The hands-on part of her veterinary education involved rotations in a variety of places—at the Bronx Zoo, in the Florida Keys, on a kibbutz in Israel, not too far from where Ramon's parents live. Her favorite, says her father, was working at Tufts' Wildlife Center where people would bring in wild animals from the hills of central Massachusetts. "There wasn't really a protocol," Steinwintner says. "Mariah especially loved working on those beasts because there was nothing to go on. She had to use all of her intuition and sensitivity and her scientific background to figure out what's the right thing to do for this crow or this raccoon."

Mariah never grew out of the impulse to rescue animals. But she did come to understand the fine distinction between giving up on something and letting go of it. Her mother called one day to tell her that Guy, a pet cockatiel she had since she was 9, was not perching. He was just sitting in the bottom of the cage, which is not natural, and King could feel a tumor under his wing. After a long-distance consult with the vet about the possibility of doing surgery, Mariah told her mother she should put the bird down. "She said to me, 'He had a good life, Mom. Let him go,'" remembers King. It's a conversation King will have reason to recall frequently.

THAT SUNDAY in Peru, after the morning's strenuous hike, everyone in her group settles down at the lodge for an afternoon nap. Mariah can't sleep, though. She gets up, goes out for a walk, takes some pictures. Later, when her friend Molly Harrington comes back to the room to check on her, she is relieved to see Mariah in bed, having apparently finally fallen asleep. She hadn't slept well the entire trip so far. When Harrington tries to rouse her to ask about dinner, Mariah, who never drinks, sounds drunk and confused. Thinking she is showing signs of serious altitude sickness, Harrington races off to get their guide. When the two try to help

Mariah stand up, she slumps down as if she's fainted. The guide gives her oxygen to stabilize her and make plans to take her back to lower altitude in Cusco.

What follows is a long, jarring, winding journey over rough terrain. Harrington has to hold Mariah up because she isn't able to do it herself. Mariah jokes about her tongue being numb, and covers her eyes because everything is blurry. It takes two hours just to get to an exchange point where they are met by the closest thing they have to an ambulance. The ride to Cusco, where there is a traveler's clinic, is another hour-and-a-half. Mariah asks Harrington if she has had a stroke. Indeed, this will turn out to be the case. But at the moment it is unthinkable to everyone but Mariah. It will be more than another 24 hours before doctors make the shocking diagnosis that this vibrant young woman who was hardly sick a day in her life has suffered a brain stem stroke. One of the arteries feeding her brain was narrowed—probably a congenital condition. But for whatever reason—the altitude, birth control pills, nobody will ever know with certainty—it became blocked, cutting off oxygen to her brain and causing grievous damage.

It is not until Tuesday night that her family gets the news. Her father jumps on the next plane to Lima. By the time he arrives, Mariah has deteriorated even further. She is now in intensive care, breathing with the help of a ventilator. She is virtually paralyzed, wracked with vicious muscle spasms, but able to talk. She asks her father to take her home. Later, he is floored when she tells him to kill her if she is not better in four days. This is not the tenacious person he has always known. He asks her to be patient, to see how things are in six months. The next morning, when he comes back to the hospital, she has been robbed even of her speech. Cruelly, the only thing left intact is the cognitive part of her brain—the part where she can see clearly what she has lost.

IT'S A formidable road that stretches out before Mariah. She is receiving the best care in the world, first from Walter Reed Army Medical Center where she was flown to as soon as she could be moved from Lima, then at the poly-trauma rehab unit at McGuire Veterans Affairs Medical Center in

Richmond, Va. There she undergoes five months of intensive therapies—physical, occupational, speech, kinesiology and recreational therapies. Finally, she returns to the Walter Reed campus to live at the Mologne House, a kind of assisted living hotel, where she will continue the recovery process as an outpatient.

The prognosis is not terrific. At first she can only communicate by wiggling her feet—she wears one sock that says "yes," the other "no." After a few months she regains her ability to speak. She calls it a "Mariah-cle." But the production of sounds is labored; the old musicality to her voice gone. She has to relearn how to walk, how to reach for things, how to brush her hair, how to swallow. She has always been a voracious reader. Now she not only has trouble holding a book up to read, but she has double vision. The most doctors can do for that is suggest an eye patch. Damage to her vestibular system, which contributes not only to her balance but her sense of where her body is in space, is profound. She is afraid of walking on her own, terrified that she is going to fall and hurt her head. Still, everyone who knows Mariah holds the same thought: If anyone can beat the odds and astound the medical experts, it will be Mariah.

But it's not like that at all. She is profoundly depressed, even suicidal, from the first. She does make slow, but marked, progress, meeting one milestone after another—sitting up, holding a fork, walking with assistance, maneuvering her wheelchair. In her old life, she would often throw her kayak on top of her car at the crack of dawn and head out for a solitary morning of paddling and birdwatching. As part of her therapy, she gets back in a kayak, courtesy of a volunteer program run out of Walter Reed. Kayaking is an excellent way to rebuild core muscle strength and confidence, Mariah starts out in an indoor pool with a specially outfitted kayak, but eventually kayaks in the C&O Canal and the Potomac River. She also participates in equine therapy at Fort Meyer, which puts her back among the familiar smells and sounds of a stable. She works her way up to a point where she is able to ride solo—a stunning achievement.

But all of this progress seems lost on her. In fact, she continually rejects the notion that she has made any progress at all, denies taking steps on her own or kayaking on the canal—perplexing

everyone who has worked with her and witnessed her achievements. "I don't know if it was because she was holding out for being back where she was and even better—which was never going to be in the cards," says her father Mark Steinwintner. "Or if the stroke itself had robbed her of the rational ability to see what was and measure it against where she had been."

Truly, her losses are staggering. Yes, she can talk—quite intelligibly if she talks slowly and if the listener pays good attention. "It was miles from the articulate, witty, brilliant Mariah that she liked to project," says Steinwintner. Her occupational therapist brags about the snowman Mariah drew one day during a session—a noteworthy accomplishment in her recovery. Still, can Mariah have heard that praise without grieving for the lost pleasure of sitting cross-legged on the grass with a sketchbook in her lap while she captured the fine details of a rose about to bloom?

There are collateral losses as well—the privacy she so prized, for one, and, too often, her dignity. One afternoon her mother took her out for lunch at her favorite delicatessen. Afterwards, they decided to get manicures at the nearby salon. "Such a good girl," the nail technician cooed to this brilliant, sophisticated woman as though she were a child.

A few months after the stroke, doctors tested her cognitive functions. "I'm still the smartest girl in the world," she told Steinwintner when she was wheeled back into her room. "She had memory that scored her in the 99th percentile of people who have not had strokes," he says.

It was on her intellect, finally, that she pinned her hopes. She wanted to get back on track with her veterinary pathology career. One of the giant roadblocks to this goal was that she didn't have the fine motor coordination to write; in fact, even using a keyboard was a challenge for her. She suggested trying speech recognition software, and when she first tried it out she was able to compose a nice message to her brother.

"We were both elated. Maybe it wasn't necessary for her to be able to write really well to be successful professionally," Steinwintner says. "She could do it this way. I know that just filled her with a lot of hope." He bought a high-end laptop for her and loaded it up with the speech recognition software and took it to her ►

1. MARIAH BEING HELPED INTO THE SADDLE AS PART OF THE THERAPEUTIC RIDING PROGRAM AT FORT MYER



1

2. WALKING WITH HER MOTHER PAST ONE OF THE CAISSONS AT FORT MYER



2

3. A PARTING HUG FOR HER FAVORITE HORSE, MINNIE



3

—Photos by Carol Guzy, the Washington Post

the next time he went to see her, a few weeks before Thanksgiving. “The plan was to see if she could also do some veterinarian transcription type stuff,” he says. “She was eager to have a go at it.” But this time around, for whatever reason, her speech was off just enough that the system didn’t do a good enough job transcribing what she was saying. It was frustrating, but she kept at it for hours—to the point that she was barely intelligible.

“Here was the problem,” says Steinwinter. “A few weeks earlier there had been this giant breakthrough and all the hopes that went with it. And all of a sudden she was crashing into a wall. I think that did two things to her. It robbed her of a technical solution to a problem. But it also isolated her further and just reminded her—other people have trouble understanding me and so does the computer and here I am stuck in this awful situation.”

Mariah has spent her whole life on a mountain. On the rare occasion that her smarts and strengths didn’t carry her all the way to the top, the sheer force of her will made up the difference. Now picture Mariah sitting there at that computer, trying to train it to recognize her voice—a voice she couldn’t quite control, a voice she herself didn’t even really recognize as her own. Imagine her talking into the machine over and over and not being able to make it understand. Imagine her heart breaking as this failure washes over her. Is she giving up—or is she letting go?

One afternoon, Mariah and her mother are sitting in companionable silence in Mariah’s room at Mologne House. “What are you thinking about, Mariah?” King asks. “I’m thinking I had a wonderful life before the stroke,” she answers. Her mother can’t help but remember when she has heard Mariah say something like that before.

Perhaps that wonderful life—filled as it has been with dogged ambition and grand accomplishment—has left Mariah unsuited for a decidedly imperfect body, for a life that is not of her own choosing. Whatever the reason, a few weeks later, on December 24, 2009, 18 months after the stroke, while her mother is out running some last-minute errands for the holiday, Mariah makes one final, heartbreaking choice—to end her own life.

It is her mother who finds her, as Mariah must have known it would be. That morning, she had painstakingly signed a home-

made Christmas card for King, made from one of her earlier wildlife drawings. “I love you, Mom,” it said, in handwriting so quivery it looked like it had been written with an Etch-a-Sketch. Now, King opens the door to Mariah’s room at the Mologne House, anticipating the holiday evening ahead with Mariah home. Moments later, she is back into the hallway, crying for help, crying because there can be no help.

In Boston, Mark Steinwinter is following his family out the door to Christmas Eve service when the phone rings. Upon hearing the news that Mariah is gone, he takes a step backwards to sit down but misses, landing on the floor.

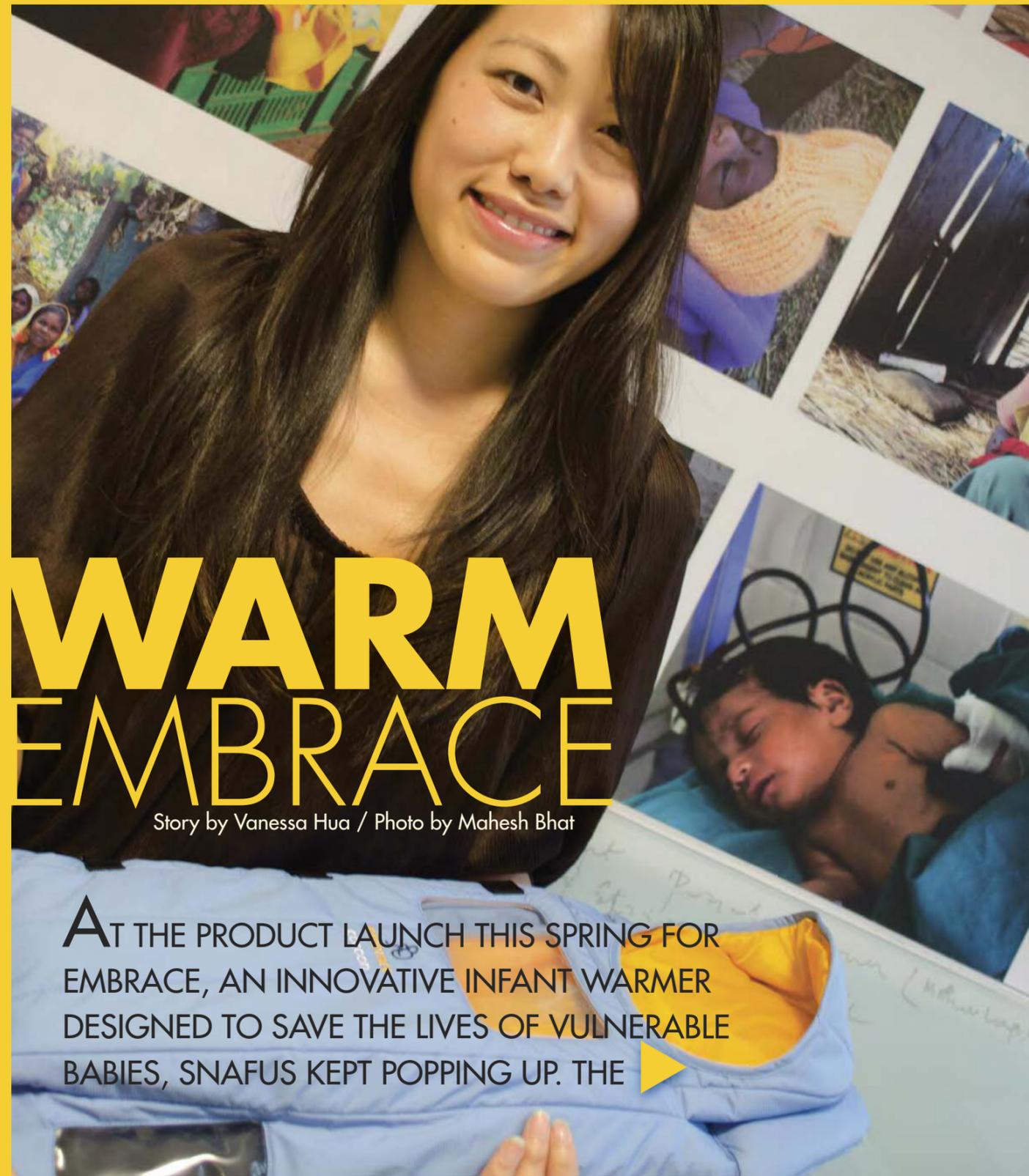
Clay won’t learn of his sister’s death until the next day. When his father tries to break the news to him gently, Clay screams an endless, echoing “Nooooooooooooo”—perhaps equal in weight to all of the hope and love the family had put into holding Mariah up until she could find her own way.

KING OPENED the Metro section of the *Washington Post* the day after Mariah’s death to see Mariah’s picture front and center. Ironically, the *Post* has chosen Christmas Day to run a story that has been in the works for some time on the equine therapy program for wounded warriors at Fort Meyer.

In the days and months to come, King will mourn for her daughter. She will spend sleepless nights going through all of the drawings and paintings and scraps of writing that Mariah left behind, trying to hold onto her daughter, trying to not be buried by her grief.

But on this raw Christmas morning, King is jarred, and then comforted to see her daughter’s familiar face. In the photo, Mariah is wearing the softest pink sweatshirt. She has just finished grooming a gentle white horse named Minnie, her favorite, and is hugging her, her face almost buried in Minnie’s neck. It’s a beautiful photo—a benediction of sorts. She is hanging on for dear life, it seems. And she is saying good-bye.

Mariah King Steinwinter Kochavi was buried with full honors in Arlington National Cemetery, her caisson pulled by some of the very horses that she rode at Fort Meyer, including Minnie.



WARM EMBRACE

Story by Vanessa Hua / Photo by Mahesh Bhat

AT THE PRODUCT LAUNCH THIS SPRING FOR EMBRACE, AN INNOVATIVE INFANT WARMER DESIGNED TO SAVE THE LIVES OF VULNERABLE BABIES, SNAFUS KEPT POPPING UP. THE ▶

electricity went out at the startup's packaging and quality control facility in Bangalore, India. The wash-tags were printed incorrectly and had to be redone and stitched in. And when Jane Chen '00 and her team set off to mail the very first shipment, their rented car sprang a flat, forcing the group to hail a rickshaw.

Chen, Embrace's CEO, overcame the problems with the same determination and creativity that led her to co-found Embrace. "Everything that could go wrong did, but we were determined no matter what to deliver the product," Chen says by phone from Bangalore. "People napped for an hour on the couch in the office, but otherwise worked through the night."

Each year, more than 20 million premature and low-birth-weight babies are born worldwide. Four million die in the first month of life because their internal organs are underdeveloped and the babies don't have enough fat to regulate their body temperature. Survivors may grow up with severe health problems such as diabetes and heart disease—which could be prevented if they were kept warm.

However, in villages in developing nations, babies are often born at home or in rural clinics that lack incubators or use ineffective, stopgap measures such as tying on hot water bottles or keeping the frail patients under light bulbs. In the cities, hospitals may not have enough incubators, or find them confusing to use and difficult to maintain and repair.

At \$200, the Embrace infant warmer is a fraction of the \$20,000 cost of a traditional incubator. Resembling a tiny sleeping bag, the device uses a pouch of a wax-like substance that can be heated to keep the babies warm for four to six hours at normal human body temperature. They're portable, safe, and easy to use and re-use.

The ingenious product has attracted widespread attention for Chen, who has been featured in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Economist* and a segment on ABC News. She was selected as a fellow at TEDIndia—the influential conference of global movers and shakers—and as the recipient of Pomona's Inspirational Young Alumni Award for 2011.

At Pomona, Chen, a psychology major, mentored at-risk high school students and spent a semester abroad in Nanjing, which kindled her interest in working internationally. After graduation, she headed to Hong Kong as a management consultant. After reading about villages hard hit by AIDS in China, she became a program director at a startup non-profit that funded and operated projects in education and care for children and adults impacted by AIDS, raising funds and increasing public awareness about their plight.

"I realized how lucky I was, to be born in the point one percent of the luckiest people born on the planet. I could have been born into another life," says Chen, the daughter of Chinese im-

migrants. "It exposed me to the injustices of the world."

She returned to earn an M.B.A. and a master's in public policy in a joint program at the Stanford Graduate School of Business and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. Embrace emerged from a 2007 class project at Stanford, where Chen, along with Linus Liang, Nag Murty and Rahul Panicker—classmates from diverse backgrounds in engineering, business, public policy, entrepreneurship and computer science—created the prototype after a trip to Kathmandu, Nepal, where they witnessed the immense need firsthand.

The road from idea to market has been arduous, taking Chen across 11 states in India, interviewing doctors, midwives and government health officials to refine the device. "We wanted to make it truly locally appropriate, rather than something we came up with in the U.S. and force-fed on the other end," she says.

Leading up to April's launch, there were animal trials with preemie lambs in Utah, presentations of research at medical conferences, business meetings in India and distribution deals with companies such as GE Healthcare and Novartis and NGOs such as Population Services International.

Initially, Embrace is selling a version that requires 20 minutes of electricity to heat up the device, for clinics and hospitals with intermittent power. The second version, to launch in October, is geared towards home use and relies on hot water as the heat source.

"It's a huge market, but it's going to take convincing that community health workers should be equipped with this tool, just like a stethoscope," says Kevin Starr, director of the Rainer Arnhold Fellows Program, which mentors social entrepreneurs, and funds Embrace through its parent organization, the Mulago Foundation. The startup, in the process of securing venture capital funding, will have non-profit and for-profit arms. So far, Embrace has raised over \$2 million through foundations and individual contributions.

The company will be based in Bangalore and Chen has settled into life in India with gusto and aplomb. Clad in the traditional garb of a *shalwar kameez*—flowing tunic over billowy pants—and climbing aboard rickshaws, she comes off as a native, says Vinod K. Bhutani, a neonatologist at Stanford University Medical Center who has worked extensively in India on health policy and education.

"She blends in," says Bhutani, also an Embrace board member. "She's learning to communicate the body language and understand the nuances."

After India, Embrace plans to expand its distribution into other countries throughout South Asia, China, Kenya and Uganda and eventually develop additional affordable medical technologies. "Every time we go to a clinic," Chen says, "we see 12 other needs that could be addressed."





NATHANAEL JOHNSON '01 SPENT YEARS INVESTIGATING A TROUBLING TURN IN MATERNAL MEDICINE. NOW, ABOUT TO BECOME A FATHER FOR THE FIRST TIME, HE WEIGHS THE RISKS OF HOW AMERICA DELIVERS BABIES—AND HEALTH CARE.

Exploring the dramatic rise of maternal mortality

THE DAD

WHO KNEW TOO MUCH

By Nathanael Johnson '01

AS EARLY ELECTIVE BIRTHS INCREASE SO DO HEALTH RISKS FOR MOTHER

The polarized history of birth politics

is neatly contained within my family. I was born in a second-floor bedroom, with candles burning and The Chieftains on the turntable. My wife, Beth, was born at a hospital via scheduled cesarean section, without musical assistance. My parents were hippies. Hers were Republicans. In our respective rebellions, we met somewhere in the middle. Both of us lacked the fervor that had divided the previous generation during the culture wars of the '70s. She, a nurse, was aware of the occasional excesses of modern medicine, and I, having spent my childhood testing the beneficence of nature, no longer believed that “natural” was synonymous with “healthy.” Nonetheless, before we went to our first prenatal appointment in December, Beth asked me not to say anything crazy.

“What do you mean?” I asked, aghast.

“I just don’t want you to go into investigative-reporter mode on the doctor,” she said.

For the last few years pregnancy and birth has been my beat as a journalist. It began when a source showed me the findings of an unreleased report from the California Department of Public Health revealing that the number of women dying from causes

directly related to pregnancy had more than doubled in the previous decade. The researchers immersed in this data said that this statistic was probably the most visible sign of much more widespread problems haunting maternal health care.

The U.S. is now the most dangerous developed country in which to give birth, and by far the most expensive. Usually money is the fulcrum of the health-care debate—we argue about how many we can afford to cover with insurance, and about who should get the benefit of expensive new tests and drugs. But as I reported a series of stories on maternal health it became clear to me that access to health care is beneficial only if the quality of that health care is good. And quality, it turns out, is highly variable. Even the best hospitals regularly perform procedures with no basis in scientific evidence.

My reporting, done from an abstract height, took on a new immediacy once Beth and I entered the health system ourselves. It was pretty hard to question the standard treatment at all without violating Beth’s directive against sounding like a crazy person. Hospitals, both for better and for worse, are industrial systems. They are optimized for efficient treatment, and not ►

for patients who want to examine the science backing each routine procedure. They run most smoothly when patients have faith in their efficacy. It's rough going for patients like me, who would rather leave faith out of medical decisions entirely.

It hadn't taken much research to see why medical authorities tended to think home-birthers like my parents were crazy. Maternal mortality peaked in this country around the turn of the last century, when more than 800 women were dying for every 100,000 live births. Since that time, it has fallen more than 99 percent, reaching its nadir in 1997 at 7.7 deaths per 100,000 live births. Infant mortality fell a little over 90 percent in that time period. Clearly, obstetrics has been wondrously effective—so effective that some practitioners feel they can legitimately dismiss any complaints about modern childbirth as frivolous.

These improvements have coincided with a shift in obstetrics toward more technology and greater standardization. Rather than adapting techniques to the vagaries of each birth, doctors have sought out methods that yield reliable results regardless of context. In pondering this trend, the physician-journalist Atul Gawande showed that the cesarean surgery was one of the best methods for bringing standardization to birth. It's easy to learn, and it replaces the atavistic complexities of mammalian reproduction with a few legible, controllable steps. In a 2006 article for *The New Yorker* (titled "The Score") Gawande asked if there was anything wrong with this:

"The question facing obstetrics was this: Is medicine a craft or an industry? If medicine is a craft, then you focus on teaching obstetricians to acquire a set of artisanal skills—the Woods corkscrew maneuver for the baby with a shoulder stuck, the Lovset maneuver for the breech baby, the feel of a forceps for a baby whose head is too big. You do research to find new techniques. You accept that things will not always work out in everyone's hands.

"But if medicine is an industry, responsible for the safest possible delivery of millions of babies each year, then the focus shifts. You seek reliability. You begin to wonder whether 42,000 obstetricians in the U.S. could really master all these techniques."

Gawande concluded that, notwithstanding a romantic twinge at the thought of losing human connection to yet another natural process, it was the quantifiable results of improving infant health that had driven this industrial revolution in hospitals—and who could argue with that? Though several years have passed since the publication of this article, it's worth considering here because it epitomizes both the way most medical institutions frame the issue of C-sections to this day, and the error that undermines that framing. This error is a willingness to allow the logic of industrialization to drive medicine (or the reasoning in a magazine story), while failing to use that same logic to check the results. And checking isn't so hard.

Medical researchers, thanks in large part to the work of Donald Berwick (now running Medicaid and Medicare for the Obama administration), have increasingly embraced the discipline of quality improvement, a set of techniques borrowed from in-

dustrial engineering. Quality improvement seeks out measurable benchmarks to show if reforms make things better or worse. These data allow administrators to see problems that are otherwise invisible—either because cause is separated from effect, or because they defy conventional wisdom. "The Score" focused on one such measurement, the Apgar score, which quantifies the health of a newborn on a scale of 0 (limp and blue) to 10 (pink and wriggling). And while Gawande showed how attention to this measurement could drive doctors to do more cesareans (on this point he is typically brilliant), he didn't mention that as the cesarean rate rose from 15 percent in 1978 to 32 percent today,

CAUGHEY'S RESEARCH PREDICTS THAT IF WE BROUGHT THE NATIONAL C-SECTION RATE DOWN TO 20.6 PERCENT BY 2020, EVERY YEAR WE'D BE SAVING THE LIVES OF 110 MOMS WHO WOULD OTHERWISE DIE AS THE TRAJECTORY CONTINUED UPWARD.

overall Apgar scores did not budge. In other words, quantification may have caused more surgeries, but those surgeries didn't produce a quantifiable improvement. There are also other measurements used to determine the success of obstetrics. One is maternal mortality.

This article came up when I met with Aaron Caughey, head of obstetrics at the Oregon Health and Sciences University (at the time Caughey was at UC San Francisco). Gawande and Caughey had gone to Harvard Medical School together where they had become friends.

"So did he call you when he was writing 'The Score?'" I asked. Caughey shook his head. I wondered if he thought there was anything more to be said on the subject.

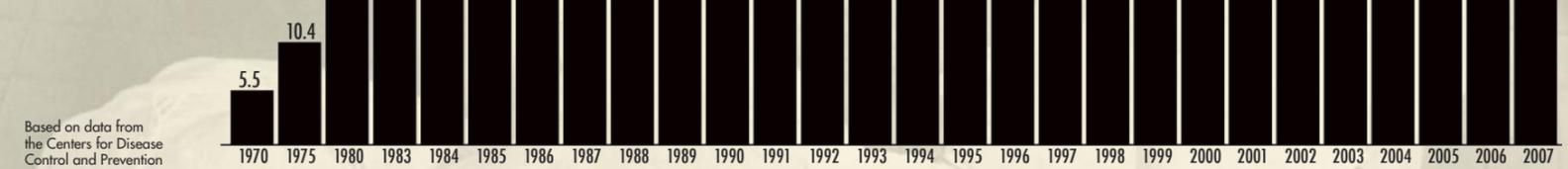
"I think there is," Caughey said. "I mean it was a great article. But most people have been missing something when it comes to C-sections."

Caughey's research predicts that if we brought the national C-section rate down to 20.6 percent by 2020, every year we'd be saving the lives of 110 moms who would otherwise die as the trajectory continued upward. These deaths are almost nearly impossible for doctors to see because most complications and injuries stemming from cesareans do not appear until the next birth, or the one after that. By performing the surgery an obstetrician can lower the risk that anything going terribly wrong, but she passes an increased risk on to the next doctor—not to mention the patient.

Caughey said it would be "really, really easy" to bring the national cesarean rate back down to 20 percent—meaning ►



TOTAL CESAREAN RATE IN THE UNITED STATES (PER 100 BIRTHS) 1970-2007



that doctors and hospitals have the tools they need to safely perform more natural births. Other quality improvement reformers have come to similar conclusions.

Intermountain Healthcare, a nonprofit hospital system based in Utah, started on a new course more than a decade ago, after the industrial audit recommended more “low-tech, high-touch” births. Intermountain focused most of its efforts on reducing the number of babies unnecessarily delivered early (either via cesarean or induction). Bryan Oshiro, who worked for Intermountain as a neonatologist in the early days of this project, told me a story of the defining experience that had made him an evangelist for this issue. The head of the neonatal intensive care asked him to look in on a group of babies with problems.

“He said, ‘You doctors are doing this. These babies are here because you allowed them to be delivered early,’” Oshiro said. “That just kind of stopped me dead. It was really clear—we’re hurting babies. And we can stop it.”

The effects of the changes were wholly positive. Mothers, on average, were able to go home sooner. Complications and admissions to the neonatal intensive care unit decreased. C-section rates declined. But there was also a hitch: The reforms have reduced the amount Intermountain charged its patients by more than \$250 million since 1999. “Intermountain is nonprofit and that makes it easier for us to take such steps, but the incentive for most organizations is to provide more care, not less,” Intermountain representative Daron Crowley told me.

My own analysis showed that a pregnant woman walking into a for-profit hospital in California was significantly more likely to have a cesarean surgery than a woman walking into a hospital without an incentive for profit. I doubt that doctors are the mechanism driving this disparity (they usually receive about the same reimbursement regardless). But it is clear that nonprofit hospitals are the ones adopting these reforms. I imagine it would be hard to convince any hospital administrator to adopt a low-tech birth program that costs money, sometimes alienates doctors (no one likes to be told they are doing things wrong), and (oh by the way) reduces revenues by millions of dollars. But it would be especially hard if that administrator’s performance was measured by hospital profits.

As my wife and I began talking about where she would give birth, all this was troubling. Of course, we could have simply opted out of a hospital birth entirely. That’s not as foolhardy as those statistics at the beginning suggest. One point usually left out of the improvement-of-obstetrics story is that obstetric practice itself was responsible for a large part of those shocking turn-of-the-century statistics. In a 1999 review of the century’s improvements, the Centers for Disease Control concluded that “Poor obstetric education and delivery practices were mainly responsible for the high numbers of maternal deaths, most of which were preventable.”

Uneducated midwives were certainly part of the problem in those days when the majority of births occurred at home. But historical examples suggest home births weren’t the crux of the problem, as in the well-documented case of Eastern Kentucky’s Frontier Nursing Service, which, starting in the 1920s, made it safer to give birth in a log cabin, attended by well-trained horse-

back midwives, than in the best hospitals in the city.

Even today the evidence is perplexingly mixed on home birth. The people who do meta-analyses of all the various studies (like the Cochrane Systematic Reviews) basically say that—for a low-risk pregnancy—it’s a wash. There’s insufficient evidence to advise patients that it’s safer to give birth in a hospital or home.

Beth and I were left to sort out the choice on our own. It made intuitive sense that a hospital would be safer in an emergency—I could think of several conditions (an undetected placental abruption for instance) where you would want to be seconds, rather than minutes, from an operating room. On the other hand, I’d also interviewed the families of women who had died because of mistakes made in the bustle of hospitals. I found I was weighing Gawande’s rhetorical question: Do we go with craft, or industry?

It’s a question that reformers now are asking about the entire medical system. Ideally health care would be post-industrial, assuming either form depending on the circumstance; it would be nice if medical recordkeeping worked with the effortless efficiency of industry, while office visits emphasized the personal touch of an artisan. Family medicine and psychiatry—craft, surgery—industry. But if we treat all medicine as an industry, as is increasingly the case, it would behoove the country to also adopt the best practices of industry—to make decisions based on evidence—rather than simply using the metaphor to justify a reliance on technology. Any industrial system is by necessity reductive, it boils complexity down into measurable numbers. At the very least we should pay attention to what those numbers are telling us.

One of those numbers is cost. In the United States maternal mortality is the most salient example of our health care paradox—the more we spend the sicker we get. The costs of maternal and infant health have grown to absolutely astronomical levels, while the outcomes have stagnated or gotten worse. Troubling as they are, the rising maternal mortality statistics are also an opportunity. If we can figure out what is happening in reproductive health then we will have a set of tools to make health care better and more affordable.

But this is a challenge for policy makers and hospital administrators. It’s not easily undertaken by individual patients. There’s no place for nuanced discussions about quality improvement during prenatal checkups. The only thing that seemed within our power to control was our choice of systems—or of faiths, if you will. Neither my wife nor I wanted to place our trust in the power of The Chieftains, but we also didn’t want to be nudged into a cesarean surgery by a health system with policies based on industrial logic rather than science. In the end, the idea of giving birth in a hospital just seemed a little more comfortable—a little more safely mainstream. It’s frustrating, but despite all the statistics and studies, we ended up making the one choice available to us based on a gut feeling.

Nathanael Johnson’s reporting on maternal death rates for the non-profit investigative reporting outlet California Watch appeared last year on the front pages of newspapers across the state, from the Sacramento Bee to The Press-Enterprise of Riverside.

MIDWIFE SARAH DAVIS ’03 BELIEVES EVERY CHILDBIRTH SHOULD BE A FAMILY EVENT.



STORY BY MARY MARVIN / PHOTO BY HOLLIE MACTAVISH

When Japhy was born on March 5, 2011, he was welcomed by his mother and father and sleepy big sister, 2½-year-old Maya, who kept herself awake for her brother’s late-night debut by watching videos. “The birth was beautiful, very straightforward and uncomplicated—a family event,” says Sarah Davis ’03, the midwife who attended the birth in San Diego at the home of parents Yukiko Honda and Doug Beacom.

“A family event” describes Davis’s philosophy about birth. “While the broader culture always considers birth to be a medical situation, we say it’s *always* a family event and sometimes a medical event,” says Davis, who co-founded Birth Roots in 2008 with partner and fellow midwife Darynée Blount. In 2010, they opened the Birth Roots Health and Maternity Center in a cozy old Craftsman home in Chula Vista near San Diego.

For Davis, midwifery combines interests in women’s health and social justice she had as a student at Pomona. As a Black studies

major, the historical research she did on African-American midwifery for her senior thesis sparked an interest in modern midwifery, eventually leading to a three-and-a-half-year apprenticeship with a midwife in San Diego. “Once I started attending births,” she says, “I knew I loved it and couldn’t imagine doing anything else.”

Now Davis helps others follow her path. Birth Roots has two student midwives who are enrolled in school and participate in prenatal visits and births. “That’s what I do to keep midwifery going,” she says. “I’d love to see a midwife on every block and a birthing center in every neighborhood. If you need medical care, you’re going to get it, but I look forward to the day where a hospital birth isn’t the expected routine.”

After being a part of an estimated 300 births, Davis knows to carefully tend her calendar, and not just because infants can arrive at any crazy hour. The midwife role also carries some special social obligations. “I get invited to a lot of first birthday parties,” she says.

BORN STILL

STORY BY MARY SCHMICH '75 / PHOTO BY ANDY MANIS

"WHENEVER YOU THINK ABOUT BIRTH, EVEN WITHOUT THINKING ABOUT STILLBIRTH, YOU HAVE TO THINK ABOUT DEATH." —Elizabeth McPherson '71

ON A COLD AFTERNOON in the Marshfield Clinic in a small Wisconsin town, Elizabeth McPherson '71 plucks the top envelope from a pile of big white envelopes and opens the mystery of another stillborn baby. "Let's see what's in here," she says. ▶



She pulls out a sheaf of documents, a disc of photos. She reads.

The mother: age 34. Four pregnancies. Diabetes and high blood pressure. No children born alive.

The baby: age 34 weeks and six days. Five pounds, one ounce. Identified only as “BabyGirl.”

The mysteries that land on McPherson’s desk come from all over Wisconsin. From paper-mill towns and Amish enclaves, from collegiate Madison and big-city Milwaukee, from farmlands dotted by red barns.

So many stillborn girls and boys. McPherson picks up an X-ray. She holds it above her head and studies the image, the small bones backlit by the sharp winter sun.

“The reason you don’t see the heart here,” she says, “is that this baby never took a breath.” The heart, she explains, is obscured because the lungs are filled with amniotic fluid, which has the same density as muscle. An X-ray can’t detect the difference.

What went wrong for BabyGirl?

There was a time, not so long ago, when no one would have investigated. A baby who was born still—who emerged into the world with no flailing arms, no gasp for breath, no cry—was apt to be whisked away, unseen by the mother and unstudied by doctors. In a 2011 issue dedicated to stillbirth, *The Lancet* medical journal called it one of the most shamefully neglected areas of public health.

McPherson is helping to change that.

As head of the Wisconsin Stillbirth Service Program, the most comprehensive program of its kind in the country, McPherson, who is also the clinic’s director of medical genetics, gathers data on the state’s fetal deaths.

Photos, doctor’s notes, hospital files, X-rays, autopsies when possible. She scrutinizes whatever she can get for clues to causes and prevention.

There’s something else she looks for, too: how to console parents blindsided by a loss as ancient as life itself. She wants to make sure that parents get the chance to see and touch their stillborn baby, to grieve as any parents might.

No woman—she heard this story once—should have to go to the grocery store to weigh a cucumber because that’s the only way she’ll ever know what her stillborn baby’s weight might have felt like in her arms.

MCPHERSON WAS IN MEDICAL SCHOOL

the first time she saw a stillborn baby. She was shocked. And fascinated.

“I was young, not married,” she says. “I wanted to have children someday, but way down the road. I don’t think I felt the pain in the way I would have later on.”

She had wanted to be a doctor since she was a girl cobbling together an oxygen tent for a doll out of Tinkertoys and saran wrap. But female doctors were rare in 1967, the year she entered Pomona College, and women on campus were still bound by rules as tight as corsets.

If McPherson wore slacks to the lab and didn’t have time to

change into the requisite skirt before dinner, she’d miss the meal. If she stayed late in the library, she might blow the curfew imposed on the women’s dorms and have to sleep, stealthily, in some guy’s room. In the dining halls, as she recalls it, a monitor ran a hand down the backs of female students to make sure they were wearing bras. She was the only woman in her accelerated chemistry course.

But she loved her classes. Shakespeare for fun. German, the language of scientific papers. Zoology, where she dissected a fetal pig and realized she would never see a human fetus as anything other than a human being.

One class in particular steered her future. It was genetics with Larry Cohen. She liked the genetic puzzle; Cohen liked her good mind.

“And Professor Cohen thought good minds were wasted in medicine,” she says.

Cohen scored her a summer job at Johns Hopkins University studying the genetics of bacteria with Dr. Hamilton Smith, who went on to win a Nobel Prize. Among the things she learned that summer was that she wanted to work with people, not bacteria.

She took her interest in genetics, along with a summa cum laude degree from Pomona, to the University of Washington Medical School, then on to graduate studies at the University of Wisconsin.

In the next few years, she married Owen Christianson, a nuclear engineer; had three healthy children; and made a career as a geneticist who specialized in birth defects. She went on to hospital jobs in Buffalo, then Pittsburgh. At each stop, her genetics expertise drew her deeper into the mystery of babies who didn’t survive the womb.

In 2003, McPherson landed a job at the Marshfield Clinic. The hub of 54 small community care centers, the giant clinic is the economic engine of Marshfield, a town whose other claim to grandeur is the World’s Largest Round Barn.

Her youngest child was almost out of high school by then, and she was tired of the relentless demands of a big-city hospital. As the daughter of an itinerant Navy chaplain, she was accustomed to starting over in new places.

On the snowy evening she arrived in central Wisconsin, members of the Society for Creative Anachronism’s local chapter showed up to help her unload. She has been active in the organization since her 20s, attracted by its mission to re-enact the customs of medieval and Renaissance Europe.

Work at the busy Marshfield Clinic, however, would limit the time for her alternate identity as Elspeth, a 10th-century Scottish woman who enjoys single-needle knitting, Renaissance dancing and cooking Viking-style.

At the clinic, she connected with the Wisconsin Stillbirth Service Program, founded in 1984 by Richard Pauli, a University of Wisconsin geneticist whose experience with his own stillborn son convinced him of the need for better research. When he announced his retirement after more than two decades, McPherson knew what she had to do.

“When I heard the program was going to end,” she says, “I said, ‘That can’t happen.’ I said I’d take over.”

STILLBIRTHS HAPPEN ALMOST AS OFTEN

as the deaths of newborns. About 25,000 are reported in the United States every year. In nearly half the cases, the cause is unclear.

Technically, the term “stillbirth” is applied to fetuses who die in the womb after the 20th week of pregnancy. McPherson will investigate any birth after 13 weeks.

“I have occasionally looked at younger babies, an inch long,” she says. “If you find something and it looks like a baby, I’m willing to look at it. I’m sorry about using ‘it,’ but you can’t tell the gender until 13 weeks.”

McPherson uses the word “baby” when some others might say “fetus.” She is nevertheless careful to say that, although she wouldn’t have an abortion even if the risk of stillbirth was high, she doesn’t counsel against it.

“In genetics,” she says, “we try to be non-directive.”

NO TWO STILLBORN MYSTERIES ARE

exactly the same. This is Hayley Patoka’s story.

“It took us a year and a half to get pregnant,” says Patoka. “We were so excited. Everything seemed to be going well, even though the baby was measuring small.”

Patoka, a 29-year-old children’s counselor who works down the hall from McPherson, tells her tale one quiet Saturday morning sitting at a round table in a little clinic room. McPherson leans on a hand, listening.

At first, Patoka goes on, she thought the pain in her sternum was heartburn. Her obstetrician recommended Pepto Bismol. A few nights later, the pain was so intense that she curled up on the floor and stayed there until morning, her husband by her side.

The next day, at her mother’s insistence, she went to the doctor. Could be gallstones, she was told. The ultrasound told her the truth.

The following night, 22 and a half weeks into her pregnancy, she delivered a lifeless baby that weighed a little over half a pound.

“They cleaned her up,” Patoka says, “brought her back. We had time to hold her. We took pictures.”

The baby wore a tiny knit cap. Moldings were made of her hands and feet. Cremation was scheduled.

Such parting rituals for a stillborn were once rare, and Patoka was grateful for the kindnesses. But she wanted something more: an explanation.

“You’re looking for something to help close those doors,” she says.

She spent hours on Google, trying to figure out what had failed. Then co-workers suggested she enlist McPherson who was, after all, just a few doors down.

“Before I met with Hayley and her husband,” McPherson says, looking Patoka in the eye, “I went through their records.”

McPherson has her own rituals when addressing the parents of a stillborn. Over and over she tells them their child was beauti-

ful. Not your fault, she says, not your fault.

If the child has a name, she repeats it.

“I looked at beautiful photos of their little girl,” she says now. “Looking at Gabriella’s body, I knew she had been dead for a few days. We talked about how beautiful she was. And how to keep it from happening again.”

As often as not, McPherson can’t figure out what happened. This time she knew.

Patoka had a condition called HELLP, a syndrome that involves the liver, and her unusually small placenta was unable to nourish the fetus. The placenta’s failure is a common cause of stillbirth.

Patoka plans to get pregnant again, but this time under the supervision of a specialist recommended by McPherson.

“I wish I could give you better news,” McPherson tells her.

“It helps just to have an acknowledgment,” Patoka says. “An acknowledgement that it was a child, that this wasn’t just some mass of cells.”

IF MCPHERSON HAD BEEN BORN

a thousand years ago, she would have been a midwife.

She says this as she drives past snowy fields near the airy log home that she and her husband built on former farm land.

She is recounting the time a midwife called her at 3 a.m. The midwife, who serves the local Amish, had just delivered a baby with birth defects. Would McPherson come look?

She drove the narrow winding roads in the dark that night. The baby was dead when she arrived. She immediately took the father, his infant in his arms, for X-rays, which showed that the baby’s ribs were too short to make room for lungs. Then she went on in to work.

“I had a chance to help a family that wouldn’t have gotten help,” she says.

Some weeks her clinic cases keep her so busy she doesn’t have time to promptly investigate the stillbirth cases that land on her desk, or the ones she witnesses when she’s summoned to a hospital bed. If she gets home before 8, her husband says, “You’re home early.”

But all her work is of a piece: babies who die before they leave the womb; newborns who exit the world almost as soon as they enter; children with birth defects who grow into adults. They’re all part of the genetic mystery that she seeks to solve, with the belief that understanding stillbirth will illuminate the rest.

Sometimes the sight of another stillborn baby, or a parent of that baby, makes her cry.

“I don’t see anything wrong with that,” she says. “People want to know that you feel something of their grief.”

And if it seems she dwells too much in death, McPherson doesn’t think so. In her view, things connect. The Middle Ages and now. The womb and the outer world. Life and its opposite.

“Whenever you think about birth,” she says, “even without thinking about stillbirth, you have to think about death.”

ANN BROWER '94 RECALLS HER HARROWING RESCUE FROM THE CHRISTCHURCH RUBBLE.

Bus Number 3

BY RACHEL STEWART JOHNSON '96

The afternoon of Feb. 22, 2011, was fittingly sunny for midsummer in Christchurch, a city that looks out on the vast Pacific from New Zealand's South Island. Ann Brower '94 was riding on the shady side of the No. 3 bus, engrossed in reading *The Economist*. She often took this route through the center of the city.

A senior lecturer in political science at Christchurch's Lincoln University, Brower was on her way to a meeting with a collaborator at a university across town. Several minutes into her ride, she switched to a seat on the sunny side of the bus, which had fewer than 10 people aboard. The sunlight that day was inviting and its lure, she now believes, saved her life.

The shaking began shortly after she switched seats. "I don't remember a noise," Brower explains. "The bus stopped. I think maybe I looked up when it stopped. And then—the bus was shaking violently, really moving back and forth ... I thought, 'ooh, it's a big one.' I saw bricks falling. My first thought was, 'oh gosh, this is the first time I've *seen* anything.'"

New Zealand, Brower's home since she accepted a Fulbright scholarship to pursue land-use studies in 2004, is known as the "shaky isles." A 7.1-magnitude quake west of Christchurch in September 2010 had been followed by months of temblors. One of them, the shallow, 6.3-magnitude quake that struck in February of this year, turned out to be the nation's deadliest in decades, leading to widespread destruction and frantic rescues epitomized by the scene on Bus No. 3.

Brower would be the only passenger to escape alive.

After the façade of a building rained down on the bus, three brothers, masonry workers who had been working nearby, arrived first on the scene. They began tossing away debris that rose as high as the collapsed roof of the bus. Soon they were joined by a young man named Rob, who crawled into the crushed vehicle to comfort Brower. She knows it was "Nathan" who worked to splint her leg roadside. A group of men flagged down a passing SUV and lifted Brower into the back, then began waving away traffic through the open windows, yelling *we have a casualty inside*. Brower arrived to waiting teams of medical personnel outside the city hospital 59 minutes after the quake struck, thanks to the efforts of more than a dozen rescuers, none of whom were professional first responders.

One among them, a car salesman named Gary, remained with Brower for the first two hours of her hospital stay and held her

hand. "Sometimes I would squeeze a bit hard," Brower recalls. She suffered a broken shin, six fractures to her pelvis and a severed tendon in her hand. She underwent two surgeries in the first days after the quake.

The men told her she had let loose a "roar" that alerted them to her presence amid the rubble. "There was no doubt I would survive," Brower says, laughing. Rob teased that he was around the corner and down the street, but when he heard that roar he was inspired to act. The scene inside the bus, he later revealed, was nearly unbearable. He knew he must keep Brower focused.



Reuters / Simon Baker

He talked about anything—he asked for her name, wondered where she worked, and then provided a few fishing stories, Brower recalls. The two remained face to face until Brower was freed.

The scariest part of the experience was the weight on her body. "I remember feeling more and more weight coming onto my pelvis. And I remember thinking it was strange because it was coming in intervals and not sort of all at once. And I remember screaming, 'no no,' every time there would be more weight." The men who freed her later explained that ironically, she screamed when more weight was removed. "To me it felt like it was more weight coming on, but because they were taking weight off, I guess I just had more blood flow to my legs. It felt like the opposite. But that's why it was coming in intervals."

Brower remained hospitalized for seven weeks, including five weeks in a rehabilitation facility, with friends and colleagues visiting often. "It's almost like watching my own funeral—in a good way," she says.

Through it all, Brower has kept in touch with several of her rescuers and their families. Despite her reduced mobility, Brower took three of the rescuers to dinner, providing two of them their first experience of Indian food. Rob, the man who tended to her inside the bus, returned her bag and phone several days after the disaster and fielded calls from concerned family and friends in the meantime. There were some who worried that this unknown man had stolen Brower's possessions. She assured them he was among those who had come to her side, a man of a far different caliber. "If you pull a kid out of the ocean, you know that you can swim. It's not a risk to your own life," she says. "But staying in the shadow of those crumbling buildings ... they really were putting their own lives at risk."

She can't help but notice who came to her aid—and who didn't. "It was the people in suits who just walked on by," she says. Even friends later acknowledged that they had done nothing to assist the victims, believing that rescue workers would have the recovery efforts well in hand. Laments Brower: "If everyone were in my white collar class, you know I might still be on that bus."

Brower had made news before all this. Not long after she arrived in the country seven years ago, she began researching—and criticizing—government land-use policies that she found amounted to giveaways to wealthy farm interests. For this she drew the ire of some who disagreed with her and bemoaned their "chirpy" antagonist.

New Zealanders often use "chirpy" to describe someone who is especially buoyant, a cheerful soul. Chirpy now in the midst of her ordeal, Brower returned to her academic pursuits before exiting the rehabilitation hospital, renewing work with the colleague whom she'd intended to visit on the day of the quake. Her recovery, including home visits from a nurse and physical therapy sessions three times a week, has been "not quick, but relatively uncomplicated," she says. Her calendar includes plans for a return to her faculty position, short trips to nearby quake-free places such as Australia and throwing what she calls a "rescue party" to celebrate the efforts of her unhesitating cadre. "I have nothing to complain about," she says. "I got off very lightly."

THE BEQUEST

AT FIRST GLANCE, THE ELUSIVE LESLIE FARMER '72 LEFT LITTLE TRACE AT POMONA.

BUT UPON HER DEATH, SHE LEFT MILLIONS TO THE COLLEGE. SO WHO WAS SHE?

Story by Mark Kendall / Illustrations by Mark Wood

LESLIE FARMER WAS A YOUNG WOMAN ON EDGE, AWKWARD AND ECCENTRIC, SOMEONE WHO DIDN'T FIT IN EASILY. CLASSMATES WHO ENTERED POMONA WITH HER IN 1963 RECALL LESLIE AS SOMETHING OF AN OUTSIDER BY CHOICE—IF THEY RECALL HER AT ALL.

"I don't remember seeing her interacting companionably with anyone else," wrote one contemporary in response to my query on the Class of '67 listserv. Another could only remember her name and seeing her "lookbook" photo, but nothing particular about Leslie. Yet another classmate only had a memory of meeting Leslie in passing.

Some of Leslie's obscurity likely stemmed from the fact that she left Pomona as a junior for a one-semester study abroad in Beirut and didn't return for five years, staying on as a freelance reporter. But even in Lebanon, where you'd expect American expats to share a sense of camaraderie, she was hard to get to know. Editor Bill Tracy and illustrator Penny Williams-Yaqub worked with her in Beirut, and were surprised at how little they could recall of Leslie on a personal level. "Bill and I are always very interested in people," says Williams-Yaqub, adding that, looking back, they both were stunned "that we didn't know more about her."

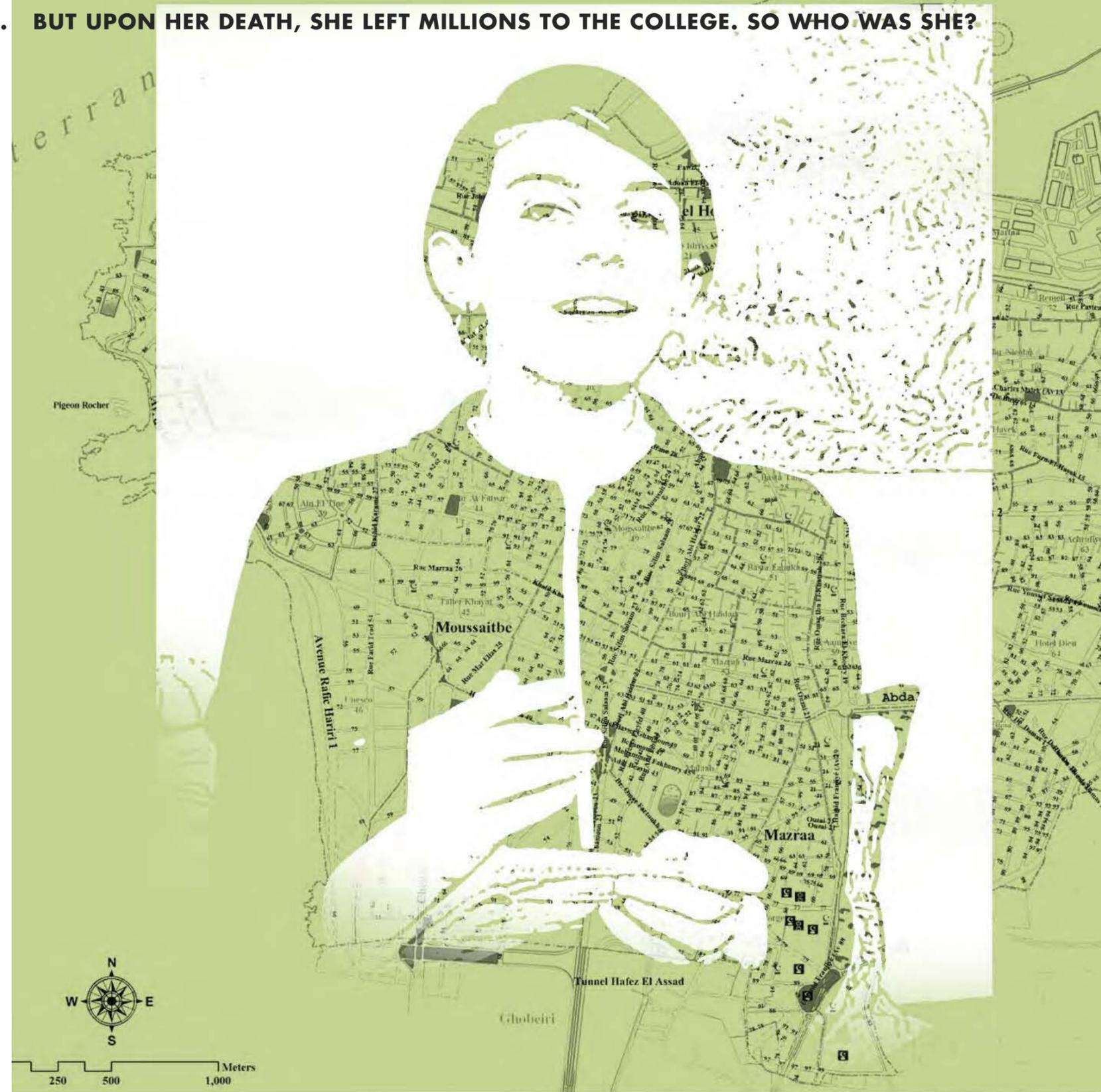
After she died in 2007, enigmatic Leslie left one more mystery. As the details of her estate were sorted out over months and then years, it emerged that Leslie had bequeathed millions of dollars to the College. The gift was unexpected—she had never tipped the College to her plans—and Leslie had had scant contact with Pomona in recent years. News of Leslie's out-of-nowhere bequest, along with mention of her unusual stint in the Middle East as a student, eventually crossed my desk and set off my quest to learn more about her.

Leslie's social seclusion and the lack of any close living rela-

tives—she was single, an only child and both of her parents are deceased—meant some aspects of her life remained beyond reach. But her love for writing made it possible to piece together a lot of Leslie's story from her many flecks of commentary and personal reflection still scattered around the web. It also helped that Leslie did indeed go on to forge a few lasting ties with people over the years and that, once again through the wonders of the web, some of the people who knew her best still could be found.

The Leslie Farmer found here was a talented writer, green-thumbed gardener, chronic book hoarder, pointed observer, fearless explorer of cultures and a lover of languages (studying Arabic, Czech, French and Italian at different points). It seems she could get swept up in just about anything that had to do with the life of the mind. But she also struggled to find her footing in life, following her intellectual fancies as a sort of eternal grad student. She saw the world: Her story reaches from Los Angeles to Beirut, from sand-swept Arabia to the cobblestone streets of Prague, and finally to the Garden District of New Orleans and the imposing, columned home where she died.

And if Leslie never quite overcame her afflictions and limitations, she certainly did defy them. Tracy, one of Leslie's Beirut editors, didn't get to know her well, but he was on to something about Leslie from the start: "The first time I met her, she was painfully shy and very quiet. And yet there she was, a single woman traveling in Beirut, Lebanon ... I thought, 'there's something here, she's got some courage and guts.'" ▶





LESLIE HELM FARMER WAS BORN

in 1945 in Los Angeles to society-page parents and, no doubt, to plenty of drama, right from the start. Her mother was a former movie actress, Fay Helm, who appeared in dozens of films in the '30s and '40s, typically in smaller character parts but also in some larger roles, including one in the still-admired *film noir* thriller *Phantom Lady* (“A night he could not forget ... with a woman he could not remember!”). Leslie’s biological father Jack Hardy was a prominent L.A. attorney, often in the papers, who earned the most ink for the sensational murder trial in which he won acquittal for a wife who had helped kill her brutally violent husband with a meat cleaver.

Fay and Jack Hardy divorced, not-so-amicably, shortly after Leslie was born, and Leslie would later write of how she had only seen her birth-father in a picture and had never met his family. Fay quickly remarried and, by all accounts, Leslie adored her adoptive father, Albert O. Farmer, a Beverly Hills dentist. The family lived in the rustic Mandeville Canyon neighborhood of Brentwood, and Leslie had a palomino named King and what sounded, in many ways, like an idyllic life. Years later, Leslie wrote a tribute to Albert’s gentleness and decency, praising how he could be a “man’s man” and still not be a boor, a bully or domestic tyrant.” She tells of celebrating her 10th birthday in London, where her father bought her a carved wood swan she spotted in an antique shop.

But the next year, when Leslie was only 11, her father was hospitalized for a hernia operation. “Forty-eight hours later he was dead, victim of a rare blood cancer that was kicked into acute mode by the surgery,” Leslie wrote in an online posting many years later. From then on, it was just Leslie and mom. To put it succinctly, they were not close, at least by Leslie’s account.

As a teen, Leslie attended the private Westlake School for Girls in L.A., and then gained admission to Pomona. It’s not clear how Leslie decided to go to Lebanon (the 1964 *Metate* makes fleeting reference to her performing “songs from the Near East” at the five-college Smudge Pot Coffee House). Alan Hayes ’67 does recall that the intense and pale-looking Leslie had an interest in Islam, which was very unusual at the time, and that she once

asked a Jewish student whether he spoke Arabic. According to Hayes: “Some people who were in that conversation later spoke of this as an example of Leslie’s social ineptitude, which I suppose it was, but I thought it was kind of charming all the same.”

Hayes, in fact, is the first person I came across who saw something more in Leslie, recalling her as “an original ... and kind of complicated, which is to say confused, which struck me at the time, being a floundering adolescent myself, as an appealing authenticity.” And maybe Pomona as an institution saw something too: She would become the first Pomona student to study in the Middle East as part of the Experiment in International Living, according to articles from the time.

In Beirut, she took university Arabic classes and stayed with a young Lebanese woman named Fatima and her mother, forging a friendship Leslie would never forget. “Fatima was liberal, pretty, intelligent and not over-concerned at that time with religion or politics,” Leslie wrote in a letter decades later. When her one-semester study abroad was up, Leslie decided to stay. Maybe it was an easy choice: Bill Tracy, then an editor at *Aramco World Magazine*, recalls Beirut at that time was the place to be in the Middle East, a city so cosmopolitan that someone chatting at a cocktail party might shift from French to Arabic to English in the same sentence. There was plenty of work for journalists, as the city was home to dozens of newspapers. Among the papers she reported for from Egypt and Jordan as well as Lebanon was the *Beirut Daily Star*, the top English-language paper read throughout the Middle East. *Aramco World*, which reported on the region with funding from the massive Arabian American Oil Company, provided what might have been her most memorable assignment (still found online at www.saudiaramcoworld.com) in which she traveled across Saudi Arabia for a piece for a special issue about women in the Arab world.

“When the last vestiges of the veil have disappeared, those who regret its passing will, I think, be few, symbolizing, as it does, the shadow of a time when women from the lowest to the highest, the most educated to the illiterate, were begrudged not only freedom of marriage, of association, of movement, but even the light of day,” was Leslie’s poetic ending to a piece titled “The Veil: A Darkness at Noon.”

The Arabian journey was unusual for a Western woman and, Tracy says, Leslie had to carry a letter of introduction from Aramco. “It was a little iffy,” adds her long-ago editor. She traveled with the illustrator Williams-Yaqub who recalls Leslie was “very edgy,” and then volunteers a thought: “I don’t know if she was stable. I’m not sure.” But Leslie pulled off the assignment, writing the lead-off piece for the issue, which on the cover featured a Saudi woman at school in Lebanon wearing large sunglasses instead of a veil. “Leslie is one of the few people, when she wrote something, the editor didn’t really play with it,” says Tracy, going on to note that her pieces always had the right beginning, middle and climax. “It was just structured exactly the way it was supposed to be.”



LESLIE’S OWN STORY DOESN’T

hold together quite so neatly and proportionately. It is known that Leslie came home from the Middle East by 1971 and Pomona allowed her to resume her studies, which was no sure thing after five years away. She graduated with the Class of ’72 with a degree in English. After that she settled in the San Francisco Bay Area, but her undertakings for the next two decades can only be lightly traced with help from a few scattered class notes she submitted to this magazine. In 1976, she wrote in to say she was pursuing her master’s in communications at Stanford: “I have just sent out a fresh flock of poems to various magazines, and while awaiting the first rejection slip, am growing bulbs indoors and learning to play the corrugahorn.” Two years later, she

reported she was doing much the same thing—writing poems and sending “I-told-you-so letters” to editors regarding Lebanon after civil war broke out there—except she had now dropped out of Stanford.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that it was in 1991, near the end of this long, possibly difficult period, when her time at Pomona and in the Middle East may have seemed more and more seminal, that she laid out her estate plans. Half would go to the College and the other half to Fatima, the old friend from Lebanon she had kept in correspondence with. Leslie’s last class note, in 1992, is particularly cryptic, as she writes of hoping to “bench press her own weight and see spring in Damascus in the foreseeable [sic] future.”

Within a few years Leslie would indeed find her spring, though in Prague instead of Damascus. The mid-’90s would bring Leslie a new obsession—the Czech Republic—and a new friend. And if her interest in Eastern Europe seemed to come out of nowhere, her friend Jarmila Marie Skalna explains that Leslie’s Czech obsession had roots in ... Beirut.

During Leslie’s time there, decades earlier, she heard the news that a 20-year-old student named Jan Palach had lit himself on fire in Prague’s central square to protest the Soviet invasion that snuffed out then-Czechoslovakia’s growing democracy movement. Palach was a few years younger than Leslie, and she was captivated by the idea that someone that age could make such a statement. Leslie’s glimmer of interest was pushed aside by other matters until, somehow, it was rekindled decades later and she went looking for someone to teach her

Czech. She was referred to Skalna, a Czech writer who with her husband left her homeland and settled in the Bay Area a decade earlier. The lessons were fruitful. “She learned Czech incredibly fast and well,” says Skalna.

In 1995, Leslie made her first trip to Prague and, as Skalna recounts, she was enthralled, even leaving a poem she had written about Palach at a monument to the Czech martyr. Upon her return home, Leslie delved deeper into all things Czech: music, films and the writers Kundera and Capek. She worked and worked on her own, perhaps-never-finished book getting inside the minds of two doomed Czech soldiers as they holed up inside a church after assassinating SS leader Reinhold Heydrich in a famous World War II incident. ▶

In this productive phase in her life, Leslie finally went back to complete her master's degree—Skalna suggests Leslie was trying to please her mother—at San Jose State. She kept returning to the Czech Republic, managing to connect her obsession there to her work back in grad school. “I was so astounded and ravished by the baroque architecture of Prague that I somehow persuaded my department to let me do a long magazine article on historic restoration in Prague as my thesis,” Leslie wrote online.

Leslie visited the Czech Republic for a third time, in 1997, this time to study the language at a school in Brno in south Moravia. She did quite well, making it to the highest level of the beginner program, and she kept in touch with Skalna by email. “She was very happy there,” says Skalna.

Leslie's happiness came despite what Skalna calls her “obvious social problems,” and some of the students at the Czech school had names for her. What was it about Leslie? Skalna's take is that she just didn't make a good first impression on people. “But later on when you started knowing her and you became closer and she opened herself (up), she was very enjoyable company,” says Skalna, who wrote a chapter about Leslie in her self-published book, *Who Needs Dreams?*, about interesting people she has met over the years.

Well-read Leslie was not big on banter, and when she did have something to say, she was quite blunt. “She had a very, very personal opinion on everything,” adds Skalna. “She was not easily influenced by someone's thought or ideas. ... She would be a very good critic—she got right to the point.”

When it came to the Czech Republic, though, Leslie's enthusiasm for detail overtook her ability to critique her own dense writing about the nation, says Skalna. Leslie, despite her productive freelance career in the Middle East decades earlier, didn't get much published during this time. Still, she always saw herself as a journalist. “She wanted to be a writer,” says Skalna. “It was her inside wish.”

Perhaps Leslie just wasn't cut out for the hassles and indignities that come with making a living as a writer, and, at any rate, she may not have needed a regular job. According to Skalna, Leslie was living off a trust fund, which it appears she carefully stewarded. In the Bay Area, she lived in a modest apartment in East Palo Alto, where the rents were lower than in Palo Alto proper and other well-off Silicon Valley cities.

The place held boxes of books, Skalna recalls fondly. When Leslie once talked of leaving her library to Skalna one day, her friend begged her not to, knowing she couldn't handle all those tomes. Skalna did accept from Leslie some flowering cyclamen bulbs (tubers if you want to get technical) which Leslie had brought from Jordan decades ago and kept replanting. Along with books, gardening was one of Leslie's great obsessions, and she had a knack for reviving seemingly vanquished plants. She had a particular interest in tending flowering bulbs, like the white-and-pink petaled cyclamens. Maybe that's the metaphor for Leslie: she was not a wallflower by any means, but one of those rare bulbs, with the best of her hidden and easy to miss unless you held out for the bloom.



LESLIE PULLED UP ROOTS IN THE

year 2000. She liked living in the Bay Area but felt home prices there were just too high for her budget, according to Skalna. She chose New Orleans—long a magnet for eccentric writer types—drawn by the French influences. “She thought she would be happy there,” says Skalna, who once visited her for Mardi Gras.

And, at first, she almost certainly was. Leslie bought a spacious, imposing, two-story home with columns out front and located on the edge of the city's upscale Garden District. She became an incessant poster on what became the Google group neworleans.general and sometimes attended social gatherings of its members, who wore aluminum-foil hats when they met for lunch. She soaked up the local color, donning costume for Mardi Gras and even trying out recipes for cooking nutria, the water rodents that plague Louisiana's coast. “She loved New Orleans, she really did,” says Jane Dumestre, who met Leslie through the online group. About Leslie, she says, “We all have our own little quirks. I think she was just over our heads.”

Along with writing on the Internet, Leslie fired off more than her share of punchy little letters to the editor of the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*, like this one published in April 2003, shortly after President George W. Bush launched the Iraq War:

“I can't decide whether your March 29 headline, ‘Guerrillas aren't fighting fair,’ is horrifying, funny or both. According to

Webster's Third New International Dictionary, guerrilla war is irregular war carried on by independent bands. In other words, not to fight fair is their raison d'être ...”

As she had for so many years, Leslie continued her practice of exchanging letters with her old friend Fatima in Lebanon. But sometime in 2003, Leslie lost touch with her and began posting urgent messages in a Google group devoted to Lebanon: “I keep getting your letters but mine always come back to me, although sent to your latest address ... I'm worried that you're in much worse health than you mention.” She contacted the Lebanese chancellery in Washington for help and even pled with radio stations in Beirut to broadcast her message. “I'm worried about Fatima, particularly as she wrote of being sick and her mother and maternal aunt died of the same disease,” read another posting.

It's unclear whether she ever did hear from Fatima again and, even as she worried about her old friend, Leslie was facing her own health troubles. About a year earlier, Leslie was diagnosed with dystonia, a movement disorder that brings involuntary muscle contractions, which Leslie experienced in her neck and upper body. Hers was not a mild case. “She went to every doctor she could think of. There was no solution,” says Dumestre.

Spasms brought on by the disease sometimes caused her head to turn sharply to the side and, in time, Leslie began losing her ability to speak. Using her hands also became more and more difficult, beginning to cut her off from her typing, her lifeline to the

world. Her emails became terse. “She was very clever in writing, but when she got sick her writings were more like pieces of broken glass,” says Skalna, who recalls crying as she spoke with her friend on the phone. “You read some small paragraph that was very bright and then she stopped writing because she was in pain.”

Amid all this came Katrina. In the days after the hurricane hit New Orleans in 2005, Skalna, back in California, hadn't heard from Leslie, so she signed up at the Red Cross office in Palo Alto to volunteer to help in New Orleans and go look for Leslie. Before she left, Leslie, who had been evacuated to a nearby town, got a note to a church volunteer to call Skalna and let her know she was OK. Her home sustained water damage, but was standing. After Leslie returned to the city, though, her condition continued to deteriorate, and she gave up walking, even driving. At times, Skalna says, Leslie would have to crawl on her knees to get around the house.

Leslie was found dead inside the house in May 2007 after someone noticed her mail piling up. She died from complications of her dystonia, says estate administrator Michael Cooper, who adds that the official cause was recorded as asphyxia. Severe neck dystonia can affect the upper airway and bring breathing difficulties, according to the Dystonia Medical Research Foundation.

It appears that no memorial service was held—at least I could not find anyone who had attended one—and the estate handled the interment of Leslie's remains at a funeral home just outside New Orleans. But her passing did not go completely unnoticed as the news trickled out a few months later in a Google group: “An eloquent and elegant mind that should be missed,” read one of the posts.

Later in 2007, the College received a letter stating that Leslie had left a bequest, which is not an unusual occurrence. Only over the ensuing months and years did it emerge how large and complicated this estate settlement would become. As mentioned earlier, Leslie left half to the College and half to her old friend Fatima in Lebanon. So the estate administrator had to locate her old friend on the other side of the globe. In a sad turn, when Cooper did find her family, Fatima was in ill health, and she died only months after Leslie. It's not even certain whether Fatima ever learned of Leslie's passing. Cooper then had to seek out Fatima's heirs. Add to this the complications of Katrina: water damage to Leslie's home led to the loss of records that would have made it easier to sort out her assets, according to Cooper. Meanwhile, the estate of Leslie's late mother, Fay, needed to be folded into Leslie's, and valuations of numerous properties and mineral interests were required. When the last of the bequest is distributed, Pomona's share will total upwards of \$6 million.

Where will it go? As Pomona President David Oxtoby learned more about Leslie's background and interests, he decided it would be fitting for her gift to go toward the College's international initiatives, which will include a new foreign language immersion hall to replace Oldenburg and an adjacent center to house the College's various internationally related programs under one roof. So the alumna who once seemed to leave such a light trace at Pomona will help change the campus' face in a major way. And somewhere in one of those buildings, somewhere in that place, once-forgotten Leslie Farmer will be recognized by name.

History / California

IN CLASS

With Professor Victor Silverman

For tonight's meeting of Professor Victor Silverman's seminar class on California history, students were assigned to read architecture critic Reyner Banham's influential 1971 book *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*. An unabashed fan of L.A., the chipper British academic viewed the city through distinct "ecologies": Surfurbia (the coast), the Plains of Id (Los Angeles Basin), the Foothills and Autopia (the freeways). But his real innovation, Silverman points out, was



in the way Banham looked at Los Angeles architecture in a broad sense, giving hot dog-shaped eateries consideration along with highly-regarded landmarks such as the Modernist Eames House. In this abridged and adapted snippet of discussion, the class takes a happy detour into the quintessential L.A. topic of traffic.

SILVERMAN: Maybe we can turn now to Banham himself and to looking at what he is arguing ... What did you think of the book?

LAUREN: I thought it was really interesting because it portrays Los Angeles in a positive light. Being from Los Angeles, I get a lot of crap for that. (Laughter from the class.) He looks at things that tend to be viewed in a very negative light and shows why they can be positive and how they really work in Los Angeles and how they help define it.

SILVERMAN: So what is it about L.A. that he likes that's different than the usual?

MATT: Well, I've only been to L.A. proper twice. He likes L.A. for reasons I don't like L.A. L.A. just seems vast and it's loud and it's smoggy and it's kitschy. You have Hollywood and you have people in costumes ...

LAUREN: Hollywood's not actually like that. It's one street that's like that ...



SENIOR SEMINAR ON CALIFORNIA HISTORY

The Professor

At Pomona since 1993, Professor of History Victor Silverman teaches classes on topics ranging from the labor movement to the U.S. role in the Middle East to drugs and alcohol in modern society. He earned his Ph.D. in history from UC Berkeley. An Emmy-winning filmmaker, he is also the author of three books and many articles. His latest book, *California: On-the-Road Histories*, will be published this summer.



The Class

From the European conquest to the current stalemated government, Californians have contended with a series of upheavals often at a great human cost. This upper-division reading seminar offers students a chance to learn the current scholarship about this tarnished Golden State.

Reading List

Conquests and Historical Identities in California, 1769-1936, by Lisbeth Haas

Indian Survival on the California Frontier, by Albert Hurtado

Americans and the California Dream, by Kevin Starr

The Conquest of Bread: 150 Years of Agribusiness in California, by Richard Walker

Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies, by Reyner Banham

Suburban Warriors—The Origins of the New American Right, by Lisa McGirr

Guest Workers or Colonized Labor?: Mexican Labor Migration to the United States, by Gilbert Gonzalez

MATT (to laughter): That one street has affected my entire view ... It really was not my thing but [Banham] comes through and says, well, that's what makes Los Angeles so cool because it's not like any other city. It doesn't fit any archetype. I had no idea about the Watts Towers. He introduced me to the city in a way that made me step back. He takes you through the back alleyways. He shows you all these very cool architectural buildings. It made me want to see more. I want to understand L.A. for what is.

JAY: Last year I was driving on the freeway—10—to downtown L.A. I really enjoyed it because I was stuck in traffic and I'm like, OK, now I'm in L.A. It confirmed my existence in L.A.: I'm in traffic, finally I can tell my friends about it. I was taking pictures of buildings around me, freeway signs. That's a prime example of what I enjoy about L.A. There are freeways and exits all over the place. It's just fascinating to me. And he just captures the essence of it.

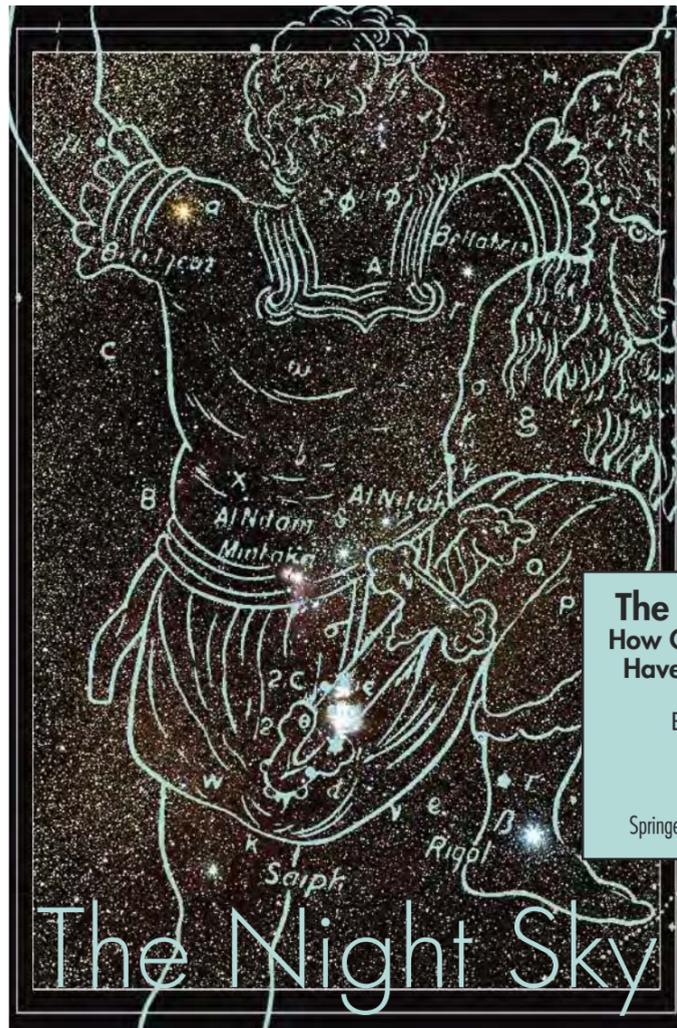
SILVERMAN: Where does Banham say something that really captures that? Right in the first couple pages, right? ... "The language of design architecture and urbanism in Los Angeles is the language of movement," which is directly contradictory of what you're saying Jay, which is that the language of Los Angeles is being stuck in traffic.



(Laughter.) He goes on: 'Mobility outweighs monumentality there to a unique degree and the city will never be fully understood by those who cannot move fluently through its diffuse urban texture ... So like earlier generations of English intellectuals who taught themselves Italian in order to read Dante in the original, I learned to drive to read Los Angeles in the original.' ... So then, what about the freeways?

LAUREN: If you're from here, you just grow up with it, so it's normal. I don't mind traffic. It's part of Los Angeles and [Banham] accepts that and kind of embraces that. It just becomes a part of how he's explaining Los Angeles and why it's different and it's just a big part of how people function.

SILVERMAN: It's not just how [people] function. Banham makes it one of the ecologies as well, thinking about the freeway as its own place as opposed to a means of getting from one place to another. And the fact that it's the one ecology that is everywhere makes the freeway central to his overall point—just as it's central to what makes L.A. L.A.



**The Power of Stars:
How Celestial Observations
Have Shaped Civilization**

By Bryan Penprase
Frank P. Brackett Professor
of Physics and Astronomy

Springer 2010 / 360 pages / \$39.95

So what opened your eyes to that broader appreciation of the wonders of the night sky?

One night in grad school, there was a star party, and we were up on the roof looking at the beautiful Wisconsin sky, a beautiful dark night. Being a grad student, I was usually staggering out of the lab at about midnight, and every night I would look up and see shifts in the sky. I was just starting to come to the point where ancient people were, where every night they would be doing that same thing and noticing the changes, the seasonal variations. This all kind of came together that night. One of the older grad students who knew some of the star lore started pointing out all the constellations, and I was just amazed. I realized that, wow, that's a part of astronomy that really connects with people and yet isn't part of the standard curricula. There's this whole other humanistic and cultural side that's completely off the books. So that's when it all started—the archaeoastronomy thing.

I know this book grew out of your class in archaeoastronomy, but how did the class itself get started?

Actually, it happened while I was interviewing here. They asked me, if I could teach one course here, what would it be? And I kind of looked around and said, "Well, I'd probably teach a course on the history of astronomy around the world, and I'd call it Multicultural Cosmology." And then they signed me up for a freshman seminar the next year.

Now I've been here about 17 years, and I've taught that class probably a dozen times—three times as freshman seminars, and the regular class eight or nine times.

How have students responded to the class?

It seems to resonate with them. Teaching is a two-way thing. You can plan a curriculum, but then as the students react or don't react, it gets modified, so it's been iterated over the years. What the students seem to like most is the parts that tie in to their own culture. You come with little tales from an aunt or a grandma, some vague sense of how your people saw the world, but you haven't had a chance to broaden it out, so being able to see a full treatment of how the Mayan would chart out the skies, for example, how they would write down their discoveries and keep track of the cycles of the universe, I think that really helps people who otherwise wouldn't have a real connection with that culture.

And the other part I think they like—which I'm happy to see—is just being aware of the sky, the same way I was made aware that night in grad school. I ask them to go out every day and look at the same place in the sky and write little diagrams of where the sun is, how the moon is moving against the stars, what constellations are up.

Going into writing the book, I took all those notes and threw them into the different chapters, adding some new research from things that I found. So now the book will go back into the classroom, and we'll see what the students like and don't like. So it's definitely an iterative, interactive process.

Do you think of this book as an archaeoastronomy textbook first and a broader-interest book second or the other way around?

Being a fan of Carl Sagan, I always knew I'd like to write something that the public would like, so that was always an essential thing, to make sure it would be enjoyable, but I also wanted a textbook for my class, so it's organized like my class. For instance, chapter one is about our experience of the sky and star knowledge—pretty much the first thing I do with the students.

What are your own favorite parts of the book?

One thing that fascinates me is the way our modern civilization is still doing a lot of the same things ancient societies did, just with different tools and at a different scale. You can see aligned pyramids and ziggurats and Native American kivas all pointing toward solstice directions or being aligned with pure north, but it kind of surprised me, going around and looking at our modern society and seeing how so many cities are snapped onto a cardinal direction grid, or maybe by coincidence are aligned with solstice directions, which future civilizations might look back on and say, "Aha, they're aligning their street grid."

Timekeeping too—ancient people would push the limits of their science and technology to get to the most detailed calendar with all kinds of motions of planets, eclipses and so on. The Mayan did that. The Chinese. The Babylonian. We do it, too. We have our Naval Observatory marking down the nearest millionth of seconds. Our timekeeping is so good that we had to decide whether we wanted to continue to be aligned with the stars or align our civilization to the motion of atoms. And we decided to keep the atomic clocks and just add leap-seconds to align atomic time with the poor old Earth's wobbling and spinning.

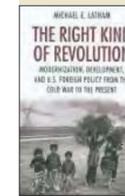
Do you see the field of astronomy today as a continuation of these past cosmologies or a clean break with the past?

It's a bit of both. The same motivation is there, the same instincts, the same human mind. We're no smarter or less smart than people three thousand, five thousand years ago, but we have this advantage of technology, and so using that allows us to break away from these other traditions and fill in the gaps in our knowledge with this flood of data that we get from these amazing telescopes. So it's both.

But in the introduction to your book, you note rather pointedly that we, too, will be ancients someday.

I like to inject a little bit of humility. Every culture in their time thought of themselves as the greatest thing ever, but you can look back and realize they missed the boat in a lot of areas. We probably have a lot of gaps in our understanding, too. Our knowledge is really impressive, and our telescopes are amazing, and we've got this detailed theory of how the universe all fits together, so we've definitely broken away from ancient cultures in that regard, but at the same time, there's this absence of any effort to summarize: Well, so what does it all mean? How do we fit into this picture? Science, wisely, has partitioned that off as not part of their domain, but that's what the ancient cultures were all about, and in a way we've lost that. So we're both more and less than ancient cultures.

Bookmarks / Alumni and Faculty Authors



The Right Kind of Revolution
Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present

Michael E. Latham '90 examines the place of modernization and development in American policy during and after the Cold War. Cornell University Press, 2011 / 268 pages / \$22.95

Northanger Abbey and Angels and Dragons

Vera Nazarian '88 satirizes the works of Jane Austen with this tale of a young woman who travels to Bath, only to be surrounded by ogres, demons and mystery, while trying to win the heart of her beloved. Norilana Books, 2010 / 346 pages / \$14.95

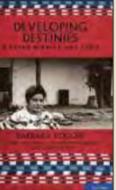


H.I.T. or Miss

Lessons Learned from Health Information Technology Implements
Associate Editor Larry Ozeran '82 and others offer insight into health information technology implementations that did not work as planned. AHIMA, 2010 / 171 pages / \$65.95

Developing Destinies

A Mayan Midwife and Town
UC Santa Cruz Psychology Professor Barbara Rogoff '71 tells the story of how a midwife in a Guatemalan town has carried on ancient practices and developed new ones based on her experiences. Oxford University Press, 2011 / 360 pages / \$34.95

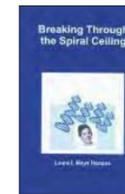
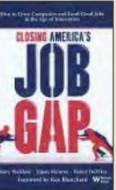


A Little Too Much

A Jack Liffey Mystery
John Shannon '65 takes us on a crime-solving mission as his famous private investigator, Jack Liffey, tries to hunt down a schizophrenic actor while his own family life crumbles around him. Severn House Publishers, 2011 / 256 pages / \$28.95

Closing America's Job Gap

Mary Walshok '64, Tapan Munroe and Henry DeVries offer advice to employers and employees alike on training and specializations that can help to fill the three million vacant job positions in the U.S. WVBUSINESSBOOKS, 2011 / 208 pages / \$19.95



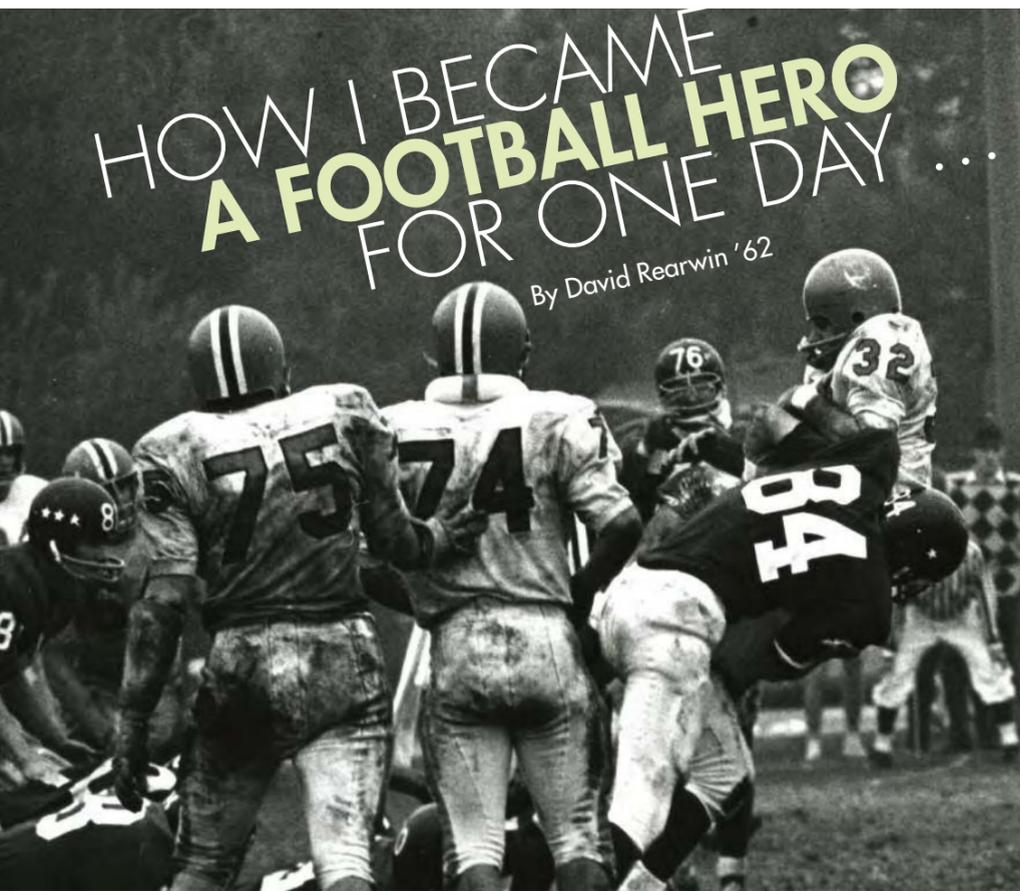
Breaking Through the Spiral Ceiling

An American Woman Becomes a DNA Scientist
Biology Professor Laura L. Mays Hoopes tells the story of how she became a molecular gerontologist in an age in which women were not welcomed into the sciences. Lula Publishing, 2011 / 176 pages / \$14

Women and Islam

Religious Studies Professor Zayn Kassam stimulates discussion as editor of this collection of essays on issues that Muslim women face worldwide. Praeger, 2010 / 400 pages / \$54.95





HOW I BECAME A FOOTBALL HERO FOR ONE DAY

By David Rearwin '62

the other team has the ball and they're driving hard. I'm on the bench, right where I've been the entire season. An incomplete pass has left the opponents with third and long. Our defensive end, making a herculean effort to break up the play, has injured himself. Out he comes, one arm dangling loosely, face contorted with pain. The coach has no choice. He looks at me with a mix of desperation and distaste.

"Get in there, Rearwin. Don't get fancy, just make sure they don't run outside."

He foregoes the usual pat on the back or ass given to the more stalwart backups. Probably doesn't want to get spider juice on his hand.

I line up at right end, near the sideline. The count, the snap. Sure enough, the opponents recognize a weak spot on the defensive line and the play heads right toward me. The ball carrier, a tough, conditioned mass of bone and sinew, strides confidently and begins to turn the corner. He's protected by what seems like an entire regiment of blockers. Snorting like war-horses, heads scanning left and right looking for someone to hit, they gallop in my direction amid the pounding of cleated feet and the leathery clatter of pads.

And suddenly it dawns on me—I'm so hopeless-looking that I'm being ignored! The first blockers sweep by me. I can smell the mix of liniment and aftershave and a hint of forbidden tobacco as they churn past. Between them and the next blocker is a gap, and in the gap is the runner,

eyes downfield. In his mind, he's past me.

Instinct kicks in—a mutation of the instinct that allowed tiny proto-mammals to survive in the age of dinosaurs. I execute a clumsy leap, landing on the ball carrier and wrapping around him like a squid on a sperm whale. It's a desperation grab: eyes closed, teeth clenched, face squinched up in anticipation of a thrashing. There's a smack like sides of beef colliding, and my helmet is ripped from my head. In a moment of selective auditory clarity, all other sounds disappear while I listen to it bouncing hollowly across the dried-up turf.

The whistle blows, the play is over. The magic moment passes and my senses return to their normal settings. I get up, retrieve my helmet, go back to my position. Tackled for no gain—they have to punt.

The coach calls me back to the sideline. "I didn't know you could do that," he says, stone-faced.

I don't remember anything else about the season, probably because I didn't have much to do with it. I practiced, worked out, showered, sat on the bench. And then it was over, leaving me with a new self-confidence. I had held the line. And there was more: I was part of a group. The football guys were members of a universal fraternity of maleness, and I had been allowed to join. Not as a full member, of course, but as a provisional temporary associate member, junior grade. That didn't matter. I had nowhere to go but up.

Honors / Alumni Distinguished Service Award

Pat Newton '51 has dedicated her life to improving her community. Lucky for Pomona College, she didn't stray far from her alma mater.

Newton married her husband Sanford, a Claremont McKenna graduate, just two days after Commencement. "Four years later I had four kids," says Newton. "We've been married 60 years this June and I've been involved with Pomona College most of that time."

Newton began her service with the Alumni Relations Office during her five-year reunion and hasn't quit since. In addition to her involvement with every reunion in some manner, she's participated in countless phone-a-thons and made many calls in between—especially during reunion years. She chaired the Annual Fund Alumni Network, a committee that coordinated ways to get alumni involved on campus both financially and as volunteers, and is currently finishing a three-year term on the Pomona College Alumni Board.

Newton is this year's recipient of the Alumni Distinguished Service Award, which is bestowed annually in recognition of selfless commitment and ongoing service to the College.

"The College has benefited greatly from Pat ever since she was a student here," says Craig Arteaga-Johnson '96, director of Annual Giving. "It's not just her generosity of time and energy. She is warm and friendly and a real can-do person."

Newton says one of the reasons she enjoys her volunteer work is the chance to be on campus and she has lived nearby in Pomona in the same house for 49 years. "Most of the time, I've been the oldest person on the Alumni Board. First couple of times I did it, it was intimidating. But they've all been very generous. And I've enjoyed the fact that they're all brighter than heck and enthusiastic and work hard at what the Board does to ensure the relationship of the alumni to the College."

Pomona isn't Pat's only community service passion. She has been involved in Girls Scouts her entire life, including being a leader while on campus at Pomona. She served on local Scout boards and committees, was the local council president, and spent five years on the national board of directors. She's also involved internationally, raising funds for a small center for older girls in Mexico.

Her service to United Way was recognized with a Gold Key Award in the 1970s and both she and her husband worked with the Jaycees. She and a group of community members founded a volunteer center in Pomona in the 1970s that assisted organizations in finding long-term volunteers and developing boards and committees. She is also a long-standing volunteer and board member with Mt. San Antonio Gardens.

Newton still works with the Girl Scouts and with the Fairplex Friends, which supports the L.A. County Fair in an ad hoc way, including raising funds to provide buses for local school children to attend the fair.

Newton's husband Sanford was a Realtor in Pomona for his entire career. While their children attended colleges other than Pomona, two of Newton's grandchildren are Sagehens: Michael Bergeron '05 and Christopher Bergeron '14.

"I feel fortunate that I was able to go to Pomona," says Pat, whose father Howard Wickersham attended Pomona and graduated in 1924. "There was no doubt in my mind where I was going to go to college. I didn't apply anywhere else!"

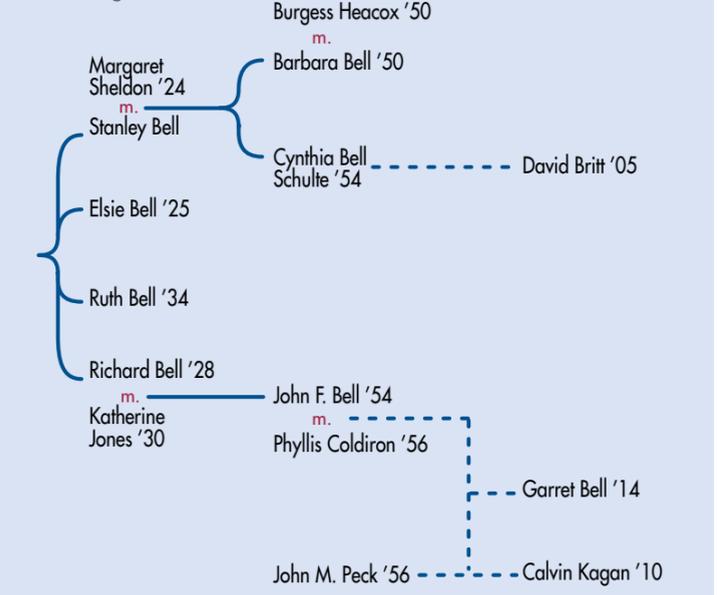


—Laura Tiffany

Family Tree / Bell-Peck Families

The Bell family tree is sturdy with Sagehens. Over the last nine decades, 11 family members have attended the College. It started in the 1920s and '30s when Lincoln C. Bell, mayor of Claremont and manager of the College Heights Lemon Packing House (recently restored), sent three of his four children to Pomona, and the fourth married a Sagehen. From the next generation, Phyllis Bell Coldiron '56, whose late first husband was John Bell '54, notes that their own kids didn't look to Pomona because the family lived here in Claremont (where she worked at the College for 17 years.) But then came grandson Garret in yet another Sagehen generation. "You never know who's coming next," she says.

The Peck side has more recent ties. John Peck '56 grew up with no connection to Pomona, only learning about the College from his high-school English teacher, and none of his children would go on to attend Pomona. But today he is connected to generations of Sagehens spanning nearly a century. It started when his daughter Andrea married Richard Bell, whose parents (the aforementioned Phyllis '56 and John Bell '54) and one set of grandparents attended Pomona. And now Richard and Andrea's son Garret is part of the Class of 2014. John Peck's other daughter Shelley, also parented a Sagehen, the recently-graduated Calvin Kagan '10.



Answers / from Page 64

R	I	D	V	S	T	H	B	Y
B	S	H	R	I	Y	D	A	T
Y	A	T	B	H	D	S	R	I
T	H	I	D	B	R	Y	A	S
A	B	D	H	S	Y	R	I	T
S	Y	R	I	A	T	B	D	H
H	R	S	T	D	A	I	B	Y
I	B	I	Y	A	R	A	H	S
D	A	Y	S	B	H	I	R	T

D	E	A	G	R	I	P	N	T
G	N	G	P	D	A	R	I	E
P	R	I	N	E	A	T	G	D
E	G	E	T	P	N	I	A	R
T	I	P	A	G	R	I	N	E
A	R	A	I	D	E	I	G	E
R	A	G	V	A	N	D	P	E
R	N	A	V	E	P	I	G	R
I	D	I	P	E	R	T	E	G

Honors / Blaisdell Distinguished Awards 2011

The Blaisdell Distinguished Award honors alumni for achievement in their professions or community service, particularly those who have lived up to the quotation from James A. Blaisdell which is inscribed into the gates of the College: "They only are loyal to the college who departing bear their added riches in trust for mankind." This year brings four winners:



Irving "Sonny" Brown '56 was honored for years of service with Rotary International—as director and vice-president, trustee, president of the Rotary Club of El Paso, Rotary district governor and in many other roles. Among the hundreds of service projects he and his wife Ann have participated in, in 45 countries, one that stands out to him is a visit to an AIDS orphanage in Johannesburg, South Africa.

"The children were well-fed and happy and were from ages 1 to 4 years old, all of whom had been abandoned. We met over 35 of them and learned that most of them would not likely live beyond age five. They clung to each of us as we greeted them and each stole our hearts, especially [a boy named] Jonathan who in my arms said to me, 'Thank you, Daddy!'"

Born in Parral Chihuahua, Mexico, Brown served as an officer in the U.S. Army Medical Service Corp. He and Ann have four children and 10 grandchildren. He is chairman and founder of Sonny Brown Associates, an international commercial and industrial real estate consulting firm.

In 2006, he received Rotary's highest award, the "Service Above Self" award. His Rotary district named their new vocational service award the "Sonny Brown Business of the Year Award," and it is given annually to companies representing the highest ethical business practices.

An economics major at Pomona, Brown says, "The College provided me an atmosphere of encouragement and commitment to explore the wonderful world of service. Trusting in Him and in my family, God gave me the opportunity to make many new best friends while working together to improve the lives of others."



Hashim Djojhadikusumo '76 hasn't been content to just earn wealth—he also shares it by sponsoring more than 3,000 students with scholarship funding and providing job-search assistance to students upon graduation.

Djojhadikusumo's father, Indonesia's former finance minister Sumitro Djojhadikusumo, hailed from an aristocratic Central-East Javanese family, while his mother came from a Christian area of the country, heavily influenced by the Dutch. His family was in exile for a decade after 1957 after his father led an armed insurrection against Communists in the government.

A government major, he returned to Indonesia after Pomona and a one-year traineeship at a Paris investment bank. Former Pomona Professor of Government Frank Tugwell, Djojhadikusumo's academic advisor, had dinner with him in 1991 in Jakarta, and was taken aback when his former student remembered his textbooks by title and author and easily picked up where classroom discussions had left off. In an interview with *Indonesia Business Week*, Tugwell said, "It was amazing. I don't think I've ever had a student who has had that kind of alert application of the knowledge."

His passion for knowledge extends to providing opportunities for students to acquire the same. In 1994, he gave \$1 million to a school in Bandung, Java. He is also the chairman of the Hashim Djojhadikusumo Family Foundation, which promotes social activities in education, children's health and well-being. His other interests extend to preservation and conservation, including monuments, buildings, statues, rainforests and wildlife sanctuaries.



Carlos Guangorena '76 has found a unique niche in commercial lending as the president and CEO of Seattle's Plaza Bank, a no-mortgages commercial bank geared toward the under-served Latino community.

Born in Mexico and raised in East L.A., Guangorena studied economics at Pomona, earned an M.B.A. at UCLA and started his banking career as a commercial loan officer at the Bank of America.

He moved from Los Angeles to Seattle after marrying Linda J. Lang '79, whom he started dating while a senior at Pomona, and rose through a successful career in banking, including positions as senior vice president for Wells Fargo, senior vice president for Pacific Northwest Bank and a senior corporate lender for U.S. Bank.

At the height of his career, an offer came along that he couldn't refuse. Michael E. Sotelo, a construction-industry executive in Seattle, approached Guangorena with a plan to open a bank that would serve Washington's growing Latino population. They saw both a business opportunity and a chance to help educate and elevate an under-served segment of society. Some 60 percent of the Latino population in Washington state was unbanked at that time.

In 2006, Plaza Bank, named for a word that means the same thing in English and Spanish, opened downtown in the 44-story U.S. Bank Centre. Today there also is a branch office in a suburb south of Seattle.

With all of the progress Plaza Bank has made in the past few years, Guangorena still doesn't feel like his job is done. "I think this is just a work in progress, not a culmination," says Guangorena. "I'm not done yet. It's not like finishing a race. The race has only just begun."



Robert E. Tranquada '51 received his medical degree from Stanford University in 1955 and discovered he enjoyed academic medicine while working at the Los Angeles V.A. Hospital. He ended up as an associate professor at USC, which led to one of his proudest accomplishments.

After the Watts riots in 1965, during which he commanded a National Guard medical battalion treating injured troops, federal money was available to open a clinic in the city. The dean of the medical school at USC offered him the job.

"I was doing research and taking care of patients and teaching and enjoying my life as an associate professor. I had never, ever considered doing anything in the way of administration," recalls Tranquada, who spent three years getting the Watts Health Clinic—which is still a pillar in the community—up and running. "It was an utterly and absolutely rewarding thing to do. It opened my eyes to the areas of policy and health care."

Tranquada's career took a further turn to the administrative and academic when he was recruited to chair USC's department of community medicine and health care. He later became dean of the School of Medicine and continued his career in similar positions at the UCLA School of Medicine, the University of Massachusetts Medical Center, and back to USC, where he is now emeritus professor of medicine and public policy.

In 1991, he was asked to chair an L.A. County taskforce on health care, which developed the Community Health Council, a board Tranquada has been on ever since. One of the Council's accomplishments is the L.A. Care and Health Plan, an independent health authority that provides health insurance through Medi-Cal to 900,000 people in the county. Tranquada also served on the Christopher Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department, which was developed after the Rodney King beating.

His service to Pomona began with the Alumni Association in 1965. He became president of the association in 1968, which also began lifetime membership on Pomona's Board of Trustees, including as vice chair from 1987–91, chair from 1991–2000 and chairman emeritus since 2000.

In Memoriam

William "Bill" Banks



influenced hundreds of lives in the course of his four decades at Pomona as a caring academic mentor, engaging lecturer and highly-respected scholar. News of his death on April 25, 2011 from scleroderma brought an outpouring of remembrances from alumni young and old.

Banks arrived at Pomona College in 1969, soon after earning his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University, and quickly became a popular professor, known for his quirky sense of humor, his colorful class demonstrations of cognitive phenomena and his dedication to his students. His courses included Perception and Cognition,

the Psychology of Evil, Seminar in Consciousness and Cognition and, since 1986, Intermediate Aerobics, where he applied the same level of energy he gave to his academic classes. He also taught first-year seminars that drew so many students that it was difficult to accommodate them all.

In 1978 and 2002, Banks received the Pomona College Wig Distinguished Professorship Award, the highest honor bestowed on faculty. Receiving the second award, Banks likened his teaching style to show business, making his lectures enjoyable and hands-on to encourage his students to "think, talk and create." He served as chair of the Psychology Department from 1977 to 1990 and again from 2001 to 2004.

The Edwin F. and Margaret Hahn Professor of Psychology, Banks investigated the nature of human perception and the role of consciousness in cognition. His research publications helped launch the field of the scientific study of consciousness.

Banks authored more than 100 research articles and served as an editor for several professional journals. He was a founding co-editor of the journal *Consciousness and Cognition* in 1990, serving as editor-in-chief since 2005. He was also editor-in-chief of the *Elsevier Encyclopedia of Consciousness*. Among his broad research interests, Banks investigated cultural variables in cognition. One study focused on the differences between Western and Confucian-influenced societies in areas such as determining blame for actions and defining personal boundaries. He was particularly interested in why people can do evil to others, examining events such as the

"Bill taught me science, but he also taught me the importance of work/life balance—he loved his work, he loved his students, he loved Pomona, but most of all, he loved his kids. His office was beautifully chaotic—artwork from his children hanging every which where ... He was better than anyone at taking in what seemed to be a mess of disjointed, complex information and synthesizing it to come up with novel approaches to age-old questions."

—Allison Sekuler '86

Holocaust, the massacres in Rwanda and ethnic cleansings in places ranging from the American West to Yugoslavia.

Born in Washington, D.C., Banks earned his B.A., cum laude, from St. John's College in Annapolis, Md., and later earned both his M.A. and Ph.D., from The Johns Hopkins University.

Clarence "Motts" Thomas



a former Pomona College associate dean of students and football coach, died in Pomona on February 20, 2011. His memorial service was held on March 19 at Bridges Hall of Music.

A graduate of Morgan State University, where he was the starting center of one of the most successful teams in the college's history, Thomas had a master's equivalency from the University of Maryland. He began his career

coaching high school football followed by college football at Bowie State College, Williams and Morgan State before coming to Pomona College in 1982 as football coach and assistant professor of physical education.

In 1992, Thomas expanded his portfolio to serve as Pomona's dean of campus life/associate dean of students, while for a time continuing to coach football. After a one-year absence to serve as dean of students at St. Lawrence University, he was asked to return as director of community and multicultural programs. In the latter capacity, he laid the foundations of Pomona's flourishing outreach efforts.

When Thomas retired in 2006, former President Peter Stanley said, "With little fanfare, Motts identified and built relationships with a variety of really substantial programs, especially America Reads and College Bound, and made Pomona their valued ally in motivating and equipping disadvantaged young people to succeed in high school and find their way to four-year colleges." Thomas was also a founding member and director of the Summer Scholars Enrichment Program, now PAYS, which began in 2003. PAYS has graduated six classes, setting approximately 180 students firmly on the college path.

During his Pomona years, Thomas kept honing his coaching skills, coaching American football in Helsinki and Kuopio, Finland, during summers from 1986-92; completing a coaching internship with the Los Angeles Raiders in 1992; and serving as a football official, rising from youth leagues to the Mid-Atlantic Conference.

As both a coach and associate dean of students, Thomas made a difference in hundreds of lives modeling kindness, teaching leadership and always being ready to encourage others.

For those who would like to do something in his honor, the family listed the following organizations as potential recipients for gifts of time, attention, money or resources: The Frederick County Hall of Fame (Frederick, Md.), the Morgan State University Clarence "Motts" Thomas Memorial Fund (Baltimore, Md.), the Williams College Eye Care Project (with "Eye Care Nicaragua" on the memo line); the Pomona College Draper Center for Community Partnerships, and the Bandon (Oregon) Community Pool Project.

"The world is a poorer place without Motts in it. We have lost his kindness and warmth, his calm in the midst of a storm, his enthusiasm for all things athletic, his commitment to diversity, his compassion for those who have had less of a chance in life, and his ability to coach us all toward reaching our highest potential."

—Professor William Swartz

Cryptic Wordokus / by Lynne Willems Zold '67

Answers on Page 51

This puzzle is a type of Sudoku in which letters replace the numbers 1 through 9. The letters to be entered in the grid are written in a scrambled order below the puzzle. When you solve the puzzle in the usual way, a word will be formed in the shaded boxes of the grid reading left to right in the columns. There's also a cryptic for each puzzle, which, when solved, will also give you the answer to the scrambled word.

	R				Y	D	
S	H		R			B	
	Y		I	D			
		B		T		R	Y
			S		H		
	S	Y		R			I
				H	B		T
	A				R		B
Y		H					I

Y S D I H B A T R

Cryptic clue: Shady Brit sabotaged all our arrival dates.

G				T	E		D	
R					I	E	A	N
I				D				
			E			N	R	
	E				R		P	
	I	R			T	D		
								P
	R	I	D	A		T		
T	N			I	R			D

P T R I A G D N E

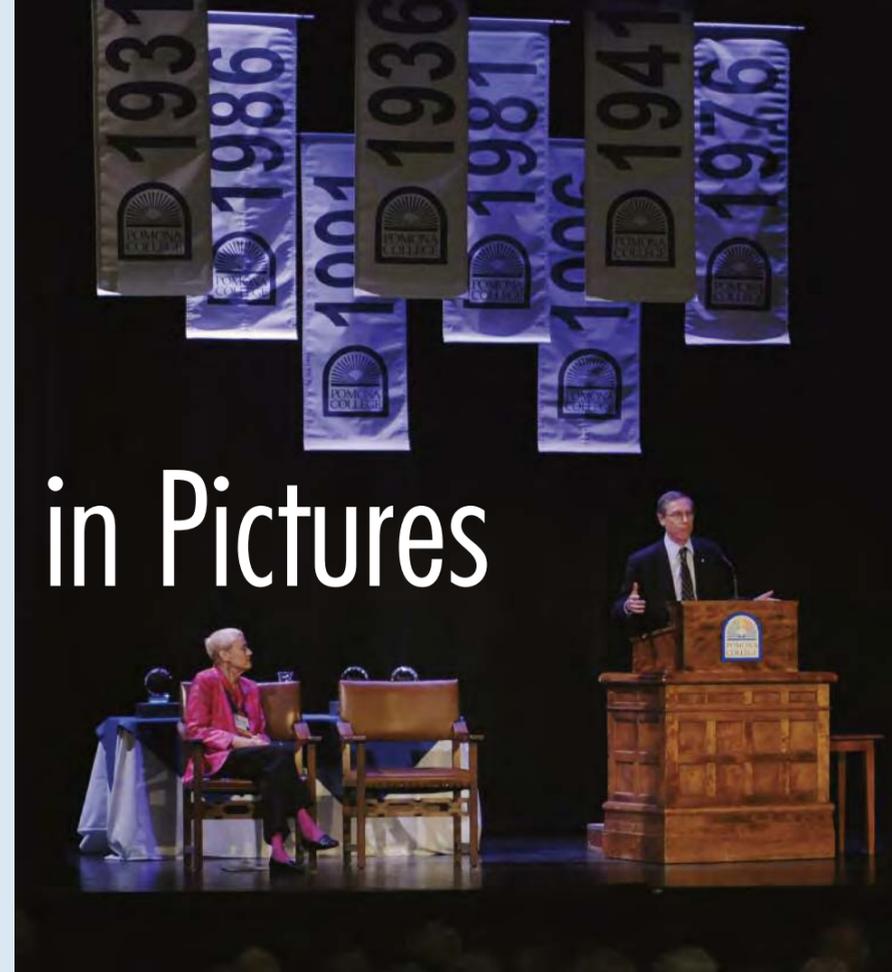
Cryptic clue: Chaos predated retiring.



Pomona Blue / Alumni Weekend 2011

Alumni Weekend in Pictures

At the end of April, Pomona College welcomed back about 1,400 alumni and friends for Alumni Weekend 2011. Alumni from class years ending in one and six returned to campus to take part in more than 170 events, including the Alumni Vintner Wine Tasting, the Parade of Classes, the inaugural "Daring Minds" lecture series, and the "Through the Gates" program celebrating 2011's Alumni Award winners.



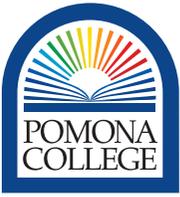
Save the Date

Mark your calendar now for next year's Alumni Weekend, to be held April 26-29, 2012. Returning for reunions will be classes ending in 2 and 7. For more photos from Alumni Weekend 2011, see the inside back cover of this issue.



Clockwise from top left: members of the Class of 1976 in the Parade of Classes; Alumni Board President Mary Ellen Kilsby '56 and President David Oxtoby onstage for the "Through the Gates" program; LGBT and allied alumni joining seniors for Lavender Graduation; members of the Class of 1961 in the Parade of Classes; members of the Class of 2006 enjoying the Alumni Vintner Wine Tasting; Jim Mitchell '80 chatting with other alumni at the Wash Party; Prometheus keeping watch over the hors d'oeuvres table at the Alumni Vintners Wine Tasting; a greeting between old friends; and former Director of Alumni Relations Lee Harlan '55 serving "Frozen Assets" to a visiting alumna.





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and it's happening again, beginning August 30, 2011... See inside front cover and enclosed brochure...

