

SWARTHMORE

College Bulletin

September 1997



SUMMER

TIME



Those who taught and studied in old Science Hall would be astonished to see the newly refurbished Trotter Hall, shown here as the landscaping was being completed in August. The original Science Hall (inset, ca. 1910), which opened in 1882, had wings added in 1895 and 1920 and was renamed in 1937 in honor of the longtime head of the Natural Sciences Department, Spencer Trotter. After nearly two years of interior and exterior renovation, the “new” Trotter opened with the beginning of classes this month. Look for a photo tour in the December Bulletin.

INSET: COURTESY FRIENDS HISTORICAL LIBRARY
CONTEMPORARY PHOTO BY ELEFTHERIOS KOSTANS

SWARTHMORE

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Cover: There's a lot of action on campus during the summer—and not all of it on the playing field. Story on page 10.

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10 Summertime

Those lazy, hazy days of summer on campus have become but a memory. Nowadays literally thousands of youngsters come to Swarthmore to learn the finer points of baseball, lacrosse, or tennis, others to take part in educational enrichment programs such as Upward Bound. And then there are all those backhoes....



16 Good enough for Swarthmore?

Why not pick our incoming classes at random, queries Barry Schwartz, professor of psychology. There are many reasons, counters Robin Mamlet, dean of admissions. Enjoy this debate about the whos and whys of getting admitted to Swarthmore.

By Barry Schwartz and Robin Mamlet



20 Investing in Social Capital

With the advent of television, says Harvard Professor Robert Putnam '63, leisure time in this country has become privatized. His theories on why we have been disengaging from civic life have brought him acclaim—and stirred a national controversy.

By Jason Zengerle '96



24 Under One Roof

After moving to Vancouver in 1990, Deborah Hyman '81 and her family felt isolated, far from family and friends. Seeking to find the kind of support that used to come with neighbors in small towns, they found their dream in a cohousing community.

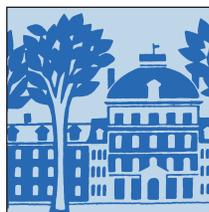
By Beth Grubb and Chuck Luce



64 Swarthmore and the NSA

After the end of World War II, young idealists from campuses around the country formed the National Student Association. But 20 years later it was discovered to have secret CIA backing, and Swarthmore's disillusioned student body voted to withdraw.

By Elizabeth Weber '98



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60 Recent Books by Alumni

If this issue of the *Bulletin* looks a little different, it is. For the first time since 1983, the magazine plays host to the College's annual Report of Gifts—a record of donations to Swarthmore from July 1996 through June 1997. It also contains two important feature stories about how we relate to each other and to our communities. I think the two are connected.

Creating community is a big issue these days. Social scientist Robert Putnam '63 ("Investing in Social Capital," page 20) has voiced America's nagging feeling that something is wrong with our body politic—a problem he attributes to declining civic involvement. Putnam believes that voluntary organizations like bowling leagues and PTAs are essential to the health of a democracy, and his ideas have touched a national nerve.

Deborah Hyman '81 and her husband, David Wright, have felt the same thing on a more personal level. Their involvement in

WindSong, a cohousing community in Vancouver, B.C., ("Under One Roof," page 24) is a testament to their belief that the health of individuals and families is directly related to the quality of the social environment in which they live.

They took great risks to help

create an intentional community that meets their need to be something more than just another family lost in suburbia.

I'm fascinated by the wide variety of intentional groups we join in order to better our lives. As an inveterate joiner myself, I sometimes wonder whether we really exist as individuals unless we bind ourselves to families, neighbors, churches, baseball leagues, Scout troops, singing groups—or schools. Nowhere is this more evident than at Swarthmore College. Students growing to adulthood are deeply influenced by friends, teachers, and the small societies in which they live and work. Swarthmore changes peoples' lives, and I believe that both Deborah Hyman and Robert Putnam are doing what they do today because of something they took away from Swarthmore, something as much spiritual as intellectual.

Like a WindSong or a bowling league, a great college is an intentional community, beholden to its founders, given life by its current members, and sustained by its alumni. In one way or another, you choose to be part of it, and whether or not your name is on one of the lists following page 32, as a reader of this magazine you continue to be a part of it. While it is not the job of the *Bulletin* to ask you for money, we hope that it shows you (and lets you enjoy once again) one of Swarthmore's greatest gifts to you—an extraordinary experience of community.

—J.L.

Assisted suicide changes doctor's role

To the Editor:

As a physician who has spent the last quarter-century working with frail homebound elderly people, I would like to respond to Dr. Tom Preston's [55] views on physician-assisted suicide ("The Future of Dying," June 1997).

Now that the Supreme Court has determined that no constitutional right to physician-assisted suicide exists, the race to determine which state will first legalize this action is underway. As the national debate intensifies, we are faced with a drastic change in what we have all held as a basic truth: that life is valuable and is to be preserved.

A most important concern is the risk that vulnerable persons, especially the frail aged, will be subjected to undue influence by others in making death decisions. There may be a venal basis for family members to seek a way to have an older relative die; or a political agenda may exist. When Richard Lamm, then the governor of Colorado, said several years ago that old people have "a duty to die and get out of the way," he was surely not expressing merely his own view. Policymakers and insurance companies are highly likely to press for further legal steps that will lead to the early death of older persons rather than to pay for those famous last six months of life that purportedly cost the health system so dearly.

Assisted suicide changes the role of doctors. No longer will the elderly be able to trust implicitly that their physicians will stand up for them and not harm them. The fear that the doctor may connive with the family will lurk in the patient's mind in some situations. All physicians are placed in an equivocal position, even those who know that they will never participate in an assisted suicide.

Deaths in younger persons, some of which are indeed disastrous and tragic, have been the prime concern of protagonists for physician-assisted suicide. However, the likelihood of death in younger groups is modest compared to that in aged. There are ever-increasing numbers of

PARLOR TALK

I'm fascinated by the wide variety of intentional groups we join in order to better our lives.

older persons in this country who have deteriorating conditions that will eventually lead to death. All of us who have worked with the frail elderly know of situations where families were ambivalent or worse about the survival of an aged parent. Pressure will be placed on doctors to cause death under new legal grounds. We also will see subtle demands placed on older persons to agree to die. Thus the Right to Die will become the Duty to Die.

In its decision to allow physician-assisted suicide, the 2nd Circuit Court judges—taking a position now reversed by the Supreme Court—leaned strongly on the fact that withdrawal of life support by doctors is already legal. The Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment was construed to mean that because doctors are now allowed to withdraw life support, leading to death of patients, they may also assist in suicide. The 2nd Circuit judges simply passed over the extremely obvious distinction that in withdrawal of life support it is the disease that kills; in physician-assisted suicide, it is the doctor who is the killer.

Physicians are trained to preserve the lives and the good health of their patients. Once physicians are legally enabled to participate in killing their patients, other abuses must inevitably flow from this fundamental concession.

PHILIP W. BRICKNER, M.D. '50
New York

Market-driven health care and assisted suicide don't mix To the Editor:

The article by Tom Preston advocating the legalization of physician-assisted suicide ignored the rapid changes in the health care marketplace that make this a very dangerous concept.

Many fear living on in intractable pain or attached to machines or tubes. Advocates of assisted suicide claim that it gives control to those wishing to avoid this fate. But Dr. Preston admits that current law already allows doctors to use all means to relieve pain, even if death is hastened, and allows patients to

Please turn to page 32

"Shh! Did you hear that?!" We were immediately silent. But the mysterious noise that put us on alert sounded more like a water pipe than our nemesis: Swarthmore College Public Safety. We relaxed and continued.

This night's adventure had brought us to the new Trotter Hall, still under renovation in late June. At about midnight we walked up to campus and found its hall lights brightly lit and the front door wide open. So, we took a tour of the not-quite-finished building. Our intentions were harmless, but the illicit midnight tour was still pretty exciting. My first English classroom during old Trotter's final semester was nearly finished—lights were hung, furniture in place. Other parts of the building were not so far along and were strewn with building materials, curious tools, and packaging.

Having thoroughly inspected the contractors' progress, we left the way we came and returned to the dark and quiet of a summer night in Swarthmore.

For the 120 or so students who stayed for the three months of summer, the campus was a different and interesting place. Construction intensified dramatically, tearing up the grounds, encircling some sections in orange fencing and paving others.

In places not affected by the extensive surgery, the campus was equally dramatic. Most students leave too early or arrive too late to see the outrageous bloom of Kohlberg's Cosby Courtyard or the Rose Garden, Crumhenge, or the Scott Amphitheater. All these places untouched by construction looked brighter, greener, and more alive than they do during the school year. But they were silent, too. When the construction ceased for the day and the staff of the College left at night, the whole campus was vacant. And then it was ours.

At first it felt very strange to walk around the campus without seeing anybody. After some time, though, a sense of proprietorship grew, and I became accustomed to the quiet and empty spaces that felt like they were

ours to explore.

Under the cover of darkness, we certainly did explore. We found Crumhenge under a full moon filled with thousands of fireflies. The complicated grounds of the Scott Arboretum Offices, we discovered, are a good place for hide-and-seek. We made use of Crum Creek especially in the hot weather. Despite the taboo against climbing the trees, we spent many nights perched high in the old, knotty Purple Leaf Beech between McCabe and the Arboretum offices.

Some of our ventures into the nearly deserted campus did not fare quite as well. Our plan to get to the sixth floor dome room of Parrish was quick-

ly abandoned when we encountered an impenetrable-looking locked door on the fifth floor. On one particularly hot night, we managed to find an open, air-conditioned classroom in Kohlberg to watch a movie on the large projection screens. Public Safety soon paid us a visit and scolded us mildly for not asking them first—but they let us finish the movie.

Resident assistants and varsity athletes have just returned for the school year, and the first-years and then everyone else will soon follow. I am surprised at how possessive I now feel about the campus. The quiet, empty places are being taken over by the returning students who, like me, feel that the campus belongs to them.

I am sure in a matter of weeks I will learn to share again. However, spending a summer in Swarthmore has changed my relationship to this place. The returning students weren't here to see Trotter's skeleton or the campus in full bloom. Many are surprised to see the results of the construction projects that those of us who stayed watched step by step. Some places will remain mine, at least in memory. But I suppose this is the way it is for all of us who spend time here.

I'm going to miss summer in Swarthmore—peace, quiet, no schoolwork to worry about. Just a whole, empty campus to explore.

—Jim Harker '99

*When the
College staff
left at night,
the whole
campus
was ours.*

Educating the Global Person

The 1997 Commencement Address
By President Alfred H. Bloom

You, the members of the Class of 1997, are graduating today in the midst of one of the most radical and pervasive revolutions in human history—the globalization of our world.

Thirty years ago last week, when I graduated from college, I set out around a world, vast stretches of which still remained, as they had for millennia, only barely touched by the ideas, economics, and culture of a global order. That majority of the globe beyond the Rio Grande, beyond Hawaii, and beyond the borders of Western Europe, was to us a terrain of adventure, at once romantic by virtue of its cultural lure and intimidating by virtue of its geographical and cultural remoteness and/or subjection to Communist rule.

The war in Southeast Asia was centrally on our minds—and, we feared, in our futures as well—but otherwise those further stretches of the globe lay outside what we imagined could ever be our personal sphere of involvement and responsibility. Only specialized careers might take one there, or an idealistic mission to bring to the underdeveloped portion of the globe the technologies, insights, and values of the West. Names like Bucharest and Kiev, Kuala Lumpur, Shanghai and Taipei, Bogota, São Paulo, Lagos, and Nairobi rang with a mystery almost on a par with that of Timbuktu.

During the past 30 years, that relative isolation, in place for the length of human history, has been amazingly and suddenly removed. Now hardly a town or village exists anywhere that is not linked by phone and media—if not by the Internet—to a new pervasive global order. Hardly a town or village exists anywhere whose financial, commercial, intellectual, artistic, and gastronomic life has not been fundamentally transformed by that new global order, whose central cafe does not serve both coffee and Coca-Cola and offer conversation infused with the events, expectations, and alluring possibilities of a larger world.

Moreover, the names of that former era—such as Ceylon, Rhodesia, Saigon, and Peking—have been replaced by Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe, Ho Chi Minh City, and Beijing—signaling that the new order speaks in multiple voices, of which those of the West, though still very powerful, are now only a subset.

And, in penetrating every corner of our planet, the new order has subsumed us as well, embedding our intellectual, cultural, and economic lives within its global context.

Unlike 30 years ago, it is highly likely that any career you choose will engage you in that global world. And unlike 30 years ago, it is highly likely that the contributions you will want to make and the leadership you will assume will depend in important measure on your embrace of it.

I urge you in the strongest terms to meet that global challenge and responsibility.

At the same time, I assure you that your Swarthmore education constitutes a remarkable preparation for that task. The knowledge, analytic skills, and ethical consciousness you have developed here will enable you to grapple with the structural and value complexities of our global order. Your areas of particular expertise will provide the basis for rewarding exchange with individuals of similar interest across it. Your ability to listen and to grasp others' perspectives will equip you to build trust and shared understanding across individual and cultural divides. And your proficiency in foreign languages will open for you the even deeper understanding that comes from grasping other points of view through the categories of language and thought in which they are conceived.

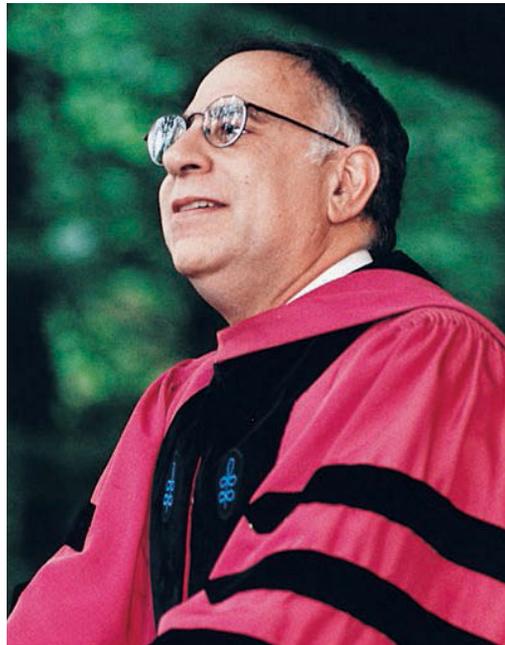
Many of you have already begun to acquire international experience. Thirty-three percent of you have studied abroad. You international students who have come to Swarthmore have succeeded in the remarkable accomplishment of taking on and mastering an educational system different from your own. And for those of you who are looking forward to your first trip around the world, if your careers don't immediately take you there, Singapore Airlines will—and at a fare that is only 24 percent in inflation-adjusted dollars of what it cost in 1967! Among the benefits of globalization is easier access to the world.

But even a rich intellectual foundation, supplemented by international experience, will not in itself ensure your transformation from Renaissance men and women to the global persons I urge you to become. For that global leap will require building on those skills and that experience

in at least three additional ways:

First, I ask you to make use of the analytic precision and flexibility with which you have approached new fields of knowledge and new disciplines to break down any sense you may have of the inapproachability of other cultural worlds. Use those very skills to move beyond exotic and alienating stereotypes to an increasingly precise grasp of the actual differences in perspectives and priorities that distinguish those worlds from your own.

And even more importantly, use those very skills to move to a recognition of where differences end and where the rich array of human commonalities begins—that rich array of conceptual abilities, emotions, needs, and aspirations that all human beings share. As the myth of inscrutability dissolves, almost any cultural context can become a domain of effective and satisfying personal engagement for you. A distin-



DENG-JENG LEE

"The global person acts to open his or her own nation not only to what it can teach but also to what it can learn," said President Bloom.

guishing characteristic of the global person is that he or she arrives as confident in Mombasa and Manaus, as in Memphis and Minneapolis, that beyond the Airport Hilton lies a world in which personal connections can be made, and shared goals identified and achieved.

Second, I ask you to make use of those carefully honed analytic skills to explode the assumption that the most significant challenges facing our own society are somehow unique to us. Consider, for example, how many nations are struggling, as we are, to overcome the historic marginalization of ethnic or racial groups and to create more inclusive democratic societies—nations ranging from Peru to Rwanda to Bosnia, Israel, Sri Lanka, and Canada. Consider how many other nations currently face severe pressures from immigration, from the urgent need to strengthen their educational systems and reverse the degradation of their environments. Consider how many other nations face, as we do, unconscionable conditions of poverty and a steadily increasing disparity between their wealthy and poor.

A second distinguishing characteristic of the global person is that he looks at the world through a global framework that rejects a privileged and provincial view and attends not only to the commonalities that unite us all as individuals, but to the commonalities that unite us in the realm of societal experience as well.

And that brings me to my third and final point. I ask you to make use of those same skills, which have served you so well at Swarthmore, to shatter the assumption that there is little in the way of experience and insight out *there* relevant to solving our problems at home.

Thirty years ago when I landed in Singapore, in Taiwan, in South Korea, and in Hong Kong, the poverty I witnessed beyond the main squares was comparable to, or worse than, that of Chester or North Philadelphia today. During

the past 30 years that poverty has been virtually eliminated, with, moreover, no appreciable increase in the disparity between those at the lower and higher ends of economic success.

Given the extent to which we all share in a common global experience, I believe that it is morally indefensible today to claim, on the basis of a presumed sense of uniqueness and privilege, that approaches which have been so remarkably successful elsewhere are of no value to us here. Those nations have critical lessons to teach, regarding, for example the central importance of investing in education, public health, and job creation.

And they stand as compelling proof that poverty can be eliminated, if the collective will is there.

A third distinguishing characteristic of the global person is that she acts to open her own nation not only to what it can teach but also to what it can—and what it has the responsibility to—learn.

In sum, I urge you to become the global persons that your careers, your societies, and your historic era require. There is no group of individuals to whom I would more confidently entrust a global world, and there are no individuals whom I would rather see at alumni events everywhere from Melbourne, Malagasy, and Managua to our most esteemed Montreal.*

And don't forget to enjoy that world as you engage it, and as you make it your home.

Congratulations on your graduation. And as the Chinese put it—*yi lu shun feng*—may the wind be behind, blowing smoothly, for the entire journey you undertake!

*A reference to the students' beautifully staged April Fool's joke regarding the presumed merger of Swarthmore into the Canadian university system.



DENG-JENG LEE

Remember your freshman roommate?

Did you become friends for life, or were you ready within days to throw him or her (along with his or her really, really annoying habits) out the window?

Chances are you at least tolerated each other, says Myrt Westphal, who directs the residential life program for the Dean's Office. She's been involved in the pairing process for six years, although for the last two Jennifer Leigh '94, as director of student activities, has been doing the actual matchups.

After an initial screening to find incoming students with special needs (mobility limitations or other medical problems), the winnowing process begins with:

- Sex: "We don't have coed housing by room," says Westphal, "although we do have coed halls."
- Smokers: "There's a whole group of people who say they prefer living on a smoking hall, but there are a growing number who are allergic to smoke and can't be in the same environment," says Leigh.
- Sleeping habits: "This can be hard because the kid who had to get up and catch the school bus at 6:30 a.m. thinks he's early to bed and early to rise," Westphal says. "And then he gets here and doesn't need to do that anymore, and he turns into a midnight oil person."
- Neatness: "We have a category of compulsively neat people that we try to make sure are with other people who feel that order is important," says Leigh.

After making those combinations, "there's a big group of people who pretty much go with the flow," Leigh adds. "They're in between in their habits, so they're very flexible.

At this point we look for characteristics to make sure they have at least two things in common: They like to party, they're athletes, they're outgoing and would not do well with a shy roommate, they're substance-free and need time alone."

Once personal habits are sorted through, Leigh says the next step is to bring about geographical diversity. "You come to a school where people are from all over the world, and part of the learning experience is to be with people different from yourselves."

The process isn't perfect, and a lot of the conflict seems to begin at home with filling out the questionnaire. Says Westphal: "We get some false information. In some cases the parents fill out the questionnaires or they'll look over their child's shoulder and the child won't admit to things they don't want their parents to know (such as he or she smokes). And sometimes students reinvent themselves, filling it out as the person they want to be, not who they are."

Another problem that arises is cultural: people who have different styles of dealing with anger and frustration or different values about sharing and privacy.

But serious problems are few, she added, which she says is a credit to the students. "There's a great propensity on the part of incoming freshmen to make it work."



SHERRI JOHNSON



Stephenson

Stephenson to lead information services

Acting on a recommendation of the Librarian Search Committee, the new position of associate provost for information services has been created. Thomas Stephenson, associate professor of chemistry, will hold the post for the next three years. He will work with the library, Computing Center, and Media Services staffs to see what areas of cooperation

and collaboration can be fostered among the three.

The new position addresses the committee's recommendation that the College move "toward a single, integrated department of information services in the foreseeable future..."

Stephenson's new responsibilities will include administering the College's efforts as part of the recent \$1 million Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant for foreign language instruction. The grant, made jointly to the Modern Languages departments of Swarthmore, Bryn Mawr, and Haverford, will support a program to integrate new approaches to teaching foreign languages. Facilities will be upgraded for a common level of technical capability.



Elverson

Lew Elverson, coach from 1937 to 1978, dies

Lewis Elverson, longtime football and track coach and former chair of the Department of Physical Education, died May 1.

The emeritus professor of physical education for men began as a part-time football coach at the College in 1937 after his graduation from the University of Pennsylvania. The next year he was named head coach. Elverson went on to compile

more wins than any other Swarthmore football coach, leading the Garnet to league championships in 1965 and 1966.

Elverson also coached track and field from 1951 to 1978, recording a .545 winning percentage and the most wins ever by a Swarthmore track coach. He was athletic director from 1976 to 1978 and served as chair of the Physical Education Department before retiring in 1978. Elverson's contribution to the College is memorialized by the Lew Elverson Coachship, established by former players to support the head football coach's position.

He is survived by his wife, Josephine Elias Elverson '40, his son Thomas Elverson '75, daughter Sara-Jo LeForge, and three grandchildren.

Technology and cultural life: an adventure in education

By Kenneth J. Gergen

I have just completed one of the most exciting semesters since I began teaching at Swarthmore almost 30 years ago. My exhilaration is largely the result of a new course: Technology, Self, and Society.

The course was designed to explore the impact of the 20th-century explosion in technology on individual and cultural life. Of particular concern are the “social technologies”—from the telephone, automobile, and radio early in the century to television, jet transportation, and computer communication in recent decades—that have so fully insinuated themselves into our daily lives.

Too frequently our reaction to such technologies is merely to ask what is the cost or what new opportunity or entertainment is being provided? We seldom address the ways in which these technologies alter traditional conceptions of the self, intimacy, relationships, commitment, and community, for example, and the ways in which they change the character of daily relations, family life, education, and politics. It was precisely to this kind of deliberation that the course was directed.

From the very beginning of the course we worked collaboratively. Because of the vastness of the topic and its freshly minted character, there was no way that I could serve as a learned authority on all issues. (And besides, if the course was designed to foster critical deliberation, then monologue was not a promising option.) The students and I searched for means of generating a pedagogy that resonated with the course content. For example, we established computer-based discussion groups. Each week students checked into their group and offered preliminary opinions on the week's readings. Further, the class of 15 was divided into smaller units responsible (with collaborative input from me) for generating class activities relevant to the readings for each week. It was this latter departure from traditional classroom practice that gave rise to some of the semester's most engaging experiences.

For example, students made ingenious use of the newly available computer classroom in Kohlberg Hall. One week we created a virtual classroom in which we welcomed into our discussion a media guru from the West Coast. On another occasion we explored a hypertext program that enabled us to see how an audience could work interactively with a playwright to create a collaborative work. Still later we visited the Website of a prominent New York artist and contributed materials that she might use in forthcoming techno-based art. Video materials were frequently brought in to supplement class discussion, and certain weeks we found useful resources could be drawn from Websites scattered across the globe. One afternoon we all remained in our rooms and offices while we communicated via computers in a frenetically spiraling multi-logue. In effect, the semester allowed us to create, experience, and

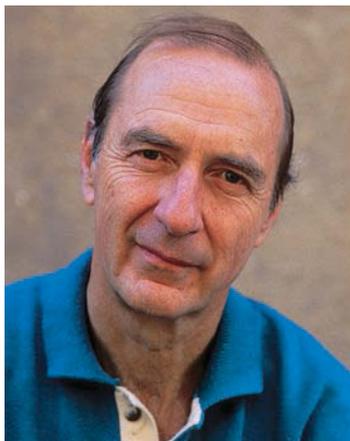
reflect on electronically mediated life—from the local to the global.

The enthralling sense of exploration did not stop here. One prominent outcome of the technological explosion is the realization of the limits of oral and literary traditions of expression. With technological innovation, we open new forms of representing and communicating knowledge. When words, numbers, sound, images, color can all be converted to a single, digital modality, layered and interlaced, and then placed in continuous motion, there is an explosion in our potentials for communication. It thus seemed appropriate to invite students to use their term projects as sites for communicative exploration. Although they were free to write a traditional scholarly paper (and some wrote very fine ones), I encouraged the class to take risks. If not now, when?

At the semester's end, I was treated to a galaxy of shooting stars.

Robert Dull '97 wove prominent course themes into a stage production that made innovative use of technology to criticize the technologizing of human relationships. The play was subsequently presented to the student body. Kate Bernstein '99 took her camcorder into the field to generate a fascinating ethnography of Rave culture, where teenagers are drawn together by a dance and drug fusion in which technological imagery and sounds play a key unifying role. Richard Delgado '97 generated a hypertext program enabling “the reader” to rove through the e-mail archive of class dialogues and to trace the range of intricate connections. Meghan Falvey '98 fabricated a series of prints bringing critical attention to technology's functioning in society. Her project included posting these prints in various center-city sites. Carew Kraft '99 and Jennifer Weiss '98 each generated a collection of paper fragments—bits of scholarship, dialogue, drawings, and more—each treating different issues raised by the course. The collections themselves portrayed the fragmentation of knowledge generated by present-day technology. (The curious reader may hear a fragment from Kraft's postmodern answering machine by dialing [610] 328-8690.) Kylian Robinson '97 treated the class to a massive painting that, when illuminated by an accompanying paper, explored the limits placed on communication and understanding by using printed language.

As this course made apparent, the most exciting aspect of teaching is the opportunity to learn. One prominent lesson was that when students are given an opportunity to create forms of pedagogical practice tailored to a body of material, the old traditions of lecture/discussion seem more relevant to a social and technological context that is rapidly deteriorating. Students growing up with unparalleled technological sophistication in a new information environment are invaluable resources in creating a new vocabulary of educational practice.



DENG-JENG LEE

Kenneth J. Gergen, the Gil and Frank Mustin Professor of Psychology, is teaching a new course called Technology, Self, and Society.

E-mail from Ghana

Editor's Note: Sharon Friedler, professor and director of the College's dance program, her husband, Louis, professor of mathematics at Beaver College, and their 15-year-old daughter Sorelle, were in Ghana from January to June. Friedler was invited to teach dance composition at the University of Ghana by Professor Kwabena Nketia, director of the university's International Center for African Music and Dance, who was Cornell Visiting Professor at Swarthmore in 1995. Along with her teaching duties, Friedler gathered information for a book on traditional dances of Ghana and how they are learned in the villages, at the university, and taught cross-culturally. During their stay in Africa, the family sent e-mails chronicling their adventures in the classroom and out. Here are some excerpts:

- "We're here, safe, and are slowly becoming acclimated to the heat and the very different culture. We are living in a house that by American standards would be a modest middle-class house that a college faculty member could afford. We asked if the house had air conditioning and were told the bedrooms had. Wrong question. We should have asked if there is dependable electricity."

- "Everything takes five times as long as it would at home. At home things run efficiently, but salespeople and clerks are often rude. Here nothing runs efficiently, but everyone is friendly."



- "This weekend we went to Agogo, a village northeast of Kumasi. On Sunday (after the chief fed us two meals and then talked to us about the importance of the chieftancy) we went out into the courtyard where about 250 people, mostly in traditional dress, watched and listened to a spectacle of drumming and dance. Most of the dances we saw were from the Akan (Ashanti) tradition and their hand gestures are usually proverbial in nature, such things as 'I lean on your wisdom' in relation to the chief."

- "We saw the play *Midnight Hotel* by Nigerian playwright Femi Oshfisan. It was a 'bedroom farce,' which we found moderately funny but the audience thought was hysterical. Part of our problem was language: One of the char-

acters spoke in pidgin English, which we've learned to figure out in print but is impossible for us to understand when spoken quickly."

- "Ghanaians are never in a hurry to do anything until they start driving—then nothing stops them."

- "I am teaching dance composition to second- and third-year students. They all come with a knowledge of the dances of their own ethnic group and some acquaintance with the dances of other groups in Ghana. However, they have never been exposed to modern dance, so my approach thus far asks them to draw on their traditional vocabularies and combine them with more pedestrian movement. Assignments using Ghanaian proverbs, poems, and musical structures all yielded wonderful results. We seem to be developing a good sense of ensemble."

- "The festival in Abidjan. We spent almost as much time getting ready to go to the Côte d'Ivoire as we did there. It took an entire week to get our residency permit from Ghana extended, get a visa from the Côte d'Ivoire embassy, and pick up our tickets. I asked the ticket agent if food was served on the flight. She told me 'sometimes.'"

- "There is one television channel in the country, GTV, which carries CNN in the early morning and late evening. CNN also sometimes comes in on another channel, but there is no obvious pattern to the times."

- "Yesterday we watched a rehearsal/performance of a dance and drumming troupe of children and teenagers led by Sorelle's drumming teacher, Johnson Kwadzo Kemeh. During the more than 2½ hours that the children rehearse, more people keep coming. It is clear that these sessions function simultaneously to build community, to entertain, and to pass on traditions. At the end of this marathon, Sorelle and I were drawn into the act, drumming and dancing. People seemed genuinely surprised and delighted by our knowledge and efforts."

- "As difficult as we've at times found the adjustments to Ghana, now that we're getting to leave we realize that it will not be easy to reacclimate to the United States. We really did slow down. The idea of driving on the expressways around Philadelphia is truly terrifying."

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Dance Professor Sharon Friedler (left) performs Adowa, a traditional dance of the Agogo region of Ghana, with an unnamed subchief at a durbar, a festival or celebration.

Women's lacrosse team earns first-ever postseason berth

The **women's lacrosse** team reached the postseason for the first time in school history. Posting an 11-6 record, the Garnet made its first-ever appearance in the ECAC Division III Mid-Atlantic Championships. The Garnet was defeated by Hartwick College, 14-11, in a semifinal contest. Swarthmore opened the season by winning its first five games, earning a No. 9 ranking in the IWLCA poll. Highlighting the season was the Garnet's first-ever victory over Ursinus College, a 14-12 decision, and the first victory over Franklin & Marshall since 1988. Led by Holly Baker '99 (42 goals, 24 assists, 66 points), Kristen Osborne '97 (25 goals, 20 assists, 45 points), and Alicia Googins '00 (43 goals), the Garnet posted its fourth consecutive season with 11 or more victories. Lia Ernst '97 (32 goals) and Kelly Wilcox '97 were named to the USWLA All-American squad. Ernst, Wilcox, Baker, and Laura Starita '97, and Samantha Peltz '97 were named to the All-Centennial Conference squad.

The **men's and women's track and field** squads both posted successful meet records. The men went 11-0 and finished in second place at the Centennial Conference Championships, while the women went 11-1 and finished in third place at the conference championships. In their final Centennial Conference Championships, seniors Eric Pakurar and Shan Sutherland both brought home the gold. Pakurar was a repeat champ, winning the 400-meter hurdles in a time of 0:55.49, and Sutherland won the pole vault, clearing a height of 12'11.5". On the women's side, it was freshman Desiree Peterkin who led the way for the Garnet. Peterkin broke the school, meet, and conference records with a 37'6" triple jump to qualify for the NCAA Division III Championships. Peterkin, along with Danielle Duffy '98, Catherine Laine '98, and Jill Wildonger '97, set school, meet, and conference records in winning the 4x100-meter relay in a time of 0:50.29. Duffy was a repeat champ in the 400-meter run, winning in a time of 1:00.81. Laine finished second in 100-meter hurdles and third in the triple jump, qualifying for nationals in both events. At the national championships, Peterkin became the first Swarthmore woman to earn All-American honors by finishing in eighth place with a jump of 36'11.5".

The **men's tennis** team reached the second round of the NCAA Division III East Regional Tennis Championships, finishing 12th in the nation. Playing one of the toughest schedules in the nation, the Garnet posted an 8-9 record, earning a seventh seed in the tournament. Swarthmore squared off against 10th-seeded Rochester in the opening round, knocking off the Yellowjackets 4-3. Roger Werner '98, Ed Ernst '98, and Jon Temin '00 were all victorious in their singles matches, and the doubles teams of Werner and Ernst and Temin

and Sascha Sheehan '00 gave the Garnet the doubles point. Advancing into the second round, Swarthmore ran into their nemesis, the second-seeded Amherst Lord Jeffs, losing a 4-2 decision.

The **women's tennis** team opened the season with a 6-3 victory over Peace College, but a combination of injuries and inexperience saw them finish the season at 3-13 overall and 2-8 in the Centennial. Wendy Kemp '99 led the Garnet with a 10-5 overall record. The sophomore posted one of the best conference marks of the season, going 8-2 against Centennial opponents. At the Centennial Championships, Neena Shenai '98 was the lone Swarthmorean to advance to the second round. Shenai and Elena Rosenbaum '98 were named to the Centennial Academic Honor Roll.

After losing six starters to graduation, the **baseball** team used the 1997 season as a rebuilding year. The Garnet recorded a 5-28 overall mark and went 4-14 in the Centennial, finishing strong, winning two of the final three contests. A sign of good things to come came on the final day of the season, as Steve Farneth '00 threw a no-hitter, blanking Haverford 8-0. It was the first no-hitter by a Swarthmore pitcher since 1978. Pat Straub '97 came in from the outfield to fill the void as catcher, led the Garnet with a .417 batting average, and was named to the First Team All-Centennial Conference for the second consecutive season. Jeremy Bonder '97 hit .381 on the season and was named Second Team All-Centennial.

The **softball** team finished the season with a doubleheader sweep of Haverford to post a 4-25 record. Michelle Walsh '98 and Apryl Dunning '99 were both named to the Second Team All-Centennial, finishing 2-3 respectively in the conference batting race. Walsh hit .495, leading the conference with 14 doubles and seven triples, and Dunning hit .488 and placed fourth in the conference with 30 runs.

The **golf** team recorded their first victory since 1995 in the season opener, a 394-407 decision over Philadelphia Pharmacy. The squad finished the season at 3-9-1. David McKechnie '97 and Ben Schall '97 were named to the Centennial Conference Academic Honor Roll.

The **men's lacrosse** team looked to use the 1997 season as a rebuilding year after the graduation of eight starters from last year's squad. Offensively the Garnet was led by Pat Donaghy '99, who recorded team-highs in goals (11), assists (seven), and points (18). Tucker Zengerle '00, one of four freshman starters, stepped to the forefront earning Second Team All-Centennial Conference recognition for his strong defensive play. Zengerle was the lone freshman to be selected to the all-conference squad.

Haverford snapped Swarthmore's two-year run as **Hood Trophy** champions, earning a 11.5 to 7.5 victory. This spring men's tennis, women's lacrosse, and softball earned full points, while baseball split a point.



MARK DUZENSKI

Holly Baker '99 helped the women's lacrosse team reach its first-ever postseason play with 42 goals and 24 assists.



Above: The Swarthmore Project, now in its third year, brings two choreographers and six to eight dancers to campus for two weeks of residency to create new works. The artists return to campus during the academic year for performances and workshops. Here dancers rehearse a work by New York choreographer Wil Swanson.

Swarthmore Coach Karen Yohanan Borbee runs 10- to 15-year-old lacrosse players through practice. Borbee's First Draw day camp is among a half-dozen sports camps that teach everything from baseball to scuba diving.



SUMMERTIME

and the livin' is lively, boisterous, bustling, dusty, cacophonous—and just try to find a place to park.

Time was, between the end of Alumni Weekend and the beginning of freshman orientation you could shoot a cannon from Trotter to the train station and not be in much danger of hitting anything.

Boy, have things changed.

In part some activities, such as myriad sports camps and local dance school recitals, generate extra income for the College's budget through facility rentals. In part some meet the College's commitment to act in the best interests of the community, such as Upward Bound and the Bridges Project of the Chester/Swarthmore College Community Coalition. In part the campus was dotted with orange construction fencing as roofs were replaced, walks repaired, and the Trotter/North Campus project finished.

Add to this legions of visitors, some prospective students and their families, some doing family research in Friends Historical Library, some holding retreats, and weddings, wedding, weddings.

Since 1964 the College's Upward Bound program has helped prepare students from surrounding communities for post-high school education. Here Anthony Jones offers advice in business letter writing during the program's six-week residential school. This year 50 students took part.



Area residents enjoy a concert in the Scott Outdoor Auditorium. On one Saturday each in June, July, and August, “An Evening in the Arboretum” invites people to bring a picnic dinner, stroll the campus on a guided tour, and enjoy free entertainment.



Above: The Summer Community Learning Project, created by six rising juniors in the Education Program, invited the adolescent female relatives of College faculty and staff to take part in a two-week program that focused on building self-esteem and self-understanding. Here the girls perform a skit on having fun together to the song “Lean on Me.”





SUMMERTIME

Below: On an average day during the summer, the Admissions Office welcomes about 100 prospective students and their families. After information sessions and interviews, tours of campus—this one led by Hugh Weber '00—are de rigueur.



In June workers removed the flagstone from the walk in front of Parrish Hall. It and the upper part of Magill Walk were renovated to provide new drainage, to create a substructure that allows access for heavy equipment (such as fire trucks) without destroying the walk, and to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Some of the original stone from both walks was salvaged and used to rebuild Magill Walk.

SUMMERTIME

Music Professor John Alston runs members of the Chester Boys Chorus through vocal exercises during its six-week summer camp. Thirty handpicked boys rehearse for part of the day before karate lessons, tutoring in math and reading, swimming, and baseball. Alston's aim is to strengthen the boys' characters as well as their voices.





As is the case every summer, faculty—mainly in the natural sciences—conduct research aided by Swarthmore students. Seniors (l to r) Nancy Koven, Kim Lombardo, and Anjolie Idicula prepare laboratory rats for memory experiments in Psychology Professor Allen Schneider's (in background) lab.



Left: A Quaker-styled commitment ceremony joins Adrienne Pierce '84 (right) and her partner, Laura Goodwin, in the Scott Outdoor Auditorium. Every weekend is booked with weddings—and many newlyweds who want their formal portraits taken in campus gardens.

Below: Arts and crafts were part of day camps run by Future Stars, an organization that brings hundreds of youngsters to campus for sports training as well as weeklong sessions that combine artistic, athletic, musical, and cultural activities.



Is “good enough” good enough for Swarthmore?

Two views of the college admissions “rat race”

1 Barry Schwartz: Why selective colleges should become less selective—and get better students.

Jane is preparing for an elegant dinner party. For dessert she intends to make a Grand Marnier soufflé. She’s wondering whether all of the elaborate and involved steps in the recipe are really necessary. She’d like to experiment, to see if the work can be simplified. But she won’t experiment today. Today she’ll follow the recipe as she has before, because she wants a soufflé that works.

Jack is a subsistence farmer. He wonders whether a different method of cultivation might produce a larger yield. He’d like to experiment too. The problem is that his crops feed his family, and if his experiment fails, his family may starve. So he won’t risk it.

The point of these examples is twofold. First, there is no substitute for experimentation for unlocking the world’s secrets. But second, experimentation carries risks. If we actually care about results—a light soufflé or an abundant crop—we can’t always afford to experiment.

Yet the commitment to experimentation has enabled science to transform our understanding of the world. To cope with risk, science invented a domain for experimentation that is essentially risk free: the laboratory, a place in which the pure quest for knowledge can be separated from its applied consequences. Engineers can’t do experiments with the bridges they build. But they can do experiments in laboratories that lead to new techniques of bridge design.

Schools are—or should be—laboratories too. Students striving to achieve mastery should experiment with the materials they study, exploring new ways to think and talk and write about them. Even if these new ways prove unproductive, much will have been learned from the effort. Real mastery in the classroom demands risk taking; it demands experimenta-

tion. And when, on occasion, experiments in learning lead to new ways of thinking that are a real improvement on the old ways, everybody benefits.

Yet in many high school classrooms today experimentation is discouraged because so much is riding on the results. Among today’s high-achieving high school students, the future seems to depend on getting into selective colleges or universities like Harvard, Yale, Stanford—or Swarthmore. Despite the fact that these institutions now cost almost \$30,000 a year, every one of them has been experiencing an all-time record number of applicants, to the point that applications now outnumber places by more than 10 to one. (This year Swarthmore received more than 4,000 applications for fewer than 400 places. Harvard sifted through more than 18,000 to find 1,600 new students.)

Why such intense competition? It is probably a reflection of a widespread belief that the United States has become, in economist Robert Frank’s words, a “winner-take-all society.” For the few who make it to the very top, untold glories and unimaginable salaries await. For everyone else it’s going to be a life of perpetual struggle and uncertainty. With the perceived stakes this high, any rational person will do whatever is necessary to get a leg up on the competition. And of course this concern with being the “winner” doesn’t stop when the admissions letter arrives; it surely continues all the way through college, if not all the way through life.

Though a good deal is now being written about the unfortunate consequences of living in a “winner-take-all society,” the focus is characteristically on the losers. I’m focusing here on the winners. Those who apply to elite colleges and universities are hardly a random sample of our national high school senior class. They are the best students at their respective high schools. Almost every one of them is good enough to succeed at Harvard or Swarthmore, but only one in 10 will be given the chance.

What does such intense competition do to the kids who win? I believe it turns the high school class-





ELEFTHERIOS KOSTANS

Roll the dice ... *“In many high school classrooms today, experimentation is discouraged because so much is riding on the results,” says Barry Schwartz. He proposes that colleges like Swarthmore reduce the pressure on high school students by setting some basic qualifications for admission and then choosing the entering class at random. Schwartz is the Dorwin P. Cartwright Professor of Social Theory and Social Action and associate provost of the College. His most recent book is *The Costs of Living: How Market Freedom Erodes the Best Things in Life* (W.W. Norton). The views expressed in this article are his and do not reflect Swarthmore admissions policy.*

room into the equivalent of a subsistence farm, where the stakes are so high that students can't afford to take risks. Everything they do is calculated to produce better credentials—high grades, great SAT scores, impressive extracurricular activities. Such intense competition sacrifices risk taking, intellectual curiosity, and the desire for mastery on the altar of demonstrable success—a light soufflé. As a result, even though on paper these applicants look better than ever before, they may actually be learning less.

Thus by making themselves so competitive, our elite colleges and universities are subverting their own aims. They are admitting students who have done the wrong things for the wrong reasons in high school and who are likely to be disappointing students in college. Is there anything, other than hand-wringing, to be done? After all, these top schools can only admit so many students, and if 10 times that many want to come, competition seems inevitable.

Not so. There is a simple step that elite institutions could take that would dramatically reduce competition and thus change the distorted adolescence that many of our most talented students now experience. All that is required is this: When Swarthmore gets its 4,000 applications (or Harvard its 18,000), these schools should screen the applications only to decide which of the applicants is good enough to be admitted. In the case of Swarthmore, this might reduce the pool to, say, 2,000. Then, these 2,000 names could be placed in a metaphorical hat, and the “winners” drawn at random for admission. While a bright high school student might have to distort her life substantially to be seen as the “best” (if that is what admission to a place like Swarthmore requires), she won't have to distort her life nearly so much if all that is required is that she be “good enough.”

This modest proposal may seem preposterous at first, but it isn't. There is little doubt that a random fifth of the 2,000 applicants that survived an initial screening would make a fine first-year class at Swarthmore. While admissions professionals like to believe that they have the discernment and diagnostic ability to look at 2,000 wonderful applicants and pick 375 of the superwonderful from them, there is a large literature on human decision-making that makes clear that people in such positions are much more confident of their abilities than the data warrant. In other words, picking one-fifth of the qualified applicants at random might be just as good a way of producing a great class as the hair-splitting scrutiny of folders that is the present practice.

With a procedure like this, the desperate efforts by high school students to climb to the top on the backs of their classmates could stop. Schools could once again be places for experimentation. Learning could once again be driven by curiosity rather than competition. Adolescents could once again devote at least some of their time to figuring out what kind of people they are and want to be. The result, I'm convinced, would not be worse students but better ones. ■

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Robin Mamlet: Our personal approach is better—both for the kids and the College.

It's well-known that Swarthmore College is highly selective in its admissions—which simply means that we receive many more applications from qualified applicants than we have spaces to admit. This is nothing new for Swarthmore, which has been a competitive school for a very long time. Yet in recent years, preparing for admission to a first-rank college has come to be viewed as an academic grind that rewards dutifulness instead of fostering intellectual independence and curiosity.

No one—especially a dean of admissions—can deny that there is some truth to this. But the answer is not to randomize or mechanize the admissions process, but rather to make it even more personal and more focused on the strengths, talents, and startling human qualities that distinguish the best students from those who are merely building an impressive résumé. If college admissions is indeed a rat race for young people (and I think it is for many of them), then it is incumbent on our most competitive and selective schools to humanize their admissions processes so that these bright teenagers are seen less as numbers on a graph and more as the complicated, interesting, and sometimes vulnerable kids that they are.

Barry Schwartz is correct when he says that experimentation and risk taking are qualities that we should encourage in our young people, and Swarthmore's admissions process is designed to discover exactly these qualities among our applicants. The question is not whether students are “packaged,” but how well Swarthmore's team of admissions professionals and alumni volunteers can come to know them as individuals, finding and ultimately admitting those who are especially bright, intellectually engaged, and able to ask their own questions.

Admission to Swarthmore is indeed highly competitive. This fall's entering class—the Class of 2001—illustrates this better than almost any class in recent memory. The College received completed applications from 4,270 candidates, of whom we offered admission to 994. About 38 percent of those offered admission chose to enter Swarthmore, giving us an entering class of 382 students. (Note that 146 of these were admitted during our two early admissions periods in December and January, with the rest getting the word in late March.) Overall, fewer than one in 10 applicants for the Class of 2001 actually arrived on campus this month—and what a class they are.

Being a highly selective college requires those of

us in admissions to make complicated and difficult decisions about human beings. We all know that the best decisions are made by people who have the most complete information, and at Swarthmore this means more than just comparing high school grades and test scores to create statistical profiles of the candidates. It certainly means more than a thumbs-up or thumbs-down on whole groups of applicants—determining which are “good enough” to do the work at Swarthmore and which are not. An admissions program based on such a standard neither meets the needs of the anxious 17- and 18-year-olds who apply nor the needs of the College as an institution.

Swarthmore's admissions process tries to reflect the humane values of a Quaker-founded College by making every attempt to understand and respect each applicant as an individual. Our person-to-person approach makes this possible. While many colleges and universities have cut back on personal interviews, Swarthmore has added to its interviewing staff in recent years. Though we encourage prospective students to visit our beautiful campus, Swarthmore admissions deans also travel extensively to meet guidance counselors and prospective students in their own schools and communities. Each dean concentrates on a particular geographic region, gaining an understanding not just of what applicants from that region look like on paper but of where they are from and how their schools or communities have shaped them as individuals. In addition, hundreds of alumni interviewers around the world provide personal contact with prospective students, answering their questions about Swarthmore and helping us evaluate their potential contributions to the College. By the time an applicant's folder is complete and the deans' discussions begin, we have tried to build as full a picture of a unique human being as we can.

Because of our individual approach, we believe that we can discern the difference between the “packaged” candidate and the ones who are truly curious, intellectually excited, and academically able. We also come to know their schools, and in some cases, their teachers. The suggestion that applicants to Swarthmore are actually “learning less” while they “look better than ever before” ignores the intellectual risk taking and outstanding teaching found in many honors and advanced placement courses—both in public and private schools—all across the country. The difficulty comes (and this is another reason to keep the process on a human scale) when we find a bright, motivated student who comes from a less advantaged school where the teaching may not be as good. Then, to be true to our values, we have to dig deeper, learn more, and occasionally give greater weight to potential than to performance. The meritocracy of the SAT





ELEFTHERIOS KOSTANS

Read the folders ... *“Swarthmore’s admissions process tries to reflect the humane values of a Quaker-founded college by making every attempt to understand and respect each applicant as an individual,” says Robin Mamlet, who became dean of admissions in 1996. She previously served as director of admissions at The Lawrenceville School in New Jersey and as dean of admissions and financial aid at Sarah Lawrence College. The folders? Those are just A through Br...*

and the grade point average can only go so far in predicting success at Swarthmore. Some students who might not be deemed “good enough” under these objective criteria in fact turn out to thrive—even star—at the College.

As a liberal arts institution, we are particularly concerned that each entering class not merely be composed of intelligent, energetic, and highly qualified young men and women whose needs will be met by Swarthmore, but that these students in turn are able to meet the needs of the College itself. For us, admissions is a two-way street. Naturally we seek great students who will thrive in the intense intellectual atmosphere here, who will sustain the College’s academic excellence and make its classrooms come alive. But we also seek students who will bring their own gifts to Swarthmore and its many aspects, some of which are not strictly academic but all of which contribute to the gestalt of this singular small liberal arts college.

We need string players for the orchestra, Latin scholars for the Classics Department, and, yes, football players for the Garnet Tide. We need mathematicians, philosophers, artists, engineers, English speakers, and people for whom English is a second (or even a third) language. We especially need students with unusual personal qualities who will provide the spark for the satire magazine, the steady counsel of the resident assistant, the leadership for student government, or the compassion to become involved in the larger community beyond the gates of the College. And finally we need all kinds of diversity—socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and geographic. Such diversity not only brings a wide variety of perspectives and backgrounds to the College but also sends Swarthmore’s superb education, critical thinking skills, and ethical concerns back out there to serve a much wider world four years later.

College admissions offices—like it or not—are the gatekeepers of access to privilege in a society that, as Paul Fussell has correctly observed, has replaced Europe’s hereditary ranks and titles with a “mechanism of snobbery” based on who has gone to the best university. There is no question that we are engaged in a form of social engineering, especially in first-rank institutions like Swarthmore. Whether or not the proper mission of higher education is to re-engineer society itself—a question that is the subject of vigorous national debate—we must consciously and humanely “engineer” each entering class to assure that a Swarthmore education remains broad and rich and deep in all the ways that reflect our values as an institution. Last year more than 4,000 young people knocked on our door and asked to be a part of that.

“Good enough,” no matter where you set the bar, is not good enough for Swarthmore. As imperfect as human decision making is, it is better to touch the lives of individuals through their teachers, their schools, their communities, and their families—and through their own voices. Only after we have done everything possible to know and understand them can we make the difficult choices that must be made. ■

INVESTING IN SOCIAL CAPITAL

“Bowling Alone,” Robert Putnam’s argument that declining civic involvement is dangerous to American democracy, brought him to the White House—and to the pages of People magazine.

Sitting in his tidy office at Harvard’s John F. Kennedy School of Government, Robert Putnam ’63 doesn’t strike you as a “public intellectual.” In fact if it weren’t for the university press books and volumes of policy journals that line the narrow room’s bookshelves, you wouldn’t even guess that Putnam was an academic. With his red hair and closely trimmed beard that stretches in a thin line around the bottom of his face, Putnam more resembles an Amish elder than a professor of government.

But, as befits one of those rare scholars whose influence extends beyond academe and into popular public debate, “public intellectual” is a label Putnam now wears. He has been summoned to consult with President Clinton. (“It was exactly like a good Swarthmore seminar,” Putnam says of their meetings, “lots of intelligent discussion back and forth, people making strong arguments and listening to one another.”) His ideas have heavily influenced two of Clinton’s State of the Union addresses and were no doubt partially responsible for Clinton convening last May’s Summit for America’s Future in Philadelphia. His name is dropped frequently on op-ed pages and public affairs shows. He even received the imprimatur of *People* magazine, America’s ultimate arbiter of celebrity, which feted him in a fawning profile.

What accounts for Robert Putnam’s notoriety? What about him could simultaneously interest Bill Clinton

and *People* magazine? Believe it or not, his academic ideas. In 1993 Putnam published a deceptively slim volume titled *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Hailed a classic in *The New York Times Book Review*, *Making Democracy Work* represented the culmination of a two-decade study of regional government in Italy by Putnam and two colleagues. In the book Putnam came to the unsurprising conclusion that governments in the economically thriving North of Italy outperformed those in the economically backward South. All in all, this sounds like a solid if unremarkable work of social analysis. But what caused a stir was Putnam’s interpretation of this phenomenon.

Instead of settling on an economic or political explanation for the governmental performance discrepancy, Putnam sought a social one. Using a slew of statistical measures and a rigorously empirical analysis, Putnam reasoned that the superior quality of governance in Italy’s North was attributable to the region’s higher levels of something Machiavelli called *virtu civile* (“civic virtue”)—a public-spiritedness among citizens that manifested itself in their tendency to form small-scale, frequently nonpolitical associations. Borrowing from Tocqueville, Putnam argued that these civic associations furnish the citizenry with the trust and cooperation—quali-

ties that fall under the rubric of “social capital”—that are essential to strong democratic governments. In Italy’s North, people tend to belong to these associations, and in the South, they do not. “Good government in Italy,” Putnam concluded, “is a by-product of singing groups and soccer clubs.”

While it advanced an interesting and provocative thesis, *Making Democracy Work* remains a typically obscure academic book about a government and society in a foreign country. Though it was well-received among social scientists, this was still not the stuff of cultural celebrity. But Putnam’s study of Italy had convinced him that social capital is, quite literally, what makes democracies work. So what he did next made sense: He applied his theory of social capital to the United States.

Two articles, one brilliantly titled “Bowling Alone” (*Journal of Democracy*, January 1996) and another called “The Strange Disappearance of Civic America” (*The American Prospect*, Winter 1996), contained his initial observations. They were not pretty. Culling data from a variety of sources, including survey research and association membership rolls, Putnam concluded that over the past several decades, as the advent of television has privatized leisure time, Americans have been rapidly disengaging from civic life. As bowling league participation has declined, voter turnout has dropped and church attendance has faltered. Associations as diverse as

By Jason Zengerle ’96



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the League of Women Voters, the Elks Club, and the Red Cross have all experienced precipitous declines in membership.

He elucidates his premise late one afternoon as the corridor outside his office fills with students and professors calling it a day. "Fundamentally, my argument about America is that a variety of social and technological changes over the last generation have rendered obsolete a stock of Ameri-

can social capital, which is just jargon for saying that because of television, and two-career families, and divorce, and Wal-Mart, and a number of other factors, people no longer feel comfortable going to the PTA. The channels through which people a generation ago connected with their communities aren't serving the purposes that they used to. I think America is suffering from a social capital deficit." And without a solid base of social capital, Put-

Robert Putnam '63, Hon. '90, has touched a national nerve with his research on civic involvement.

"Because of television, and two-career families, and divorce, and Wal-Mart, and a number of other factors, people no longer feel comfortable going to the PTA. The channels through which people a generation ago connected with their communities aren't serving the purposes that they used to."

nam thinks, America might well be in trouble.

Putnam is not the first person to argue the importance of strong community ties. Political theorists from Aristotle to Tocqueville to communitarians today have been using abstract principles or anecdotal evidence to say largely the same thing. But Putnam, a social scientist by trade, is one of the first to articulate the point with statistical rigor. When Putnam frets that Americans are losing touch with their communities, he offers a copious amount of data to justify his concern. And when he predicts that this weakening of civic life bodes ill for American society, he can base his prediction on his two decades of research in Italy. While Putnam's argument undoubtedly has a certain gooey-eyed appeal—if we were only just more involved in our communities, the world would be a much better place—his brief for it is far from sentimental. Sifting through the myriad graphs and tables that accompany his writings (he presents more than 50 of them in just 185 pages of text in *Making Democracy Work*), it's hard to accuse Putnam of soft-headed speculation.

To say that Robert Putnam's image of the lone bowler has struck a chord with Americans would be a giant understatement. "I've written about 50 articles in my life—a lot of them intellectually better than this one," Putnam admits. "But this piece has gotten so much attention because so many Americans feel discontent about the state of their connections with their communities."

"Bowling Alone" has transformed Putnam from an academic (a prominent one, to be sure—he received an honorary Doctor of Laws from Swarthmore in 1990) into a certified public intellectual. His counsel is now sought not just by heads of state, but by prisoners in federal penitentiaries who write him to ask about the implications of civic engagement on their lives once they are out of jail. He overhears people in airport terminals debating about whether he is right or wrong. And inevitably his ideas take on lives of their own.

From the time "Bowling Alone" first transcended the academic realm and

began receiving national press attention, Putnam has been worried that his arguments might be misconstrued or used to advance causes or agendas with which he did not agree. "If you're talking in a seminar and somebody misunderstands your argument, you can correct them on the spot," Putnam explains. "But if you're speaking in a national context, you can't imagine going around and trying to correct

After a spate of universal acclaim, both liberals and conservatives realized that Putnam's theory had an elastic ability to skewer not just their opponents' shibboleths but their own as well.

everybody who's misunderstood this or that point." Recognizing the futility of micromanaging his theory, Putnam has resisted the urge to weigh in on its various interpretations. Given its initial widespread acceptance, it has had many.

Liberals originally embraced Putnam's theory because, as Putnam intended, it gave them a way to address an issue that conservatives had typically owned. America's social malaise was not the result of '60s excesses but could be attributed to something more ideologically neutral like a decline in community participation. Liberals also liked Putnam for pragmatic reasons. As Nicholas Lemann wrote last year in an analysis of Putnam's work for *The Atlantic Monthly*, "[It] suggests the possibility of solving our problems through rela-

tively low-cost association-strengthening local initiatives that don't require higher taxes."

Conservatives, to Putnam's chagrin, also seized on his theory—more proof, they said, that big government is the problem. If democracies ultimately derive their strength from local volunteer groups like bowling leagues and Shriners, then there's no need for a strong central government. Furthermore, conservatives like Francis Fukuyama argued, big government initiatives actually discourage civic involvement as the public sector crowds out the philanthropy of the private sector.

After its initial spate of universal acclaim, however, both sides recognized that Putnam's theory had an elastic ability to skewer not just their opponents' shibboleths but their own as well. Some liberals turned on Putnam when they realized that inherent in Putnam's idea of stronger communities was a criticism of the liberal rights revolution. While Putnam is quick to caution that he is not arguing for a return to the 1950s, his ideas do not exactly place a primacy on the autonomy of the individual. To some liberals, this is heresy. Katha Pollit, writing in *The Nation*, went so far as to label Putnam "square." Others played the guilt-by-association game, saying the most obvious manifestation of Putnam's cherished American proclivity for association is the militia movement. One such critic alluded to the bowling alley outings Timothy McVeigh once made with his co-defendant in the Oklahoma City bombing trial, Terry Nichols. "Perhaps we would all have been better off if Mr. McVeigh had gone bowling alone," he wrote.

Some conservatives, on the other hand, could not countenance Putnam's indictment of television, which, taken broadly, can be seen as an indictment of the free market they so cherish. As conservatives envision it, the free-market system is ultimately dependent on the same privatization of leisure time, brought about by technological advances such as television, that in the end Putnam blames for civic disengagement. If Americans were to spend more of their nights at PTA meetings or choir practices, then they would spend less time in front of

their televisions being exposed to advertisements or other cathode-ray inducements to consume. Volunteerism is fine, these conservative critics seemed to think, as long as it doesn't cut into profits.

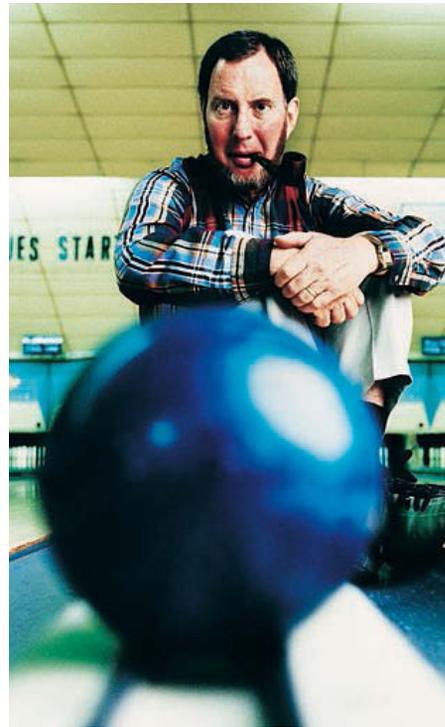
Thus conservatives soon went on the attack against Putnam, claiming that America's civic life was fine and that his theory was bunk. Many cited a June 1996 report by the Roper Center's Everett Ladd, which scrutinized Putnam's numbers and accused him of making statistical errors. Others relied on less authoritative sources, the most memorably absurd being a *Los Angeles Times* article headlined "Bowling Alley Tour Refutes Theory of Social Decline," which reported on several thriving LA bowling alleys where bowling league participation had declined but, because of birthday and office parties, "nobody bowls alone."

That all of this back and forth does not terribly bother Putnam is partial testament to an academic's commitment to the dialectical process of inquiry. "The academic conversation—whether I'm in a Swarthmore seminar room or the wider world of the academy—is not about someone announcing truth," Putnam says. "It's about people stating points of view, listening to what their opponents or what all other people have to say, and then reformulating their argument." To this end, Putnam wrote his two articles, which contained his initial and incomplete thoughts on civic America, to elicit both positive and negative responses that he could then process and incorporate into a book he is writing on the subject, *Bowling Alone: Civic Disengagement in America and What to Do About It*, due out in the coming year from Simon & Schuster. "Some people have made some important insights that have led me and forced me to develop my thoughts in different ways," he says.

But Putnam's openness to criticism is also attributable to a somewhat nonacademic characteristic: He has a social action agenda. While Putnam believes academics should still concern themselves with developing statistical techniques, learning formal models, and studying things that no one really cares about, he views his

work on civic life as part of a larger effort for social and political renewal in America—an effort in which he hopes others will enlist.

His work has sparked an academic growth industry in what can loosely be termed social capital studies. Since he wrote his two articles, a number of social scientists have subsequently launched their own projects on civic engagement. *The American Prospect*,



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"We need to think of new ways through which we can connect with our communities," Putnam says. "We need to reinvent the Boy Scouts."

which ran Putnam's second article, has seen its pages turn into a forum for a debate on civic engagement, with a host of prominent academics (including University of California at San Diego Professor Michael Schudson '69 and Swarthmore Associate Professor of Political Science Richard Valelly '75) weighing in with their views on the topic. All of this attention being paid to his theory—and the problem it seeks to address—pleases Robert Putnam. In this sense he is not an academic who stakes out his turf and then bristles at the thought of any intrusions onto it. Rather, Putnam is like a doctor who has diagnosed a deadly disease and is now hard at work searching for a cure. That others

have joined him in this search, and may indeed find a cure before he does, he finds heartening.

Putnam's current focus is on discovering new channels through which people can connect to their communities and build social capital, since his findings of civic decline suggest that the old channels—like Rotary Clubs and bowling leagues—no longer do the job. He looks back to the 1890s for inspiration. Then, as now, the country had just gone through a 30-year period of dramatic economic, social, and technological change; and, like today, the changes had left Americans searching for new civic institutions to replace the ones rendered obsolete by social transformations. Since Americans in the 1890s were able to build new civic institutions, like the Rotary Clubs and bowling leagues that have only recently faded away, Putnam has hope that Americans in the 1990s can do the same. "We need to think of new ways through which we can connect with our communities," Putnam says. "We need to reinvent the Boy Scouts."

Certainly Putnam's work on civic life has taken him in some interesting directions, away from what might be considered traditional academic terrain. He has founded a group called the Saguaro Seminar, which has brought together 30 people with an interest in civic life, ranging from Clinton adviser George Stephanopoulos to a community organizer from Oakland, Calif., to look for ways to replenish America's stock of social capital. He has also been traveling around the country to observe social capital formation at the grass roots. All of this, Putnam believes, is just part of his job. "I think the role of an academic is to listen carefully to what people have to say about their experiences," he explains. "An academic then has the ability to generalize from those experiences and share that message in forms that people elsewhere can hear." When you're appearing in both the *Journal of Democracy* and *People* magazine, you can be pretty confident your message is being heard. ⁿ

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Drive up to it unaware, and you'd have a hard time distinguishing WindSong from any of the other upscale condominium complexes in the Walnut Grove section of Langley, British Columbia. Here, developments with names like Chelsea Garden and Derby Hills spring from the earth like two-story, picture-windowed cash crops on the disappearing farmland of western Canada.

Look again, though. Steeply pitched glass roofs straight out of an Arthur C. Clarke novel peek above the facade. You park your car in one of the few visitor spots. Despite the building's ample size and the fact that downtown Vancouver is an easy 20-minute commute, there is no evidence of

UNDER ONE ROOF

*Traditional housing has lost its front porch.
Cohousing is bringing it back.*

By Beth Grubb and Chuck Luce

Photographs by Anil Kapahi



additional ground given over to motorized conveyances.

Someone has to buzz you in. Stepping into an entry foyer the size of a basketball court, you realize you're not in Kansas anymore.

But you're not in Oz, either. WindSong is a successfully functioning cohousing community, only the second in Canada. The 60 adults and 40 children who live here will tell you that life here is a world apart from the anonymity of the traditional housing

Deborah Hyman '81, at left with daughter Morgan, lives at WindSong, a cohousing community in Vancouver, B.C. Her "street" is a daylight-filled atrium that contains 17 other housing units.



developments. It is an intentional safety net of neighbors whose lives overlap as much in emotional space as in living space. It's all about repairing a hole in the human spirit that so many of us feel these days but can't quite put our fingers on: the kind of support and satisfaction that once came with extended families and small towns.

Can I Help You?

We arrive early on a Thursday afternoon, and we're not in the door 10 seconds before someone spots us. A handful of kids and adults scurry about, some hauling discarded furniture from a pile in the middle of the foyer to a pickup truck outside.

A man asks, "Can I help you?" He is friendly, but it's clear he aims to find out what these strangers are doing in the enclave. We ask if he can direct us to the home of the woman we've come to see, Deborah Hyman '81.

Passing through a set of heavy gray fire doors, we enter the heart of WindSong, one of two biosphere-like housing wings. Hyman greets us, dressed in T-shirt and shorts. She and her husband, David Wright, and their two daughters, Joanna, 8, and Morgan, 5, live in an 1,100-square-foot, two-story townhouse that shares walls with neighbors on either side. These contemporary row houses face a similar set across the "lane," a mere 18 feet from the Hyman-Wright front door.

Well above us, the immense glass roof we saw from the street covers this narrow pedestrian way, forming a daylight-filled atrium where children play and neighbors congregate. The front doors of all the units open onto the atrium, and the area around each entry is furnished to suit its owner's taste. Flowering plants, potted trees, benches, tables, Persian rugs, fabric awnings, and a smattering of artwork soften the clean lines of the building. Chairs and couches are grouped in alcoves. The atrium makes WindSong feel like a safe and nurturing place.

Hyman invites us into her house to talk, shooing her children and one of their friends out into the atrium. Their laughter and shouts fill the community space and spill in through the open windows.

One of the best things about living here, Hyman says, is the influence on the children: "My kids learn how to

cooperate and care for others. They live with people of different ages, religions, and points of view. They learn about diversity and live with it.”

Hyman takes us on a tour of WindSong, which includes two glass-covered wings joined by a large common area, underground parking for 60 cars, a garden, and a narrow yard. There are 34 housing units, ranging in size from one-bedroom flats to four-bedroom, three-story units with basements. The common areas include laundry facilities, meeting rooms, an office, an arts and crafts room, a guest room, and a playroom.

To one side of the foyer is the community dining room, with brightly colored tablecloths ready for the nightly potlucks. WindSong’s community kitchen is not yet finished. When it is, dinners will be cooked and served in some organized fashion that hasn’t yet been agreed on.

A leap of faith

Hyman and Wright are Americans planning to obtain joint U.S.-Canadian citizenship. She is a social worker, specializing in parenting education, and he is a landscape architect for the city of Langley.

In 1990 they moved from Syracuse, New York, to a suburb of Vancouver, where they bought a townhouse. But they felt isolated there, far from family and friends. Neighbors in their area seemed uninterested in getting to know each other. Two years later they saw an ad in an alternative paper



It took more than five years to plan and build the community, and every decision was made by consensus—a process Hyman’s husband, David Wright, described as “the longest and most expensive personal development workshop you’ll ever do.”

about a cohousing community that was forming. The concept intrigued them, so the couple attended one of WindSong’s planning sessions. What they found was a warm, caring group of people, although Hyman and Wright reached that realization at a different pace.

“For me, it was instant,” Hyman said. “David was more cautious.”

Wright had a professional and personal interest in the environmental aspects of the project, and he was tired of the stress and isolation he felt his family was suffering.

“It was easy to see WindSong met a lot of needs,” Hyman says. “It provided an extended family and support

with practical things, like child care and car pooling and cooking. We liked the idea of raising our kids with a model of adults working things out together.”

Making a leap of faith, they decided to sell their condo and invest the money in WindSong, becoming the group’s sixth equity partners. They rented an interim house in Langley with another equity couple, regularly attended long Sunday afternoon planning meetings and potlucks, and became well-acquainted with other families involved in the project.

Every decision was made by group consensus. Wright calls the planning phase of cohousing, which took this group 5½ years, a shedding process. “It’s the longest and most expensive personal development workshop you’ll ever do,” he says. “You learn to shed expectations. You learn you don’t need as much as you thought—as much space, privacy, things. I am more content than I’ve ever been. It seems so natural. We feed on these people, and they feed on us.”

Risky business

The risks along the way to realizing WindSong were monumental, Hyman says. Once a building site was located, eight founding households pledged their life savings and anything they could beg or borrow to buy the land, even though multifamily zoning had not yet been approved.

When approval came, it included

Balancing independence and community

Cohousing is a cross between a ’60s commune and an ’80s gated-community, but without the extremes of the former or the rigidity of the latter. Proponents try to balance the independence of private home ownership with the advantages of living in a clan-like extended family.

Cohousing communities are planned and organized by their residents. Dwellings are pedestrian-oriented and designed for efficiency. Residents share meals, child care, tools, gardens, and some common areas, and they commit to a time-consuming and sometimes tedious governance by consensus.

The concept began in Denmark in 1964 and quickly spread as a popular housing option there. In 1988 it was introduced in the United States by a married couple, Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durrett, both architects. They co-authored a book, *Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves*, which serves as a primer in North America. The couple is active in promoting cohousing with slide shows and talks.

There are currently two dozen such communities in the United States and Canada, with more than a hundred others in various planning stages.

It was easy to see WindSong met a lot of needs,” Hyman says. “We liked the idea of raising our kids with a model of adults working things out together.”

an unexpected restriction from the Ministry of Environment to keep a buffer of four acres of their property undeveloped because of a salmon creek that runs through it. That left fewer than two acres on which to build, impossible for the project they had planned up until then.

“At that point, we could have thrown up our hands in defeat,” Wright says with a slight grin. “We didn’t. We took on the challenge.”

“The group came up with a radically different and ultimately more costly design,” Hyman says. The homes would all be closer together, under a glass roof, parking would be underground, and the four acres of greenspace surrounding the creek would be preserved. The resulting atriums were an innovation the residents are now grateful for.

“We couldn’t have had quite as vibrant a group without the atrium,” Wright says. “It makes us all closer.”

But another sizable challenge faced the founders as construction of the project was completed. According to their agreement with the contractor, sales on all 34 homes had to close on the same day, but only 30 had been purchased.

“Everyone dug deeper,” Hyman said. She and Wright took out a large personal loan. “Everyone did that, and we came up with enough money to secure a group mortgage on the remaining homes.” The 30 families moved in on schedule in summer 1996, and within five months the other homes were sold and the members repaid.

Common ground

This summer, as the group celebrates its first anniversary at WindSong, one family has decided cohousing isn’t for them, but the rest of the group is intact.

Hyman describes the residents: “We are retired business people, New Age entrepreneurs, healing professionals, artists, bureaucrats, engineers, librarians, electricians, teachers, accountants, and stay-at-home parents. Members range in age from babies to retired people, with a high percentage of children under the age of 6. We have single-parent families, two-parent families, couples with no children, and singles. We are vegans and omnivores, Christians, Jews, secular humanists, and agnostics. And with all that variety comes a range of values and priorities regarding our material needs, parenting styles, food preferences, and political persuasions.

“Still, we manage to live together under one roof, share many meals in our common dining room, run cooperative child care that meets most of the needs of working parents, plan inclusive celebrations and rituals, and come to consensus over the many issues involved to maintain our physical and administrative structures.”

“For the most part,” she muses, “people here are positive. They see challenges as opportunities; they are proactive. These are people who are in charge of their destinies. They know that whatever happens in life, you have a choice.”

High maintenance

Life philosophies aside, we wonder aloud how the practical work of maintaining the facility is accomplished.

“Peer pressure,” Hyman says. Although most cohousing communities resist imposing rules about chores and involvement level, cohousers also tend to be people who want control over their environment. “Our inner sense of ownership and responsibility for the community makes it almost impossible to walk past a mess without cleaning it up.”

Hyman explains that just last week the group decided on a system for taking care of common areas and maintenance to the buildings. Each adult is expected to perform 10 hours a week of a chore chosen from an agreed-upon priority list. “This is still evolving. All cohousing communities have to work this out for themselves.”

We are surprised to learn there are no criteria for new members. No screening of values, politics, aesthet-



There are few rules at WindSong, but one is only two cats and two dogs per household.

ics, or even willingness to participate in the community. Not even background checks for financial or criminal histories.

Hyman explained the group's policy as "self-selective. Criminal activity would be so out in the open, those people wouldn't come here. This is an incredibly safe environment. Safer than any alarm system or guard dog. There are always people around."

"It's crime prevention through environmental design," Wright adds, pointing out that most crime prevention methods endeavor to keep people out and things locked up.

"In the United States and Canada, it's seen as a model of success to have your own home and business and to acquire things and protect them. The price we pay is that we've forgotten how to get along. We've lost the social skills needed to live together.

"Accepted theory is to keep people separated to avoid conflict," he says. "Conflict is not something to be afraid of. Conflict is an important part of life. Cohousing is the idea that there's no reason to be afraid of each other."

Living by consensus

Hyman could think of only two rules at WindSong: no smoking in the common areas and only two cats and two dogs per household (nobody has that many pets at this writing).

"You need a lot fewer rules in your life if you communicate," Hyman says. "Respect is more important."

An example, provided by Hyman: Suppose someone in the community is allergic to cats and someone else has a cat that is allowed to roam the common areas. "The first reaction is to make a no-cats rule. But here, we just talk about it, and we find a way everyone can live with it."

Then there's the trampoline story, a textbook case of participatory democracy. Three of the WindSong families brought trampolines with them when they moved in, and wanted to set them up in the common yard. Some of the parents, Hyman included, were adamantly opposed. A series of community meetings, with the children fully involved, ensued.

The kids in the group, who naturally wanted full access to the trampolines, were able to discuss the situation, propose solutions, block acceptance of ideas they didn't like, and



Being here has freed us up to think about what we want out of life, to look at where we want to be in five years. Our stress level is less than what we used to have."

work toward compromises. In the end, the impasse dissolved. Hyman and others became convinced that the tramps were safe enough for older children to jump on alone and for younger children when supervised. Guidelines for use were agreed on, and a trampoline expert was hired by the group to give lessons and safety tips. And everyone went away happy.

"That's the difference between consensus and a town-hall approach," Hyman says. "In a town hall meeting, everybody votes, but somebody goes home a loser. That's divisive."

Consensus-based decision-making seems very Quaker to Hyman. She says in college she attended Quaker Meeting, where there are no leaders and everyone has a voice, depending on how the spirit moves them. "Swarthmore people are interested in community," Hyman says. "I always expect to run into other people from

Swarthmore at cohousing conventions. So far, I haven't."

Members of the community contribute in their own ways, Wright tells us. He scrounged landscaping plants and materials to build the playground, which he designed. Hyman presented an abbreviated seder for Passover and a Hanukkah feast of potato latkes for her neighbors. A retired woman sometimes offers craft classes for the community children. Others have organized classes in ballroom dancing, spinning and weaving, and activities such as Christmas caroling, a New Year's Eve dance, and cabaret evenings. Families going on picnics or swimming outings take along extra children.

This is one of Wright's favorite aspects of cohousing.

"I began to realize that I wanted the spiritual growth that only came after I started to extend myself to the community," he explains. "And it's not only at home—I go into the outside world not nearly as defensive as I used to be."

Group parenting

We attend one of the nightly pot luck dinners, which takes place in the common house. Offerings range from pizza to a spicy African stew—and salads, lots of salads. Conversation is light and friendly, and we are introduced to the 25 or so people in attendance that night.

Suddenly, in midsentence, Wright jumps up and dashes out of the dining room to the adjacent outdoor playground to rescue a small child, not his own, who needs a boost climbing up a ramp.

With all these kids, we ask, is there some kind of group parenting standard? There must be different ideas about discipline and tolerance.

"We've had a lot of discussion about parenting," Hyman acknowledges. She spearheaded a parent discussion group that meets once a week. "Of course everyone has their own standards of what is OK and what is not. I tend to keep close tabs on my kids, but other parents are less cautious. My kids have a structured bedtime, while other kids' bedtimes are looser.

"After a lot of talking, we decided that any grown-up can say anything to any child about anything, as long as

they're respectful. If you see kids about to harm themselves or some property, you can feel free to restrain them, and if that doesn't work, you go get the parent." There's no hitting or swatting. And if the parent doesn't correct a behavior that you think needs correcting, you have to let it go.

"That was hard, at first," she says, since talking to another adult about their kids is not usually a comfortable role. "But it gets easier," she adds.

Hyman says she has discovered her parenting style has changed in her family's first year of cohousing. "I'm more relaxed," she says.

People in glass houses

"When you need privacy, you can get it," Hyman tells us. The houses are constructed with lots of soundproofing, blinds on all the windows, and a private deck in back of each unit, overlooking the greenspace and the Golden Ear Mountains.

"If you choose to move into a place like this, you're choosing to live in close contact with other people," Hyman says. "If something's going on—a couple's having trouble, or a family has some problem—you know it. But not in a gossipy way; it's not a soap opera. We all know we're going to go through these things."

Hyman says the openness creates a lot of trust among neighbors. It also serves to let the group know when someone needs help. And help is always offered. "It can be just moral support or offering to watch the kids so you can get away for a weekend."

Inevitably, cohousing has its drawbacks. For one, it's expensive—a three-bedroom unit at WindSong sells for just over \$200,000. Such communities tend to be upper-middle-class, although a movement to make cohousing available to lower-income families is developing. "There's more progress on that in the States, where there are many more cohousing communities than in Canada," Hyman says.

Of course cohousing is not for everyone. "You have to be able to give up your sense of boundaries," Wright says. "And you have to have courage to face things you don't know about yourself."

Hyman agrees that cohousing is sometimes hard work.

"It's not utopia," Hyman says. "You

don't like all of your neighbors all of the time. You still argue with your spouse, worry about your children, have to make mortgage payments, and put money away to replace the roof. Nobody expects to move here and have all their problems solved, but you have more support underneath you."

For Hyman, living at WindSong is an answer to the struggle of being a working mom and of needing a supportive, close connection to others.

"Being here has freed us up to think

about what we want out of life, to look at where we want to be in five years. Our stress level is less than what we used to have. We feel supported enough to think about a richer experience.

"I am happier now than I have been in years," she says. "Much of that has to do with living here." ■

Beth Grubb is editor of SUN Magazine, the alumni magazine of Seattle University. Chuck Luce is co-editor of Connecticut College Magazine.



WindSong co-founder Howard Staples and a friend.

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Cynthia A. Jetter '74
Philadelphia, Pa.

Connections Representatives

Chair of Connections: Don Fujihira '69
New York, N.Y.

Boston: Chair pending

Chicago: Chair pending

Los Angeles: Walter Cochran-Bond '70
Altadena, Calif.

New York: Jim DiFalco '82
New York, N.Y.

North Carolina: Priscilla Coit Murphy '67
Chapel Hill, N.C.

Paris: Chair pending

Philadelphia: Martha Salzmann Gay '79
Fort Washington, Pa.

San Francisco: Sohail Bengali '79
San Mateo, Calif.

Seattle: Deborah Read '87
Seattle, Wash.

Washington, D.C.: Chair pending.

*Elected to Council in 1997



STEVEN GOLDBLATT '67

Outgoing President Alan Symonette '76 (left) hands the gavel to new Alumni Association President Jack Riggs '64. Riggs, director of the Program on Energy and the Environment at the Aspen Institute in Washington, D.C., will serve a two-year term as Alumni Council leader.



1997-98 ALUMNI EVENTS

Volunteer Leadership Weekend
September 19-20

Fall Weekend
October 24-26

Black Alumni Weekend
March 20-22

Alumni College
June 3-5

Alumni Weekend
June 5-7

SWARTHMORE HAPPENINGS

Recent Events

New York City: Thirty alumni followed David Wright '69 to the North Fork of Long Island for a day of history, geography, and wine. They picnicked at the home of Eric Bressler '72 and Gail Wickham '73 before touring Hargrave Vineyard. In the city Jim DiFalco '82 and Rachel Preiser '91 led a visit to the Metropolitan Museum's Cloisters.

Debbie Branker Harrod '89 and Team Swarthmore entered the "Race for the Cure" for breast cancer in Central Park in September.

Durham, N.C.: Triangle-area alumni gathered for a poolside potluck picnic, organized by Priscilla Coit Murphy '67 and George Telford '84.

Philadelphia: The Philly Connection returned to the Philadelphia Museum of Art to see a photography exhibit, "India: A Celebration of Independence, 1947-1997."

Wickford, R.I.: The Pan-Twilight Circus attracted alumni from Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts. Anne-Marie Atkinson '82, Celia Gelfman '82, and producer Tom Sgouros '82 invited alumni to a Shake-

speare circus, *Prospero's Magic Island*, or *A Tempest in a Big Top*.

Seattle: Deborah Read '87 organized Seattle alumni into a trail maintenance work party on Cougar Mountain, one of the largest wildland parks in a U.S. urban area.

Upcoming Events

Philadelphia: Martha Saltzmann Gay '79 has sent out a full schedule, including tours of Dock Street Microbrewery and CoreStates Center and gardening in the city with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.

The Alumni Association wants to hear from you!

Please write to Jack Riggs '64, president, Swarthmore College Alumni Association, in care of the Alumni Office, 500 College Avenue, Swarthmore PA 19081-1397.

Candidates for Alumni Council: _____

Candidates for Alumni Managers: _____

Suggested alumni speakers for Alumni Weekend Collection and other campus events: _____

I'd like to be a resource for the Career Planning and Placement Office.

My job/career is: _____

Any issues for the Alumni Council to address? _____

Name/Class year: _____

limit in advance the extent of their treatment.

Do we really need physician-assisted suicide, then, or could its availability actually diminish the support offered to the dying and disabled? Even for those of us most ill, the precise time and manner of our death cannot be known with certainty in advance, and it can be affected by a wide range of options that require a patient's full knowledge and choice. Some will prefer a treatment with only a small chance of cure, choosing painful side-effects over certain death. Others will not. Some may choose operations or medicines to buy time in order to see a grandchild get married, or to restore the use of a limb for a while before death comes. Others would elect only rest and relief of pain.

The choice can and should be determined by a patient's values but can also be influenced by the hopelessness and helplessness that arise from depression, unrelieved pain, inadequate support, or overwhelming expense. The current market-driven orientation of health care has restricted patients' access to mental health care, long-term care, and home services, and it has increased out-of-pocket expenses. A choice of suicide in this setting is hard to accept as free and unencumbered.

A patient's choice can also be influenced by a physician's presentation of his or her options. If in the past physicians may have been too inclined to encourage interventions, the opposite is increasingly true. Faced by monthly printouts comparing his or her expenditures with others', and by arrangements that tie physician income to "performance" in restraining costs, doctors may subtly encourage less expensive options, least expensive of which is physician-assisted suicide, though the patient's choice can be steered in less dramatic, but still cost-saving, ways.

For those concerned with the autonomy of the very ill, physician-assisted suicide is the wrong cause. Instead, we should be struggling to preserve and expand what is necessary to allow true choice for these vulnerable people, people whose circumstances we may one day experience. We should overturn the financial incentives to undertreatment as much as those to overtreatment, support the expansion and improvement of care for physical and mental suffering, and assist the dying and dis-

abled to live as fully as they wish, rather than accepting that the best we can do is to hasten their death.

ELISHA H. ATKINS M.D. '72
Cambridge, Mass.

Offending the teacher-grader

To the Editor:

In his article on Honors, Professor Craig Williamson wrote, "We let Swarthmore instructors finally give grades to their students in Honors preparations because we no longer thought that this would undermine independent inquiry or free debate." Herewith a comment from an Honors student in the days before "people grew tired or irritated or skeptical about the Honors Program":

When I arrived at Swarthmore as a freshman, I had a thin skin of sophistication over a subcutaneous layer of defensive arrogance, these two covering a jellied core of immaturity. In short, I was unpromising. What success I enjoyed came largely in the Honors years through the patience of four teachers—two men and two women—who overlooked my prickly affectations and gently pushed me toward rational behavior. Of knowledge, Swarthmore was generously giving, and I am grateful. (I can still diagram the Battle of Agincourt.) But I am grateful for something rarer than knowledge—wisdom. It was wisdom that I absorbed because of close association with Mary Albertson, Elizabeth Wright, Phil Hicks, and Townsend Scudder. And that closeness flowered when, blessedly, they taught me but did not grade me, when friendship was not (to use an archaic phrase) apple polishing.

The architects of the "new" Honors don't think that grading will "undermine independent inquiry or free debate." Perhaps, but offending the teacher-grader in these days of struggle for fel-

lowships or grants is daunting indeed. Perhaps today's undergraduates are not as half-baked as I was and need only a good fill-up from the fountain of knowledge, but I'm glad that my association with my four mentors lasted for many years after college and that they kept on helping me in the accumulation of wisdom.

HEYWOOD HALE BROUN '40
Woodstock, N.Y.

Freedom in complexity?

To the Editor:

I was very glad to learn about the "new" Honors Program in the June *Bulletin*. The student profiles were especially useful in understanding it. It seems to me that the principal differences between the original (pre-1968) Honors Program and the current one are in (a) a very clear structure vs. a very complex structure—if any at all; (b) a program covering the entire junior and senior years vs. one that covers half that; (c) an individualistic approach to education vs. a more collaborative one; and (d) no grades vs. grades.

I felt enormous freedom to learn in Honors in the 1950s despite the apparently rigid structure, but I presume that it is just this complexity and flexibility that gives students the same feeling today. It must be maddening for some faculty and administrators, however.

I also had my freedom for two full years rather than for an apparent hopscotch year's worth of study within a two-year period. Finally—but perhaps most of all—I felt that freedom because there were no grades. The current collaborative opportunity I think is excellent, and as you say very plainly, something new was needed or there'd be no Honors Program at all.

CHARLES A. MILLER '59
Lake Forest, Ill.

One last word on the bicycle guy

To the Editor:

When I saw that picture in the March issue [of the man on the bicycle—see also "Letters," June 1997], I did not think about Bob Bartle '48 [who thought it was himself] at all. Of course it is Frank Johnson '44, who started out in my class.

JUERGEN HEBERLE '45
Eggertsville, N.Y.

Charlie Newitt '44 called to concur. Sorry, Bob.—Editor

Letters to the Bulletin

The *Bulletin* welcomes letters concerning the contents of the magazine or issues relating to the College. All letters must be signed and may be edited for clarity and space. Address your letters to: Editor, *Swarthmore College Bulletin*, 500 College Avenue, Swarthmore PA 19081-1397, or send by e-mail to bulletin@swarthmore.edu.

Magician of the Andes

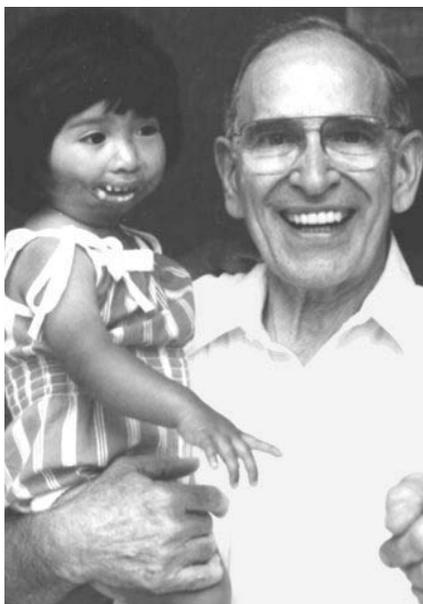
By rebuilding faces, plastic surgeon Thomas Koury '45 helps to rebuild lives.

Twice a year at six-month intervals, 12 or 13 traveling companions board a plane in Washington, D.C., bound for Ecuador. They surely present an unusual group of passengers, each carrying two large boxes and a suitcase, their baggage allowances exploited to capacity. Anything to declare? Well—how about toothpicks, green ink, stuffed toys, or electrocoagulators? Length of stay? Usually about two weeks. Purpose of trip? To drastically and wonderfully alter the lives of Andean children whose futures otherwise would look bleak. The team is led by Swarthmore biology major Dr. Thomas Koury '45.

Koury, a maxillofacial/reconstructive surgeon, has been in full-time practice at Washington General Hospital since 1959, where he is founder and chief attending surgeon at the Clinic for Children with Special Needs. He came to Washington General after Swarthmore, via the dental and medical schools of Temple University; Veteran's Hospital in Philadelphia; and the Marine Corps. He also serves on the faculty of Georgetown University, where in 1986 he trained a Peruvian doctor in plastic surgery. After returning to Peru, the young South American doctor found himself overwhelmed by the number of children needing treatment for cleft palates and other congenital deformities and asked Koury for help. In 1989 Koury took his first team to South America and continued to make biannual visits to Peru until 1993, when a close encounter with a terrorist bomb in Lima caused him to seek a safer location in Ecuador.

During the typical seven to 10 days of work there, the team performs about 60 operations. Coordinating each trip to Latin America is no mean feat; the preparation takes six months of tireless effort. Not only does Koury have to assemble a team of surgeons and operating-room personnel, all of whom are willing to coordinate their vacation time and fund their own airfares, but he also has to provide all the necessary supplies. At his side throughout the entire undertaking is his wife, Elizabeth, who, says Koury, "really does all the work."

The trips are funded through a non-profit foundation, "I Care—Children of the Andes," formed by Koury and his wife in 1989, and by support from the Rotary Club (Koury is chairman of the international lane of the Bladensburg



Thomas Koury '45 with patient Juana Segura. Juana was brought to the United States for extensive surgeries.

chapter). Using donations of money, pharmaceuticals, and leftover supplies from four local Maryland hospitals, they obtain all the equipment needed to furnish a fully functioning operating theater. They fill their two-car garage with monitors, electrocoagulators, oxymeters, and electrocardiograms, not to mention sheets, gowns, gloves, and sutures. They even take their own large supply of toothpicks, each of which Elizabeth painstakingly sterilizes and seals in plastic wrap—they are used, after being dipped in green ink, to mark the areas of incision on the child's face. The team also takes a supply of stuffed animals collected and repaired by a young Girl Scout in Gaithersburg, Md. The team members—Koury and his wife, two other plastic surgeons, two anesthesiologists, four operating-room nurses, a recovery-room nurse, a helper, and an interpreter—transport the supplies in boxes to their quarters in Ecuador, where the army usually houses, feeds, and provides them with hospital space. Koury says, "It's quite a cooperative effort; the military acts like the public health service there, so it's ideal."

The doctors' visits are advertised in advance on radio and television, so on arrival they are typically confronted with 150 to 200 potential patients, all of whom they screen to select a group of

60 or so that they will operate on. Those from wealthier backgrounds, also seeking to enjoy the high level of skill and technology that Koury's group offers, are eliminated. The children chosen, he says "are all mountain children from very poor environments, living in conditions with no running water, no cooking facilities other than charcoal fires."

Working 12- to 14-hour days, Koury's first priority is to treat facial deformities that would prevent a child from later making a living or from taking his or her place in society—such as open congenital deformities, large birthmarks, deformities of the eyelids, nose, or lips, and severe burns; cleft palates, which distort speech; and also deformities of the hand that prevent the victim from working. Koury does not perform purely cosmetic surgery on the children. In some cases, if the team cannot help a patient—for example someone requiring major cranial-facial surgery—the foundation pays for the child to be brought to the United States, put in the care of a foster family, and operated on here.

Koury is seeking to widen his field of action to include other poor countries such as Bulgaria and Sierra Leone. In spite of the complications arising from lack of time, having to pay one's own way, and work for no monetary rewards, he has a huge backlog of doctors and nurses who wish to serve with him. The experience is an eye-opener for team participants, who have included as nonmedical team members Elizabeth Koury's children, Samantha, 27, and Gregory, 24. Transported from the pristine conditions of U.S. hospitals to a relatively primitive hospital environment, they have to learn to improvise. "We've made arm restraints from sanitary napkins, used Caesarean section drapes for children's bed sheets," says Elizabeth Koury. "I tell the nurses, 'You use your brains, and you find a solution to your problem.'" And they know that the children depend on them. "These children are grateful, beautiful children," says Elizabeth. "They don't want perfection, just improvement. And when the nurses see these little children who are not going to get surgery unless it's free, and it gets to 6 p.m., and we say, 'Shall we finish up?' they say 'No.' It really changes their lives." Not to mention the lives of all those children of the Andes.

—Carol Brévert

In search of a feminist jurisprudence

Cynthia Grant Bowman '66 is a leader in an emerging field of law.

In 1991 sexual harassment was in the air. That was the year Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill faced off and the country took sides. Cynthia Grant Bowman '66 was aware of the debates taking place in homes and workplaces, but it took a call from *Newsweek*—and a personal encounter—to get her engaged.

The *Newsweek* reporter wanted to know whether Bowman, a law professor at Northwestern University, thought a woman could take legal action if she was harassed on the street. “I stumbled my way through the interview,” she remembers, “thinking up lawsuits as I went along.” Shortly thereafter Bowman was stopped at a red light, when a car full of men drove up next to her, calling out and jeering. “I rolled up my window, felt all the things women feel—fear, discomfort, degradation.”

Bowman, a scholar and teacher in the emerging field of feminist legal theory, realized that street harassment could have a real, damaging effect on its target and that there appeared to be little or no legal protection from it. Her ensuing study resulted in the publication of her article “Street Harassment and the Informal Ghettoization of Women” in the January 1993 *Harvard Law Review*—and interviews with the *Chicago Tribune*, ABC News, and National Public Radio. The time was right, and the public was willing to consider something that two years earlier might have been dismissed as trivial.

Street harassment is among many issues pertinent to women that are being re-examined through the lens of feminist legal theory, also called feminist jurisprudence. Cynthia Bowman began her work in this field in 1989, when a group of female law students approached her about teaching a course on the subject. She agreed—on the condition that her students would help her design the course. The class, which was held in a Swarthmore-style



Cynthia Bowman challenges man-made law as a professor at Northwestern.

seminar format, was a success, and the students surprised Bowman with some of the issues they introduced. The course led to one of the main casebooks on the subject, *Feminist Jurisprudence: Taking Women Seriously*, co-authored by Bowman with Mary Becker and Morrison Torrey and published in 1994. In addition to the variety of legal theories espoused by feminist legal scholars—formal equality, dominance theory, hedonic feminism, pragmatic feminism, socialist and postmodern feminism—the book covers a wide range of issues, including rape, sexual assault, domestic violence, abortion, surrogate mothers, pornography, prostitution, and sexual harassment in a variety of settings.

Cynthia Bowman came to law as a second career. After graduating from Swarthmore with a degree in political science, she received a Ph.D. from Columbia in political theory, which she taught for six years at the Illinois Institute of Technology. Then, in search of more job security than the liberal arts

could offer, she earned a J.D. from Northwestern University in 1982 and practiced law for five years before joining the Northwestern faculty as a clinical professor in 1988.

Lately Bowman's academic interests have drawn her into an examination of recovered memories of childhood sexual abuse and their treatment in the legal system. Bowman advocates a balanced approach to court cases relying on recovered memories, in which judges and jurors accept the possibility of valid repressed memories, treating them like other memories, which can be accurate or flawed.

In connection with this, she has also advocated limitations on third-party lawsuits—where someone accused of abuse sues a therapist who has helped a patient recover memories of abuse. Bowman thinks third-party lawsuits are an inappropriate use of the legal system. When recovered memories are accurate, these suits allow an abuser to disrupt a victim's relationship with her therapist. If a “recovered” memory is false, she believes other avenues to justice are more appropriate: A client can sue her therapist if the therapist used heavy-handed techniques in creating a false memory; or, if the patient insists on the veracity of her memory, the wrongly accused party can sue the alleged victim directly. Bowman also worries that allowing third-party suits could deter therapists from taking on abuse clients.

Cynthia Bowman spends her “free” time on a variety of projects related to the legal rights and welfare of women. She is also at work on a scholarly project concerning the images of battered women who kill their abusers—not only in case law but also in history, literature, criminological studies from the turn of the century to the present, and in contemporary closing arguments.
—Nancy Lehman '87 & Katie Bowman '94

And justice for all

Public interest lawyers Arthur Bryant '76 and Jill Chaifetz '86 litigate for principles.

Working to effect a positive change in people's lives and society. Simple to say. Harder to do. But it describes the work of public interest lawyers Arthur Bryant '76 and Jill Chaifetz '86, whose preparation, paperwork, time, and effort go into legal cases that can yield rewards, but sometimes also heartache.

Arthur Bryant is executive director of Trial Lawyers for Public Justice (TLPJ) in Washington, D.C. Founded in 1982 with the help of consumer advocate Ralph Nader, the international public-interest law firm is an advocacy group and membership organization comprising more than 1,500 attorneys around the world who work with six TLPJ staff attorneys to handle the cases that private lawyers wouldn't normally take. Bryant says the cases TLPJ takes on usually raise important issues of principle and "hopefully have an impact and change people's lives for the better."

From an early age, Bryant says he was "precocious about politics." He leafletted for Lyndon Johnson at age 10 and worked on the campaigns of Eugene McCarthy and Bobby Kennedy in his early teens. He says he identified with the efforts to stop the Vietnam War, but when he observed the protesters at the 1968 Democratic Convention being beaten by police, he decided that this sort of politics would not be for him and turned to the

legal process.

"In politics it's about compromise, not fighting for principles. You fight until you can cut the best deal you can," says Bryant, who graduated from Harvard Law School in 1979. "Politics focuses on political power and who has more of it. In court you could lose, but you focus on right and wrong—the merits, not who they liked more."

TLPJ handles cases ranging from civil rights and consumer safety to employment discrimination and toxic torts (suits in which someone is wronged by exposure to toxic material). Private attorneys working on TLPJ cases receive reduced fees and contribute a portion of them to the organization.

"The common theme of the cases we take is that they are precedent-setting cases of social significance where trial lawyers' skills can have an impact," says Bryant. "This is not a job for the person who likes to specialize. You need to be a generalist at a refined level."

Although administrative and fund-raising responsibilities are part of Bryant's daily routine, he spends the majority of his time litigating cutting-edge cases. In the past few years, Bryant has served as co-counsel for the plaintiffs in the Title IX lawsuit against Brown University, which found the university liable for sex discrimination against women in its intercollegiate athletic program. He was also co-counsel for the



Arthur Bryant '76



Jill Chaifetz '86

plaintiffs in *Cox v. Shell Oil*, which resulted in the country's largest property damage settlement—\$950 million—to people whose homes were damaged by faulty plastic plumbing. And in the first state case of its kind, Bryant persuaded the New Hampshire Supreme Court to hold that crash victims could sue the Ford Motor Co. for not installing airbags in its cars.

Named this year as one of the nation's top young public sector lawyers by the magazine *The American Lawyer*, Bryant says he even finds cases by watching TV or reading newspapers. "Occasionally, I see something that's outrageous and I know I can do something about it. It's a joy to work on issues that make a difference in people's lives," says Bryant, who is married to poet Nancy Johnson and has a 2½-year-old son, Wallace.

Bryant believes our society needs an organization such as TLPJ because "there are still large injustices in the world that need to be fought, and the general market of lawyers has a focus on making profits. Our focus is on doing justice."

"I've always wanted to help make the world a just place," says Jill Chaifetz, legal director of The Door: A Center of Alternatives in New York City. "Many people in our country don't get the minimum of what they need. As an attorney I found I could use my skills to make a big difference in people's lives."

The Door is a five-story renovated warehouse in midtown Manhattan, sort of a one-stop shopping facility for people age 12 to 20 whose needs are not being met by the government, their families, or other social service agencies. The multiuse cen-

ter, founded in 1972, provides medical and mental health care, substance abuse prevention, social services, entitlement assistance, educational and vocational training programs, job placement—and legal services.

The majority of The Door's legal cases, which Chaifetz oversees, involve issues of immigration, primarily undocumented young people; family law, such as foster care, paternity, child support, divorce; neglect and abuse issues; housing and public benefits issues such as food stamps and Medicaid eligibility.

Chaifetz and her staff of three lawyers also offer preventive services through pamphlets and in educational workshops given to youth organizations across New York City. "We really encourage the clients to understand how the system works and how they can help themselves," Chaifetz says. The legal division closed more than 700 cases in 1996, and Chaifetz expects almost 800 this year.

Chaifetz graduated from New York University Law School in 1989 after majoring in political science at Swarthmore. She first joined The Door as a volunteer attorney and in 1992 was hired to create the legal services center. In addition to her staff, she coordinates the work of 65 volunteer attorneys and law students.

A typical day for Chaifetz includes court hearings or meetings with clients outside the building. In the

afternoon there are staff meetings and problem-solving issues to be dealt with. In the evening hours, there is intake of new clients. All her professional activities are intertwined with her personal ones, which include 20-month-old triplets Isaac, Leila, and Milo. Chaifetz, who lives in New York City shares the credit of raising the children with her "amazing husband," Daniel Seltzer.

One of the hardest parts of her job at The Door is finding funding to continue to serve her clients. "The need is so great," Chaifetz says. "We are one of only two organizations in NYC to serve kids with these legal problems, but finding funding is a constant challenge. I'm always looking for innovative sources for funding."

Chaifetz says it's rare that a client comes to The Door with just one problem, and recognizing the enormity of a young person's problems can be humbling and at times emotionally draining. But she emphasizes for herself and to her staff the importance of talking about or dealing with their own concerns.

"I tell the staff not to put their grief on the client but also not to bottle it up. I go to other attorneys, and we talk about recognizing it and dealing with it," she says. "It's not easy to hear hard stories. But if our actions put a client in a safe place, help her get enrolled in school, get a job legally, and support herself, it's worth it."

—Audree Penner

Recent Books by Alumni

We welcome review copies of books by alumni. The books are donated to the Swarthmoreana section of McCabe Library after they have been noted for this column.

Jacqueline Carey '77, *Wedding Pictures*, Chronicle Books, 1997. Told through dialogue and full-color paintings, this novel follows the commuter romance of 30-ish couple Bonnie, an attorney, and Kip, a corporate consultant, as they wend their way through the uncertain road to matrimony.

Joshua Foa Dienstag '86, *Dancing in Chains: Narrative and Memory in Political Theory*, Stanford University Press, 1997. Analyzing three major figures in the history of political thought—Locke, Hegel, and Nietzsche—Dienstag argues that political philosophers have commonly presented their readers with a narrative, rather than a logic, of politics.

Barbara E. Walvoord, Linda Lawrence Hunt, **H. Fil Dowling Jr. '57**, and Joan D. McMahon, *In the Long Run: A Study of Faculty in Three Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Programs*, National Council of Teachers of English, 1997. This study, based on interviews, questionnaires, and other information from 700 faculty members involved in writing-across-the-curriculum courses, reports results not so much in terms of teaching strategies but rather changes in teaching philosophies.

Ross Eckler '50, *Making the Alphabet Dance: Recreational Wordplay*, St. Martin's Press, 1996. In this book of word manipulations, Eckler presents an array of alphabetical mind-benders and conundrums, with examples ranging from acrostics and palindromes to word squares and isograms.

Harley Erdman '84, *Staging the Jew: The Performance of an American Ethnicity, 1860-1920*, Rutgers University Press, 1997. Uncovering the roots of Jewish characterization in popular culture, Erdman sheds light on how they reinforced the stereotyping of the day and on the groundbreaking actors and actresses who changed the mold.

S. James Rosenfeld, **Mary H.B. (Boyce) Gelfman '57**, and Linda F. Bluth, *Education Records: A Manual*, EDLAW Inc., 1997. Written to meet the needs of education administrators, teachers, parents, educational support personnel, and attorneys, this manual is a working tool for those having questions about the applicability of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Richard Martin '67, *Versace*, Universe Publishing, 1997. In this volume of text and photographs, Martin presents the fashions of the late Gianni Versace, "at once as the designer of the Byzantine Madonna, of the performer Madonna, of modern sportswear infused with Ital-

ian Renaissance pageantry, of 1930s-inspired slinky gowns, and of an entirely new 1990s couture vision."

Sharon Bertsch McGrayne '64, *Blue Genes and Polyester Plants: 365 More Surprising Scientific Facts, Breakthroughs, and Discoveries*, John Wiley & Sons, 1997. Which came first: the flower or the insect? What male mammal makes breast milk? The answers to these and other facts about everything from blue roses to deep earthquakes are contained in this overview of modern science.

Stephen Nathanson '65, *Economic Justice*, Prentice Hall, 1998. What must society do in order to be economically just? Nathanson presents philosophical reflection and analysis to help arrive at a better understanding of the demands of justice.

Pamela Miller Ness '72, *Driveway from Childhood*, Small Poetry Press, 1997. This limited edition chapbook offers, in haiku, snapshots of the poet's memories of growing up. Copies are \$5 postpaid and may be ordered from the author at 33 Riverside Drive, Apt. 4-G, New York NY 10023.

Susan L. Cocalis and **Ferrel Rose '83** (eds.), *Thalia's Daughters: German Women Dramatists from the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, Francke Verlag, 1996. This collection of critical essays offers an overview of

women's dramatic production and their often overlooked role in the history of the German stage. Also included are interpretations of individual works.

Maxine Frank Singer '52, *Exploring Genetic Mechanisms*, University Science Books, 1997. Molecular analysis has only begun to reveal the varied genetic tactics that account for the diversity of organismal form, habitat, behavior, and function. This book aims to introduce to students and scientists how such complexity is being analyzed.

Nancy Hope Wilson '69, *Helen and the Hudson Hornet*, Macmillan Books for Young Readers. The Hudson Hornet might have cracked seats and broken windows, but when 5-year-old Helen sits inside it she can drive anywhere. When she learns that a stranger wants to buy it, she worries she will never ride in that old car again.

Claudia Whitman and **Julie (Biddle) Zimmerman '68**, *Frontiers of Justice, Volume 1: The Death Penalty*, Biddle Publishing Company, 1997. This anthology presents essays by people who have been touched by capital punishment personally (inmates, their families, and their victim's families) or professionally (law, criminal justice, government, religion, journalism, and advocacy) who deplore the use of "legalized killing" to solve America's criminal justice problems.

Swarthmore and the NSA

By Elizabeth Weber '98

The year was 1947. With the end of the Second World War and the return to civilian life, Swarthmore's student body grew to unprecedented numbers. Half of the men in the student body were veterans of the armed forces. The cost of a year's room and board had risen to \$600. And at the beginning of that September, 50 years ago, Paula Adler (Golden) '48, Bobbie Darrow (Hays) '48, and Larry Weiskrantz '49 attended the first Congress of the U.S. National Student Association (NSA), in Madison, Wis.

"We went to the meeting with unqualified skepticism," Weiskrantz said later in the *Phoenix*. "We returned, however, with overflowing enthusiasm and a deep conviction that an organization had been formed that could play a significant role in the progress of American education."

The goals of the convention were twofold: Students wrote a constitution for the association and also attempted to map out its goals for the coming year. Convention delegates discussed the formation of an information service to educate student councils about each other's actions, drew up a Student Bill of Rights, and argued about how strongly the NSA should encourage actions to ease racial segregation and discrimination.

Even before the convention began, controversy raged over an important question: Should the NSA affiliate with the communist-dominated International Union of Students, which had been formed in Prague in 1946? It was agreed to send an American delegation to Prague the following year to enter membership negotiations with the IUS, but in March a communist coup in Czechoslovakia and the subsequent crackdown on the Czechoslovakian Student Union—an action applauded by the IUS—had settled the question. The 30 Swarthmore students who had applied to be members of the negotiating team for the NSA were doubtless disappointed to miss

a chance for a trip to Prague, but Swarthmore had found other ways to become involved with the NSA.

The student body had voted to affiliate with the NSA in November 1947, and at the organizational meeting of the Pennsylvania Region of the NSA that December, Swarthmore's delegation agreed to host the region's race relations clinic "to investigate, compile, and disseminate information concerning racial and religious discrimination in the colleges of the Pennsylvania Region and to recommend programs of action which can alleviate such discriminatory practices." A Swarthmore freshman, Ralph Lee Smith '51 was elected regional publicity director, and Newt Garver '51 was chosen to head the committee to investigate fund drives for international relief by colleges in the region.

The regional race relations clinic was conducted by members of Swarthmore's own Race Relations Club, which had been lobbying the College for increased minority enrollment. Its members surveyed every college and junior college in the state about discriminatory practices and recommended increased educational efforts among their fellow students.

Swarthmore continued its active role in the Pennsylvania Region of the NSA over the next several years. The race relations clinic remained at the College, and Ken Kurtz '51 succeeded Smith as regional publicity chair after Smith became regional president, a position Kurtz held the following year. Both moved on to run for positions at the national level—Smith was national publicity chair in 1949–50, and Kurtz ran unsuccessfully for national president the following year. But by the fall of 1948, the *Phoenix* noted, "Despite the fact that the NSA represents the entire Swarthmore student body, the actual participation in its programs came from only a very few students.... At the Albright (College) regional meeting just held, it was quite apparent that Swarthmore had lost the high place she once held in the Pennsylvania region."

Smith attributes this decline to a more general loss of enthusiasm for national and international action across the country as the "veterans'

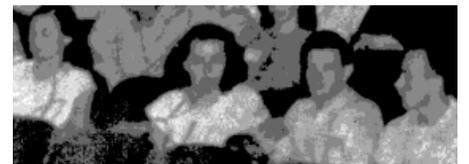
generation" neared graduation. "There was a tremendous feeling that a great war had been fought, and now came the peace, and we wanted to be involved.... I regard the veterans' generation at Swarthmore and nationally as the last of the Victorians," he says. "We had a tremendous faith in progress, faith in rationality in the long run, faith that you could accomplish something by working within the system. The weakness of the NSA was that it could never develop a domestic program that was interesting. Student governments just didn't know what to do with it between meetings."

Indeed coverage of the NSA in the *Phoenix* shows some of this tension between national and local actions. At the national level, the organization



STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN

Fifty years ago, three Swarthmore students helped to launch the National Student Association, but the organization's post-war idealism was ultimately swept aside by the realities of the Cold War.



issued resolutions on such things as loyalty oaths, student rights, discrimination in American colleges, and the Korean War. It investigated college athletics and organized a nationwide system of student discount cards. The national organization also negotiated with the International Union of Students to arrange student exchanges and organized summer tours of Europe.

By contrast the regional NSA organized student music and arts festivals, sponsored workshops on how to make student councils run more smoothly, lobbied against Pennsylvania laws requiring loyalty oaths from professors, and worked to make absentee voting legal in Pennsylvania.

"Most of Swarthmore's participation in the NSA was attending meetings and conventions, and, on one or two occasions, hosting those conventions. The appeal was that it had a strong international aspect," said Frank Sieverts '55.

Sieverts believes that Swarthmore's participation in the NSA brought something unique to the Pennsylvania region. "There was an undercurrent of civic courage involved," he says. Sieverts was elected regional president in his junior year, and he brought the regional conference to Swarthmore in December 1953. "This was the era of Joe McCarthy," he explains. "Swarthmore had a reputation as a liberal campus, upholding the cause of liberty in the face of all this. We had professors who were refugees from Berkeley and the (California) loyalty oaths and professors who were refugees from Germany. Swarthmore was an oasis of free thought, and there was a sense that we had a responsibility to bring that spirit to the NSA."

After the mid-'50s Swarthmore's leadership in the NSA dissipated. While students continued to attend regional and national conferences, they generally turned their attentions to other things. When the NSA experienced financial difficulties in the early 1950s, small groups within the national leadership knowingly accepted financial support from foundations that were fronts for the Central Intelligence Agency. The CIA and the State

Department were taking a keen interest in student political movements during the Cold War, and, according to a history of the NSA by Angus Johnston, the NSA leaders who were "in the know" (apparently not all were, especially those on the domestic side) were asked to provide information on foreign student activists.

The CIA relationship was exposed in the February 1967 issue of *Ramparts* magazine. At Swarthmore the student council resolved to withhold its annual dues "pending a complete investigation of NSA's effectiveness on our campus and its involvement with the Central Intelligence Agency." In the *Phoenix* Barry Wohl '69, sponsor of the resolution, explained what he had learned about the NSA-CIA connection and suggested a course of action. The CIA had been strongly influencing which students were selected to lead the national organization for the previous 15 years, he wrote, suggesting that "the next step is to encourage other small, liberal schools to follow our lead, withdraw from NSA, attend the Congress with us, and rejoin only when the NSA makes itself more democratic."

Swarthmore sent Bruce Campbell '70 to the summer 1967 NSA convention. Upon his return he reported in the *Phoenix*: "I did gradually become convinced of one thing: that the question of Swarthmore's membership in NSA is not very important. Swarthmore's dropping out of or remaining in NSA will obviously not strongly affect either institution." A vote by the student body in November was representative of Campbell's ambivalence: 211 students voted to withdraw from the NSA, and 153 voted to remain.

In December the student council voted to end Swarthmore's membership in the National Student Association. Twenty years had passed, almost to the day, between the idealistic vote by Swarthmore students to affiliate with the national student movement and their disillusioned decision to terminate this affiliation. n

Elizabeth Weber '98 is an economics major. Her articles about College history have appeared frequently in the Phoenix.

What happened to the NSA?

After the 1967 revelation of its longtime CIA funding, the fractured National Student Association managed to find a new voice and became an independent force in the peace, civil rights, and human rights movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s. "The ideal moderate-liberal-left coalition that had guided NSA and other groups through the previous decade was evaporating as students across the country were radicalized by assassinations, government brutality, and the continuing war," writes Angus Johnston, a historian and former national corporate secretary of the United States Student Association (USSA), the NSA's successor organization.

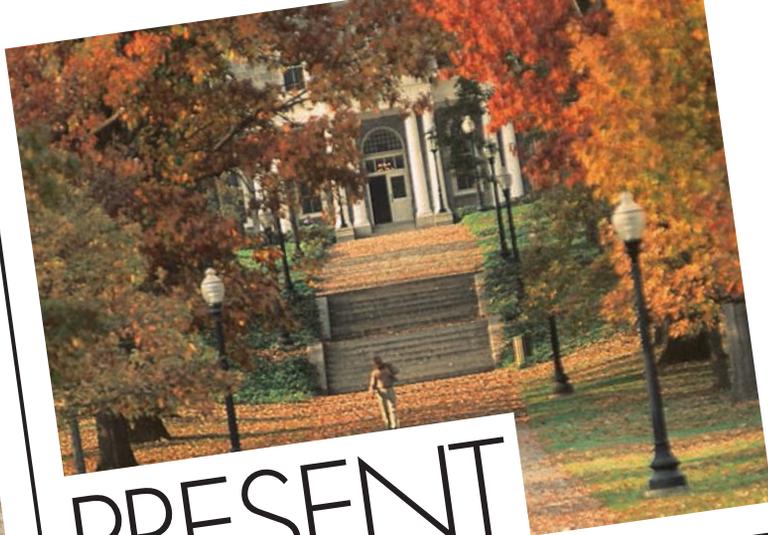
NSA activists supported the Black Power movement, were involved in the "Dump Johnson" campaign during the 1968 presidential election, championed gay rights, and broke with the International Student Secretariat, the organization set up in the 1940s to counter the communist-dominated International Union of Students. The NSA leadership was proud to have been placed on Richard Nixon's infamous "enemies list" after the association's president visited North Vietnam in 1972.

In the late 1970s, as the country's mood moderated, the NSA focused more on student issues such as economic access to higher education. It united with a former splinter group, the National Student Lobby, in 1978, forming the USSA, which has concentrated on legislation affecting federal financial aid and equality of opportunity for students. It has also placed new emphasis on grassroots campus organizations and has worked to expand the influence of people of color in its leadership.

Today, the 50-year-old USSA is the nation's largest student organization, representing 3.5 million students. As far as can be determined, however, Swarthmore College never rejoined.



PAST



PRESENT

FALL WEEKEND '97 Swarthmore's Next Decade October 24-26

Autumn is a special time at Swarthmore. The brilliance of the foliage seems intensified by the subtle gray stone of campus landmarks, and the crisp air carries a bracing sense of anticipation.

The College community invites alumni, parents, and friends to join us for Fall Weekend '97, October 24-26. Visitors will enjoy a wide spectrum of activities, from student performances and exhibits to men's and women's athletic events. They also can get a firsthand look at striking enhancements on the north campus, including the picturesque Isabelle Bennett Cosby '28 Courtyard at Kohlberg Hall, already a favorite spot for alfresco conversations, and the newly renovated Trotter Hall.

A highlight will be a program on "Swarthmore's Next Decade," a special opportunity to participate in an early phase of the long-range planning effort that will sharpen the College's focus on its most significant priorities. Among areas under consideration are the scope and nature of the curriculum, innovations in technology, the size of the College, balancing teaching and scholarship, and meeting the challenge of emerging trends in higher education.

More information on Fall Weekend is available from the Alumni Office, (610) 328-8402, or on the Internet at alumni@swarthmore.edu.



FUTURE?