



# Nightingale Faculty Newsletter

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## **OUR CURRICULUM: "A WORK IN PROGRESS"**

Exploring Africa p. 4  
*Joe Bord*

On-Line Map Library p. 5  
*Linda Field*

Literary "Tweets" in Class IX English p. 6  
*Alexandra Parsons*

Codifying Yoga and Approaching Dance History p. 8  
*Allison Trotta*

## **CONFERENCES AND SCHOLARLY ENTERPRISES**

In the Presence of Giants p. 10  
*Allan Bikk*

From Dissertation to Publication p. 12  
*Panayotes Dakouras*

Engendering Multiculturalism and Inclusivity: p. 14  
Lessons Learned from John Dewey's  
*Democracy and Education*  
*Derrick Gay*

Cicero Goes to Washington <i>Jeff Kearney</i>	p. 16
A Summer of Mathematical Immersion <i>Caroline Kerr</i>	p. 18
Reconsidering Biodiversity <i>Nikki Vivion</i>	p. 20
An Insight into Chinese Calligraphy <i>Grace Wang</i>	p. 22
Down South at the Sewanee Writers' Conference <i>Brad Whitehurst</i>	p. 23
<b>TRAVELS</b>	
St. Paul's Suite <i>Courtney Birch</i>	p. 24
A Memorable and Necessary Vacation <i>Todd Flomberg</i>	p. 26
Mr. Meikle in China <i>Scott Meikle</i>	p. 28
Travels in Argentina <i>Lois Strell</i>	p. 30
Our Croatian Voyage <i>Rebekah Zuercher</i>	p. 32

As has become a tradition, the fall issue of the *Faculty Newsletter* is dedicated to the summer. Be it through travel, research, writing, taking courses, attending workshops and seminars, or working on specific curricular and pedagogical projects, the summer is a time of reflection and new perspectives. Some traveled great distances—to China, Argentina, Africa, Europe, or throughout the United States—and nearly everyone worked on the ongoing curricular revisions that we all do as a matter of course that energize our teaching and keep it current. This was a particularly busy summer with two large collaborative projects: designing an upper school leadership program and developing differentiated teaching in the Lower School mathematics classrooms, both of which will be reported on in future issues of the *Faculty Newsletter*.

The following sampler from last summer's activities illustrates our vision of a living curriculum constantly under revision, as well as our shifting priorities as we reflect on the intellectual habits, knowledge, and skills that will best serve our students when they leave us, be it in 2010 or 2017 or 2022. It also highlights the faculty's intellectual energy and diversity of interests, as well as what a rich, multifaceted, and textured experience a Nightingale education is.

Kitty Gordan  
Associate Head of School

# Exploring Africa

Joe Bord / History

The new elective offering in the History Department, "Africa: Challenge and Diversity," furthers our institutional goal of strengthening the Nightingale global curriculum. Through a series of rigorous essays (and with the help of a college-style reading list) seniors tackle interrelated themes. Contemporary topics include international economics, aid, conflict resolution, and state-building. The course also aims to give students a sense of the longer continuities of African history. After all, the colonial and post-colonial periods account for only a little over a century and a third of recent African experience. Taken as a whole, the course seeks to shift focus by roughly working backwards. Contemporary history and politics effectively function as an introduction to older regional African histories in the southern, Sahel, Atlantic, and Indian Ocean areas. Students are introduced to a wide range of evidence from a variety of sources (medieval Muslim travelers, for example) in order to combat notions of a "Dark Continent."

The seven topics treated reflect recent scholarship in the field of African studies. Thus, while we pay proper attention to the Atlantic slave trade, we also examine the Indian Ocean slave trade that arguably passed the Atlantic trade in longevity. Students look at cultural scholarship in areas where myth has been quite as significant as underlying reality; the theories spun out to account for the Great Zimbabwe are a case in point. We pay attention to religious diversity; for instance, studying the legacy of Ethiopian Christianity. The reading includes carefully supported assignments on academic journal articles, available through the school's JSTOR subscription. Students gain experience in using electronic databases at the same time as they learn how to handle advanced texts.



The relatively small class size allows individual attention to be given to students as they cultivate skills that will be essential to them in college. Making sense of an unfamiliar mass of material, conducting research on the basis of reading recommendations, and producing tightly argued essays are all useful and recognizable attainments. Our intensive discussions in class concentrate on cutting through the welter of details to the crucial arguments. From this perspective, while the content of the course is innovative, its pedagogy falls squarely within Nightingale tradition.

There is an ongoing debate within the History Department as to whether the future focus of the elective should remain in sub-Saharan Africa or whether the time frame of the course should be compressed to the modern period and the geographical range expanded. In the latter case, North Africa would be treated more extensively and subjects from the Middle East added for comparative effect. Alas, it is impossible to do everything we would like to do, especially in one semester, and the cost of geographical extension would be to lose the pre-colonial topics. There are good arguments on either side, and it is the mark of a vigorous department that our dynamic curriculum continues to move forward.

# Online Map Library

Linda Field / History

This summer, I began the creation of an online map library, which I hope will be useful not only to all the members of the History Department, but to many of my colleagues outside the department, as well.

The library is linked to the Nightingale Web site; you can access it by signing in to the faculty portal, then selecting "Academics" and "Faculty Web Pages." There, near the bottom of the list, you will find "Map Library." Click, and you will be brought to an introductory page that includes a list of six choices:

- General Geography Links
- Physical Maps
- Current Political Maps
- Blank (unlabeled) Maps
- Historical Maps
- Maps related to Current Events

The General Geography Links page is a list, to which I will add as time goes on, of various Web sites that contain maps and/or information about geography. The Current Events section now has only maps relating to Darfur, but again, I intend to add to that as events unfold. The other four sections contain maps of many places, large and small, arranged by geographic area and, in the Historical Maps section, by time period. I encourage you to take a few moments to browse through the collection.

My hope is that this library will become the first place my colleagues go when looking for a map to project onto a SmartBoard or to print out for an activity or assessment. I have scanned or uploaded maps that my history colleagues requested, as well as maps that I thought could be useful in different disciplines. As the introduction to the Map Library says, I hope that my colleagues will let me know if there are particular maps that should be included, changed, or replaced. I am looking forward to maintaining this collection of maps as a resource for the entire Nightingale community.

My thanks go to Kitty Gordan and Heidi Kasevich for their support and for the summer stipend I received to launch this project. Even greater thanks, however, to our Technology Department and, particularly, to Adam Van Auken. He taught me how to create a Web page and guided me, patiently and willingly, through every step of the project; I could never have done it without his help.

# Literary Tweets in Class IX English

Alexandra Parsons / English

Never far from my laptop, I know the burgeoning importance of newer literacies, such as the Internet and film, and what it means to be educated today. Thus, in order to describe my preparation during the summer for my new class, English IX, I decided to present the reader with a Twitter-style summary of many of the books I read and for which I took notes and created lesson plans. After all, Twitter is a mode of communication among many Class IX girls (although, they tell me, not as favored as Facebook!).

For those who are not familiar with twittering or tweets, Twitter is a social networking site that forces one to write in 140 total characters or fewer. To get to the crux of a situation. To cull the most pared-down meaning with exacting, lapidary prose. To delve deeply into the very essence of humanity. These microblogs are no small feat, I daresay, and Twitter's influence on the English language should not be pooh-poohed by naysayers (you know who you are). Not only has this Web site made it into the 2009 edition of the *Associated Press Stylebook*, but, according to Wikipedia, "the findings of a study by Emily Pronin of Princeton University and Daniel Wegner of Harvard University [point] to a link between the short bursts of activity that microblogging frequently involves and feelings of elation, power, and creativity." Twitter has the effects of Prozac, anabolic agents, and St. John's Wort rolled into one—a better reason to microblog, I cannot imagine! Let's visit with one of Twitter's heavy users, ShakespeareGeek\*, who happens to be online now...

Realtime results for **Romeo & Juliet**

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ShakespeareGeek Two households alike in dignity. Pair of star-crossed lovers. Parting is such sweet sorrow. Plague o' your houses. Thus, with a kiss, I die.

Three minutes ago from web

---

Realtime results for **Shakespeare's Sonnets**

---



ShakespeareGeek Who is the "dark lady," anyway??

Twenty-two days ago from web

---

Realtime results for **1984**

---



ShakespeareGeek Shh. Big Brother is watching you. Yes, you! (Even in your bedroom.)

Thirty-nine days ago from web

---

Realtime results for **All My Sons**

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ShakespeareGeek Father won't take responsibility for faulty war parts; son dies as a result. Learns "they were all my sons." Forget now. Live.

Forty-three days ago from web

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Realtime results for ***Passing (Harlem Renaissance unit)***

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ShakespeareGeek Clare hides that she is part-black. Thanks to her paranoid, sexually confused "friend," Clare's racist husband finds out. Watch the window!

Fifty days ago from web

---

Realtime results for ***The Glass Menagerie***

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ShakespeareGeek And I will hug him and squeeze him and pet him and pat him and...You broke him! He was a glass unicorn; now's he just another horse.

Sixty-five days ago from web

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As you can see from the above tweets, the curriculum for Class IX English is varied and challenging. After reading five short stories that delve into the theme of reality versus fantasy, we begin the year with our first book: *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare. To supplement this play and the Class IX trip to London, the girls also study the cultural history in *The Age of Shakespeare* by François Laroque, a selection of Shakespeare's sonnets, and Renaissance and Baroque paintings that can be found in the National Gallery of Art in London. We end the first semester with a close reading of the play *All My Sons* by Arthur Miller.

The spring semester starts off by examining the role of "Big Brother" in *1984* by George Orwell. We then move on to a longer unit on the Harlem Renaissance, reading stories by Zora Neale Hurston, Chester Himes, and Jessie Fause and poetry by Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Sterling Brown, among others. We also spend some time on Nella Larsen's novella *Passing* and sprinkle in myriad paintings and photographs from the Harlem Renaissance. A reading of *The Harlem Renaissance: 1920–1930* by Steve Watson adds to the students' knowledge of the cultural history of the time period as well.

We end the spring semester with the play *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams. In addition, we refer to the *Little, Brown Handbook* throughout the year to teach grammar as a discrete subject that complements the students' writing. Topics include sentence grammar (phrases and clauses), punctuation (commas, semicolons, colons, and apostrophes), pronoun case, agreement (subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent), and words commonly confused. Lastly, we incorporate creative and analytical writing assignments that range from writing about a work of art to closely analyzing the text of one of Shakespeare's plays.

So, what's in a tweet? Newer literacies in the form of 140 characters or fewer. Try it! Your students might just be impressed with your new literacy.

\*Not my real username!

# Codifying Yoga

Allison Trotta / Physical Education

Yoga has been offered as an Upper School course at Nightingale for almost 10 years. Three years ago, Ms. Quinn and I decided it would be a good idea to start it at the eighth-grade level and since then, it has also been incorporated into the seventh-grade wellness program.

*Since most of the school day requires students to pay attention and do what is being asked of them, we feel it is necessary to allow them this time to rest.*

In seventh grade, we begin to observe high levels of stress in our students, so it seemed appropriate to begin teaching yoga at this age in order to help them experience the connection between the mind and body.

Through Nightingale's professional development program, I was able to attend a teacher training program at Yoga Works last fall. This program comprised three areas of study: theory and practice of yoga, yoga philosophy, and the art of teaching. Through this program I was able to deepen my practice and understanding of yoga, as well as to learn how to structure and create a cohesive, well-rounded class.

This summer, I used the knowledge I gained from this teacher training to develop two yoga curricula: one for Middle School and one for Upper School. Yoga is fast becoming an integral part of the physical education curriculum. We use Vinyasa Yoga and classic Hatha Yoga

as the primary sources to promote a healthy mind and body for our students. The curriculum I designed incorporates fundamental poses and routines (such as downward-facing dog and bound angle) with more challenging postures and routines. It also includes breathing techniques and relaxation and meditation methods to enhance students' concentration and reduce stress.

During the relaxation portion of class, I dim the lights, instruct the students to lie down, and turn on soft music.

This time allows students to rest and recharge. By slowing down brain waves, the right brain is activated for greater creativity. These relaxation methods help students to feel a deeper connection to their inner selves and resources. This time also allows students to integrate and process what they are learning. Since most of the school day requires students to pay attention and do what is being asked of them, we feel it is necessary to allow them this time to rest and do nothing.

Our yoga program has produced positive effects in our girls. Students tell us that they are calmer and more focused after yoga, and that it makes them feel more peaceful. We hope that by making yoga a part of their school day we can provide relief from the tensions of our students' lives. Namaste.

# Approaching Dance History

Allison Trotta / Physical Education

I am thrilled that next fall I will be able to teach a new dance history course in the Upper School. This class will be offered as a fine arts elective and will meet twice a week for one semester. Dance history was always one of my favorite subjects when I studied it in high school, college, and graduate school. I can't wait to bring my passion for this subject to the Nightingale community.

The dance history syllabus presents the subject as a complex web of connections. While many students at Nightingale are already studying dance as an art form, they will now be able to learn about dance as it connects to history and to realize that works are an aggregate of past events. Dance history is a continuum, leading from the past to the present and into the future.

Instead of having the students memorize facts, I want them to look at dance history through multiple lenses, interpreting recordings of genres, styles, artists, and works from different viewpoints. We will use a range of source material, including reviews, journals, newspapers, programs, advertisements, autobiographies, live works, videotapes, interviews, and stories. Lastly, we will investigate what genres and styles of dance engage different audiences and why. At the end of the semester, we will study the diversity of contemporary dance styles.

Choreography is the central component of our dance program at Nightingale. Ms. John and I have used the dance-making process as a way to build a dance community within the school. In dance history, students will learn how the role of the choreographer has evolved over the last century. The early modern dance choreographer created a very distinct technique and style and was the sole creative contributor to new works. He or she had a comprehensive vision of what the dance should look like, and the dancers' roles were in complete service to that vision. In more recent years, many choreographers have veered from that model, incorporating the dancers' ideas and movements (both composed and improvised) into the vision of the work. Collaborations involve a different mindset and skill set for both the choreographer and the dancers, and they also produce a different kind of result.

We will study choreographers, such as David Dorfman, who use collaboration in the creation of new works, as well as others, such as Liz Lerman and Bill T. Jones, who use the creative process as a tool for self-realization, problem-solving, or cooperative efforts toward exploring some humanistic experience. Students will recognize that some methods of dance-making can have a cathartic effect not only for the choreographer, but also for the performers and, ultimately, the audience. After viewing dances by these choreographers students will reflect on the kind of sharing, debating, and co-creating contexts in which modern dances have been constructed and performed.

Many modern dance artists use their choreography to explore their own personalities or cultures. Students will view dances of personal and cultural inquiry like Anna Sokolow's 1955 work *Rooms*. In this dance, Sokolow explores the isolation and loneliness that, from her perspective, many people experience in a modern, urban environment. Viewing dances like this will serve as a launching pad for discovering the multifarious and relative nature of human experience. Anna Sokolow used movement to explore her own beliefs, ideals, and personal view of the world. Through studying her work, students will come to appreciate the many choices that are involved in creating dances and the skills that a choreographer must possess to express an idea. Reflecting on artists of all kinds, students will consider and discuss how one individual's investigation of identity might have universal resonance through artistic interpretation.

I think it is important that Nightingale offers a course that exposes students to modern dance history and can successfully communicate the nature of the art form to those who are unfamiliar with it. Modern dance is a richly varied art form that requires a multimodal process to investigate its true wealth. I hope this course can successfully unveil the rich diversity and innovation that defines modern dance.

# In the Presence of Giants

Allan Bikk / History

You are a humble playwright living in early 17th-century London. William Shakespeare has invited you out for a pint to discuss your work. You are a young musician living in 18th-century Vienna. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is knocking on your door.

You are an historian in early 21st-century New York. The Gilder Lehrman Institute offers seminars for teachers of American History and, for a week, you sit and read and discuss. You sit with a prominent historian, Professor Eric

*The questions Americans were asking of themselves at the time—the meaning of rights, the scope and scale of our federal government, the definition of citizenship—are still questions we ask today.*

Foner. You are in the presence of giants. Listen carefully. A pin has hit the carpet. Drops of water drip from a leaky faucet down the hall. A bird whistles on the other side of campus. This is Columbia University. It is summertime. Thirty teachers from across the country have come together. Three hours a day for a week's time, there is dramatic silence in the seminar room. Thirty teachers from across the country are sitting in the presence of a giant, hanging on every word.

History is whatever historians say it is, says the giant. It takes awhile for research to trickle down to textbooks, filtered and filtered again, homogenized and depoliticized, made palatable and whole. A school develops, a mode of thought, a paradigm, and the textbook says it happened this way and everyone follows suit, and it's taught in that manner. Whether or not there is a body of credible, documentary evidence to support this school is beside the point. Then a brave soul comes forth with mountains of paper, years of research, a mighty axe. This brave soul takes the axe and swings away, like an emboldened lumberjack felling a sturdy oak. The tree falls. There is fertile soil in the forest now to plant new seeds, and a new school develops. In due time, younger lumberjacks come forth with their own new axes, ready to repeat the process, ready to lay claim. This particular giant still reigns supreme in the forest.

You have seen the film *The Birth of a Nation*, one of the most vile and sinister in the history of the cinema, emblematic of the old narrative of the Reconstruction Era that Professor Foner's work has disintegrated. The South has been defeated. The North seeks to punish the South. Hooded Klansmen come to the rescue. Carpetbaggers and Scalawags reign supreme, corrupting Southern honor. In the end, the Yankees abandon their master plan, allowing Southerners to restore their way of life. The North won the war, it has been said, but the South wrote its history. The war for union and emancipation was re-contextualized as the South's "Lost Cause."

The Reconstruction Era is the most complex in American history, defying easy explanation, a swamp of distinct interpretations. The Civil War has ended. President Johnson grapples with Congress over how best to allow the defeated Southern states to return to the union. Four million slaves are now free—they have been emancipated, defined as equal citizens under law and enfranchised under three separate constitutional amendments. The Fourteenth Amendment introduces the word “equality” to the Constitution, henceforth becoming the vehicle through which Americans could petition their government for a redress of grievances. The Bill of Rights would now be invoked as the essential statement of a citizen’s guaranteed protections. No state can deny citizens their rights. The federal government would make sure of that.

The attempt to create a truly egalitarian nation and heal the wounds of war looks so promising on paper. The South returns to the union, as new state legislatures ratify the Fourteenth Amendment. But look carefully on the local level. Racial attitudes prevail. The South is impoverished and suffering; there is a lack of credit. The Ku Klux Klan spreads domestic terror, challenging Reconstruction, attacking, lynching, burning, imbedding itself in local politics, like a virus. The Department of Justice is born in response, as Ku Klux Klan crimes are federalized, and the Klan is crushed. Northern attitudes alter, as time brings fatigue, and Reconstruction slips from the front pages of newspapers, replaced with fears of economic calamity. The Election of 1876 brings acquiescence, and federal troops will no longer be used to enforce the Reconstruction amendments. The Jim Crow regime is born, and the infamous Supreme Court decision in *Plessy vs. Ferguson* upholds the separate-but-equal principle. Reconstruction is construed as an epic failure. The Ku Klux Klan is reborn. Between 1870 and 1960, between three and four thousand African-Americans are lynched.

Watch *Gone with the Wind*. Scarlett O’Hara is the South itself, victimized at every turn but determined to survive. Scarlett will always have her Tara, the family plantation, the repository of her values. The North is cruel and unjust, boorish and threatening. The North lacks honor. The North is intent on crippling the South. Professor Foner’s work tosses aside such sophomoric and reductionist historical narratives, reducing them to dust, scattering them to the winds. Reconstruction brought our nation closer to modernity, developing the vernacular of rights and of government that continues to animate political discourse today, developing a national economy with a national banking system and the first national currency. Our nation became the United States of America—“the United States of America *is*” and not “the United States of America *are*.” Reconstruction, as a political program, surely failed. But the questions Americans were asking of themselves at the time—the meaning of rights, the scope and scale of our federal government, the definition of citizenship—are still questions we ask today.

When giants unleash their axes, what was once deemed as history now becomes fable and folklore. Thirty teachers from around the country come together to listen and, in so doing, to celebrate what one man, an historian, can do. One man sitting alone with documents can change the way we as Americans think about ourselves as citizens of a great nation and ones who deserve a clearer vision of our collective past. You are sitting at the table with Professor Eric Foner.

# From Dissertation to Publication

Panayotes Dakouras / Head, Classical Languages

Sometime in mid-May, I received an e-mail from a Sabine Fabre that started as follows:

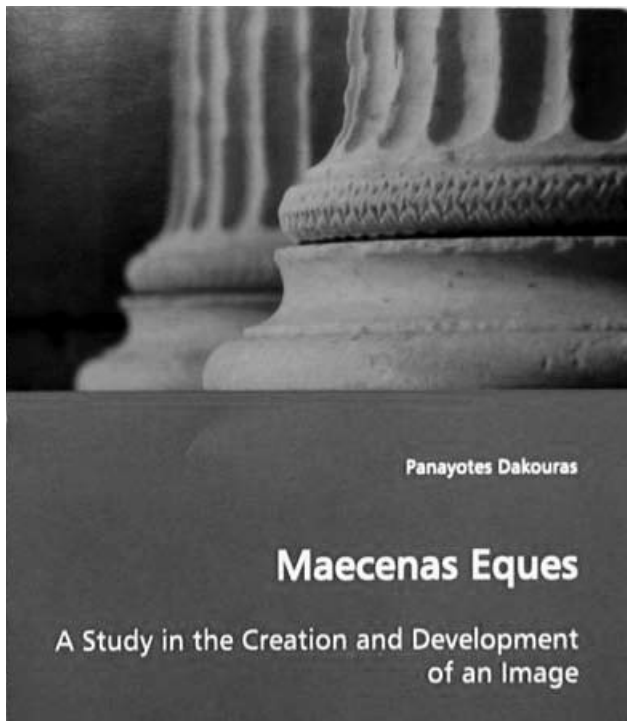
*Dear Panayotes Dakouras,  
I am writing on behalf of the German publishing house, VDM Verlag Dr. Müller AG & Co. KG. In the course of a research on New York University, I came across a reference to your thesis on "Maecenas eques: A study in the creation and development of an image." We are a German-based publisher whose aim is to make academic research available to a wider audience. VDM Verlag would be especially interested in publishing your dissertation in the form of a printed book...*

My immediate thought? SPAM! SCAM! DELETE IMMEDIATELY! As I was reading this on my home computer (and not at school when I'm usually trying to finish my grading before the next teaching period) I decided to return the favor and do my own research on this publisher. Google had numerous references and links to books by VDM Verlag. I even found several of them on Amazon. Being the perpetual skeptic that I am, I looked for some personal testimonials. Angelos Chaniotis, a good friend and one of the world's most prolific and accomplished classical scholars, told me that this was indeed a legitimate publisher, one that had published the work of two other classicists he knew. So, I decided to respond to the e-mail with a number of questions regarding the process of publication, the requirements, the time frame, etc. I was informed that the first step was to submit a copy of my entire dissertation for their consideration; the editors would respond to me regarding the viability of publication, which depended on whether or not they decided that there is a market for my work. My reaction this time? FORGET IT! THIS WILL NOT HAPPEN! How could anybody think that a dissertation on some aspects of the image of Maecenas (a first-century BCE political figure and literary patron in Rome) would interest anybody?

I sent my manuscript in, nevertheless, and was rewarded with a response that was speedy and, most important, positive. They even told me that the publication would be complete in approximately three to four weeks after the submission of my final manuscript, something that I found astonishing, given the stories I had heard about academic books that get published years after they have been approved for publication. I guess it is true: the Germans really are efficient!

Aside from being happy at the prospect of having my work published, I saw this as an opportunity to revisit a topic on which I had spent, on and off, some 11 years of my life. I went back to "the place where it all happened," the eighth floor of NYU's Bobst Library in Washington Square. I was relieved to discover that no major works addressed my topic since I had completed my work in early 2006. I looked into a number of monographs and some articles that discussed Augustan literature and society. I also did research on the six authors that comprised the six major chapters of my work: the poets Horace, Propertius, and Martial, and the historians Velleius Paterculus, Tacitus, and Dio Cassius. My research yielded a couple of additional paragraphs in the main body of my text, several necessary footnotes, and an updated bibliography. Although I did enjoy spending 10 days in the library, I must admit that I am very grateful that I was doing so in my capacity as an alumnus and not as the superannuated graduate student of years past.

Hard to believe, but I think I must have spent about an equal amount of days on the technical details of the volume: reformatting my document to conform to the publisher's guidelines, choosing the cover picture, the color scheme, and the lettering, finalizing the description that went on the back cover, and including a picture and a brief biography of myself. I think of all these as a collaborative Nightingale effort. Alex Parsons and Sam Howell did my "photo shoots" in two separate



sessions, amid lots of laughter and silly poses and facial expressions. Jane Schapiro and Jeff Kearney gave me their candid opinion on my color choices. John Loughery and Brad Whitehurst helped me shorten my back-cover notes. Here I had to include a condensed description of my work in no more than 200 words. Quite a challenging task for a verbose classicist! Brad and John are the wizards of succinct prose, not to mention the superlative comma experts. For the sake of giving some idea about my work here, I quote this passage verbatim:

Though the name of Maecenas has come to be associated with the phenomenon of literary and artistic patronage, the predominant attribute of his image in ancient sources was his equestrian status. This work examines references to Maecenas as “eques” in all their permutations and diachronic developments in texts dating from Maecenas’s time to the third century C.E. There is a sharp dichotomy between the equestrian images of Maecenas in poetry and in prose. The poets of Maecenas’s era, Horace and Propertius, and, nearly a century later, Martial, use the expression “Maecenas eques” in connection with Maecenas’s power to make specific literary requests or to support poetic undertakings. The historians Velleius Paterculus, Tacitus, and Dio Cassius, on the other hand, focus their attention on his status as a non-senatorial aide of Augustus, whose objective was the supremacy of

his leader and the consolidation of his power. After an analysis of these sources, Maecenas’s social rank emerges as a complex and multifaceted element of his image, one that is transformed in manifold ways depending on the epoch, the literary genre, the socio-political climate, and the personal history of each author.

In my acknowledgement page, three-and-a-half years ago, I had written the following:

The Nightingale-Bamford School has helped me bring this work to completion, not only with its intellectually stimulating environment and its unwavering support of my professional development but also with a very generous summer stipend that allowed me to devote time exclusively to my dissertation work.

I felt that these words were even more fitting now and left them unaltered. My book came out in mid-August, and while it will never make the *New York Times* bestseller list, it is certainly satisfying to have my work and ideas circulate, even to an extremely limited number of readers. In fact, just last week, a graduate student from the University of Leiden found my information online and contacted me, asking for some bibliographical details, because I am the expert on Maecenas, as he put it. At the risk of sounding utterly vain, I would be lying if I said that I wasn’t happy with that e-mail.

# Engendering Multiculturalism and Inclusivity

Derrick Gay / Director of Community Life and Diversity

I have always envisioned the concept of philosophizing as very daunting and intimidating. I instantly conjure images of scholarly men sitting in an old room with creaky wooden floors; walls adorned with portraits of Socrates, Plato, Rousseau, Piaget, and Locke; and an incessant circular conversation where inquiries are pondered and answered with even broader and more esoteric inquiries. As I delved into the thoughts of John Dewey, however, I

*The legacy of American institutional privilege, and the social ills that it continues to perpetuate, has created a construct that requires additional support to integrate multicultural initiatives with our educational mission.*

found an instant connection with many of his philosophies about education; in particular, the notion of education as continual growth or movement along a continuum where each member is related to and affects every other member.

As director of community life and diversity, my charge is essentially to ensure that the policies, practices, and procedures of our school include, celebrate, and affirm all members of our community. I work closely with a diverse group of constituents—students, faculty, staff, alumnae, and parents—to create forums for discussion, safe havens, and awareness and to advance initiatives of community building, social equity, and justice. Ideally, the realization of these aims would be seamlessly interwoven in promoting the aims of the school. Unfortunately, the

legacy of American institutional privilege, and the social ills that it continues to perpetuate, has created a construct that requires additional support to integrate multicultural initiatives with our educational mission. As one considers future programmatic and strategic initiatives, Dewey offers concrete advice and guidance regarding the challenges that independent schools face in trying to bolster ideas of multiculturalism and inclusivity: lack of clarity around the use of language; the notion of “diversity” as an idea unto itself and somehow different from the idea of community; and the pervasive model of diversity programming (speakers, assemblies, activities) as one-time, isolated events.

Frequently in conversations around inclusivity, individuals engage in heated discussions about the creation and purpose of affinity groups and whether they ultimately serve to unite or engender more division. I have heard members of our community speak of “diversity,” “community,” “minorities,” “people of color,” and other terms common to the lexicon of

multiculturalism. During these discussions, it becomes clear that members are engaging in debates using the same words, but have completely different notions about what these words mean—herein lies the importance of language. Dewey notes that “understanding one another means that objects... have the same value for both with respect to carrying on a common pursuit.” As an example, when I ask many members of our community to define “diversity,” they typically answer “issues about minorities.” When I ask their sense of the words “minorities” or “people of color,” the response is “black people.” To realize our aims, we need to deconstruct these perceived meanings and reconstruct a realistic denotation of the same words; this is the first step in creating some common understandings to advance initiatives from a fundamental basis of respect.

Dewey suggests, "the bare fact that language consists of sounds which are mutually intelligible is enough of itself to show that its meaning depends upon a connection with a shared experience." From what I gathered from my initial work around diversity at Nightingale, "diversity" had typically been coupled with the invitation of a speaker of color—typically black—and Cultural Night was, in practice, the artistic representation of people of Latino, Asian, and African ancestry. Through this lens, it makes perfect sense that members of the community shared the aforementioned connotations—it was their shared experience, albeit contrary to the accepted denotation in discourse on multiculturalism, social justice, and equity. Moving forward, I will aid the community to be vigilant about the explicit definition of terms, both in writing and speech, to ensure conformity in the connotative, denotative, and shared experience of these terms.

Along the same lines, many schools employ the model of "food, fun, and festivals" in their efforts to create awareness around issues of social justice. This can take the form of a diversity potluck, where "diverse families" prepare food from "diverse" places (i.e. not Europe); celebrations of Cinco de Mayo with a piñata, usually not mentioning that this event does not commemorate Mexican Independence, but rather a battle against the French; the obligatory Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. assembly; the invitation of a speaker to lecture on fill-in-the-blank horrible disease. Clearly, the intentions are laudable and the reasoning appears sound—by creating awareness of other cultures and challenging social issues, educators can engender empathy and social awareness to produce globally responsible citizens and agents of change. The fault lies in the lack of attention to the preparation and follow-through that connects these events to students and their lives. Perhaps Dewey describes it best when he writes, "experience is primarily an active-passive affair; it is not primarily cognitive. But the measure of value of an experience lies in the perception of relationships or continuities in which it leads up." In the absence of explicit reflection and discussion of how these events relate to the student, the meaning is lost. Dewey supports this notion by writing, "they [in this case, the "food, fun, and festival" programs] are mere accidents so far as we are concerned. There is no before or after to such experience; no retrospect nor outlook, and consequently no meaning. We get nothing which may be carried over to foresee what is likely to happen next, and no gain in ability to adjust ourselves to what is coming—no added control." Moving forward, we need to be more cognizant

of the importance of preparation before all presentations regarding inclusivity. This could be in the form of readings, discussions in academic classes, advisory groups, or even presentations made prior to speakers—anything to underscore explicit connections to individuals and our community. Debriefings after events will be key to aiding participants relate the experience to their lives.

One of the biggest problems that undermine these initiatives is the perception of community as being discrete from, and not related to, multiculturalism. Multiculturalism (the notion of considering and honoring the perspectives of all members of our institution) is frequently conceived as separate from, or even antithetical to, building community. For example, the existence of affinity groups, the purposeful creation of safe-places for individuals of a shared social identifier, is considered divisive by those who don't truly embrace the reality that people of subdominant social groups are institutionally disadvantaged and disempowered. Social research supports the idea, however, that participation in affinity groups creates solidarity, increases self-esteem, and ultimately fortifies community—the entire community. Dewey also warns of the tendency to oversimplify the idea of community by reminding us that "persons do not become a society by living in physical proximity, any more than a man ceases to be socially influenced by being so many feet or miles removed from others." Moreover, he warns, "individuals do not even compose a social group because they all work for a common end. If, however, they were all cognizant of the common end and all interested in it so that they regulated their specific activity in view of it, then they would form a community." Again, we need to be explicit in saying that inclusivity, social justice, and multiculturalism are inextricably embedded in the idea of community—they support each other. Simply put, a healthy community demonstrates inclusivity and multiculturalism and vice versa.

While I was initially skeptical, philosophy has become a vehicle by which I have been able to elucidate why I believe certain educational tenets. By adding clarity and a framework to theory and experiences, I can better apply these principles to my goals and methods. Perhaps I shouldn't be too surprised that I enjoy Dewey and philosophy given my work. Every day it requires constant adaptation and questioning to reconcile disparate perspectives, ideas, experiences, motives, and aims so that we can realize a common community and social aim.

# Cicero Goes to Washington

Jeff Kearney / Classical Languages

One measure of a book's value is how badly you might need it one day. No one doubts, for example, that Proust wrote beautiful prose. But what if you were choking on the madeleine rather than reflecting on it? Would he hold the same appeal? Can Lorca or Milton help you change a flat tire? If the answer is no, it is because it was the Roman authors, practical to the core, who wrote with the intention of being taken along in a pocket or tucked into a boot. After all, any hiker faced with a raging gorge knows that it is Caesar's *Gallic Wars*, not Fodor's *Colorado*, that shows us how to build a bridge on piles. Vergil has ideas on how to keep snakes out of your garden and poison out of your fruit juice. Ovid dispenses enough on-the-spot dating advice to pair up every bachelor in Manhattan. Yet if these authors, to take only a few examples, address our personal needs, it is Cicero alone who tells us how to act as a state.

As a lawyer, philosopher, and politician, Cicero is uniquely qualified to join us in the voting booth, on the convention floor, or in the debates. To read his speeches and philosophy in a Presidential election season, as I did this past year with Class X, was what the Romans called *auspicatus*, an alignment of the lucky birds. Only something as juicy and potentially scandalous as a Presidential campaign could enliven the often dry matter of Cicero's rhetorical theory. In the campaign—and especially its culmination, the inaugural address—I found material to teach not only issues of policy and character, but principles of persuasion and style. So, as a sidebar to our usual Latin III reading of Cicero's *First Catilinarian Oration*, I presented the basics of rhetorical theory, with help from its greatest theorist, Aristotle; its greatest practitioner, Cicero; and its greatest teacher, Quintilian. In the course of presenting Cicero's rhetorical treatises alongside his speech, I aimed to have my class critique the January inaugural by ancient standards.

In early November, when the candidates were still crisscrossing Ohio in search of Joe the Plumber, we were beginning with Aristotle's definition of rhetoric: "the ability to see in any given case the available means of persuasion." Finding these means of persuasion was what Roman writers would later call *inventio*, the discovery of arguments. There were means that a speaker could not control (the inartistic modes, like evidence and witnesses) and those he could (the artistic modes). Aristotle subdivided the artistic modes into three types: logical (by a command of law and facts), ethical (by demonstrating high moral character), and pathetic (by stirring the emotions).

As we worked our way through Cicero's speech, we turned from the decidedly abstract Greek theory to the more practical version of the Romans. Cicero himself had outlined five standards, or canons, by which any speech should be judged: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. Though he treated all of these at great, sometimes mind-numbing length, Cicero was unequivocal about the most important canon. Delivery, he maintained, was "of first, second, and third importance in any speech." Having provided a handout to review the elements of rhetoric, I asked the students to read the inaugural and watch it, along with that of JFK, on YouTube, evaluating Presidents on each of the canons presented in Cicero's *Ad Herennium* and *De Oratore*. I asked them to be careful to put their political leanings aside and to watch and read with a cold, critical eye. This was what they came up with. I summarize their in-class feedback with an Olympic scoring system.

### Invention...8

According to Cicero, this was the most difficult task of an orator. My class found Mr. Obama's speech (like any inaugural) light on details, so they did not award him too many points for logical persuasion. Yet the argument from historical *exemplum*, likening our military sacrifices to those of Gettysburg and Normandy, was right out of Cicero's playbook. Given that the new President spoke so little about himself, the class gave him few points for ethical persuasion. His emotional persuasion, supported by figures like metaphor and simile, they found to be consistent and effective.

### Arrangement...8

Cicero's guiding principle was to put the strongest arguments at the beginning and the end, hiding the weaker ones in the middle. The class found that Mr. Obama was slow to gain speed but that his ending—with the story about Washington addressing his troops on banks of Delaware—was appropriately moving.

### Style...10

The President used many tidy, antithetical expressions that delighted the audience, characteristic of what my students now recognized as the "middle" style. Only occasionally did he raise his register to the "grand" style, by means of extended metaphor and biblical diction.

### Memory...10

Not only did the new President look at the text on his podium less than JFK had, he knew the oath better than the Chief Justice.

### Delivery...9

According to Cicero and his pupil Quintilian, this was the most important factor of all and a necessity for reaching what Quintilian called the "slow-witted" in the audience. Appropriately, Mr. Obama was measured and deliberate, like a lecturer. His gestures were more controlled than JFK's, who poked at the podium as if he were trying to kill a bug or hammer a nail with his index finger. Mr. Obama's cadence, as Quintilian would have suggested, started flat and rose as the speech progressed. He used the calm introductory tone suggested by Cicero's own handbook and became more dynamic as he reached his close. He even joined his thumb and middle finger, extending the other three fingers, which Quintilian says an orator should do at the outset of an oration. Following Quintilian's advice, the President did not eat or drink during his remarks.

The class concluded that it may not have been Obama's best speech (like, say, the moving one in Grant Park on election night), but it was very good. Besides, an inaugural is no place for bold originality. As NPR commentator Geoffrey Nurnberg remarked, it's more like an equestrian competition, "where the course and maneuvers are precisely spelled out and marks are given purely for form and execution." The new President had held up under ancient scrutiny, and we all found that promising. Cicero would have agreed, as he wrote that great orators are great leaders because they have to possess some measure of judgment to pull it all together. He writes, "The foundation of eloquence, as of other things, is wisdom. In a speech, as in life, nothing is harder than seeing what is appropriate." Rhetoric without sense, he adds, is a weapon in the clutches of a madman. Latin III felt, at least three days into the presidency, that they were in good hands.

# A Summer of Mathematical Immersion

Caroline Kerr / Mathematics

As the last school year came to a close and we were busy grading exams and clearing away papers, I was sure that the most meaningful (or at least the most consuming) mathematical experience of my summer would be writing my thesis for graduate school. Waking up at 7:00 a.m. to research the Central Limit Theorem for 12 hours straight everyday *had* to be the most math I would do all summer!

I was wrong.

Though writing my thesis was an extremely enriching and educational experience, one of the most fulfilling mathematical moments I had this summer came while looking at the stars with a group of teachers at the Anja S. Greer Conference on Secondary School Mathematics, Science, and Technology at Exeter Academy.

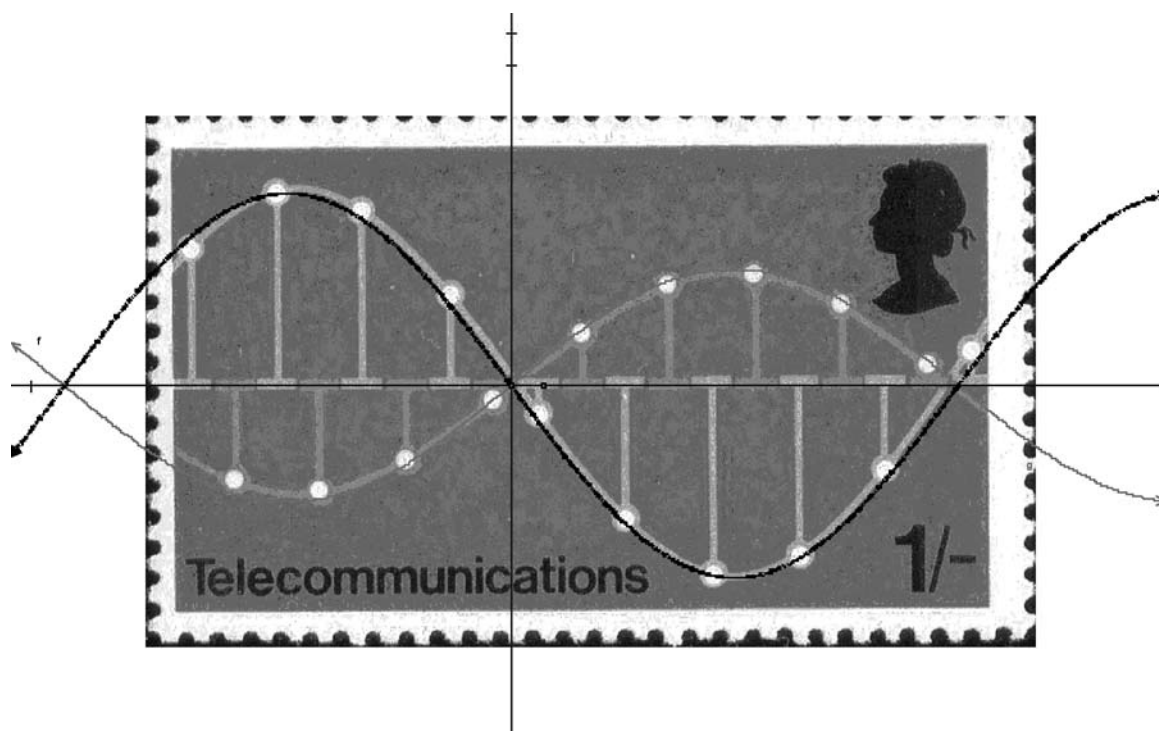
Now, I realize that stopping with friends, family, or even strangers to admire a sky full of stars is hardly an unusual occurrence—especially on a beautifully clear and crisp evening in the middle of nowhere in New Hampshire! But on this particular evening, surrounded by other math and science teachers, gazing at the stars took on a whole new meaning for me.

I first stopped with a friend just to marvel at the clarity and sheer number of stars in the sky (a rarity for a New Yorker). Amateurs that we were, we argued aimlessly over which cluster of stars formed which constellations. Some passing teachers from the astronomy conference overheard our conversation and came over to provide a more professional opinion. As they explained in full detail the position of different constellations, a small group of math and science teachers began to gather around us, each contributing his or her own fascinating tidbits on the formation of stars, the angle of rotation of the earth, or the parallax of the stars as can be determined

through geometry. Though I have marveled at the beauty of the stars or pondered the vastness of the solar system many times in my life, never before have I taken such a mathematical look at the sky. Moreover, never before have I been surrounded by such a large group of people who were equally excited about doing so.

Such an appreciation of mathematics in the everyday world was a major theme of my time at Exeter. In one of the classes I took called “Calculus Before Calculus,” we spent an extensive amount of time discussing places where mathematics can be seen at play in the real world and brainstorming ways to introduce this concept to our students. For example, we discussed interesting problems that would not only introduce students to future calculus topics (such as optimization) but would also enable them to discover the use of mathematics within real-world situations. In addition, we looked at various “math photographs” our teacher had taken of things he encountered in the real world and discussed ways we could integrate them into our curriculum. He had a vast collection of images inspired by everything from artwork to architecture where, to the properly trained eye, math could be seen. One of my favorites was a picture of a stamp he had found that features two different sine curves above the word “Telecommunications,” referring to the role of trigonometric curves in modeling sound and light waves.

Appreciating the everyday world for its mathematical richness is just one way I was completely immersed in mathematics during my week at Exeter. I also took a course on Geometers’ Sketchpad, which I believe prepared me to be not only a better geometry teacher but also a better algebra, precalculus, and calculus teacher. In this course, I learned the most efficient way to make diagrams for tests, as well as various exciting and



dynamic demonstrations I can use in class. When playing around with the software one night during free time at the conference, I thought about how I could utilize it to bolster my efforts to integrate real-world applications into my classroom. Using the photograph of the stamp I had seen earlier in the week, I developed an activity for students to manipulate sine graphs on Sketchpad so that they would best model the graphs on the stamp. By superimposing a coordinate plane over the image, students can use what they know about the transformations of trigonometric functions to play around with the amplitude, period, and shift of sine curves until they find functions that fit as closely as they can to the image on the stamp. I am very excited to utilize this activity in my precalculus classroom later this year. Above, you will see my best efforts to model the desired graphs.

With these two different classes meeting for a few hours every day, mini-sessions on everything from math games to cutting-edge technology, impressive guest speakers every night, and impromptu mathematical conversations

under the stars, my week at Exeter was all math, all the time. Never before have I been so completely immersed in mathematics. Though I had spent most of my days over the past few years discussing analysis, probability, or limit theory with my classmates while in grad school, our conversations were always centered around, and largely motivated by, the questions in a specific problem set or homework assignment we had due that week.

While at Exeter, however, everyone was there for one unifying reason: the love of mathematics and the desire to pass that love on to students. As the conference took place in one of the first few weeks of the summer, I was lucky to be able to apply this renewed passion for math to the writing of my thesis and, now, two-and-a-half months later, to my classroom. At the start of this new school year, I am excited to share my enthusiasm for mathematics with my students, whether it is through technological investigations, real-world application problems, or just discussions of the stars.

# Reconsidering Biodiversity

Nikki Vivion / Science

I can confidently say that I have never underrepresented the topic of biodiversity in any of my biology curricula throughout the years. In fact, I likely spend more time than I should making sure that unicellular creatures like bacteria, protozoans, and phytoplankton are included in the dialog along with their more obvious (and seemingly more interesting) plant and animal counterparts. It seems only fair to me that the prokaryotic world gets their due in the biology curriculum, given that there are more bacteria living on and in a single human than that human actually has of his or her own cells; we owe them some consideration.

With an appreciation for biodiversity in tow, I ventured this summer to our country's capital to attend the Smithsonian Science Education Academy for Teachers on Biodiversity. My fellow science teachers-turned-students and I first gathered for this educational adventure on a Sunday evening in July for dinner and an introduction to the week. Actually, before we had the chance to sit down and make introductions with our faculty and fellow students, we were asked to take a pre-test to provide a baseline score of our knowledge on the subject. Like any beginning students, we were then asked to define the concept of biodiversity, a task which proved to be more difficult than first imagined. I learned that the term was first coined in the 1980s and then popularized in part by my hero, renowned conservation biologist and entomologist E.O. Wilson. It is currently conceptualized as the totality of genes, species, and ecosystems in a region, and its significance is far-reaching.

Well before 8:00 a.m. on Monday morning, we were already in transit to the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH). This site became our headquarters of sorts, although most of our time in the museum was spent in areas outside of the reach of the public. We wound our way through the seemingly endless corridors to discover research labs, collections of millions of specimens in storage, and small meeting rooms for lectures and activities. We started our work for the day in the museum proper, but had the entire place to ourselves as the building was still closed to the public. We were



challenged to wander through the Fossil Hall to find the exhibit that represented the most significant contributor to biodiversity. The enormous *T. rex* fossil cast tempted some, and others wandered towards the complex coral reef marine ecosystem model. I remembered that our theme for the day was arthropod diversity, so the Burgess Shale exhibit caught my eye. I vaguely remembered examining fossils from this era in an evolutionary biology class at UCLA and knew that it correlated with an explosion of emergent life forms during the Cambrian period that were entirely new to Earth, a product of natural selection acting upon plentiful resources and a more stable, life-friendly environment. (And also there was that question on the pre-test...) The Burgess Shale exhibit became the focus of our first group activity, an attempt to classify and count all of the organisms modeled there. Just as I was starting to think, "You want me to count every worm, bivalve, coral, crustacean..." memories of Class IX biology students whining about counting every kernel on an ear of corn put me back to work dutifully counting organisms.

We then heard from the curator of the Insect Zoo about issues facing taxonomy (biological classification) in light of what we know and, more significantly, what we don't.

Presented with a large shadow box filled with insect specimens on pins, we were asked to physically move the specimens around until we had them positioned into logical subgroups based on observable typical insect characteristics alone. One of the leading insect biologists then escorted us upstairs to the insect collection, where we wandered the halls amongst “over 35 million specimens housed in more than 132,354 drawers, 33,000 jars or vials, and 23,000 slides in more than 5,200 cabinets.” Needless to say, this was not the time to wander off and try to find the restroom. We were given an insider’s view of drawer after drawer of the most colorful, intricate, and ornate bugs one can imagine. Thankfully, a planned bathroom break took place before we settled back into our seats for a lecture entitled, “What genitalia, larval foodplants, and DNA barcodes of Skipper butterflies tell us about biodiversity.” This is why I teach biology.

The last activity of the day was led by Robert Matthews, a leading entomologist. He instructed us through an activity that could easily be replicated in a biology or life science class and kept each of us engaged for the duration. The subject at hand was the nest of the mud dauber—a crafty, solitary wasp. We were each presented with a mud dauber nest (the female builder was long gone) to dissect. We found mud daubers at various stages of development; some larvae were dormant but would respond to touch, while others were active and actually consuming some of the live (but paralyzed) spiders mom left behind. Others found evidence of the parasitic action of the cuckoo wasp, leaving behind only mud dauber carcasses. Now I only need to find a steady supply of mud dauber nests before my ecology unit...

Without going into nauseating detail about the remaining four days of the Biodiversity Academy, I can (somewhat shamelessly) provide a highlights tour. Tuesday was the most divergent of the days, as we traveled out to the Chesapeake Bay for some time with researchers at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center. We spent some time out in the field, learning techniques for studying marine biodiversity including trawling (casting a net off a boat) and seine netting (dragging a net as one walks in waders toward shore). This day was definitely the most fun, and the time on a boat out in the sun was a nice change of pace from the museum.

Wednesday found us back at the NMNH for a private tour of the butterfly exhibit. This was a living exhibit brimming with butterflies of every size, shape, color, and life stage, and was accompanied by a discussion of the coevolution

of butterflies and flowering plants. Another very interesting lecture on echinoderms followed that included the handling of numerous sea urchin, sea star, and sand dollar specimens and the viewing of rather amusing video footage from a submersible camera of feather stars dancing. Time was then spent in the plant collection examining numerous type specimens and hearing of the special significance of plants in the biodiversity spectrum. Later, we worked with an evolutionary biologist to reconstruct the evolutionary tree of reptiles based on structural features of their skulls. We were even able to plug our cladistic data into a computer program to generate our own cladogram.

Thursday got us back out of the museum and into the National Zoo. There we studied rainforest biodiversity (previous adventures in Costa Rica had prepared me well), heard from research scientists about the current amphibian fungal crisis, and learned about new ways to track rare and endangered species in the field (one involved training dogs to identify various scat; better the dog than the field biologist, I say). We also heard from zoo officials about the role that zoos play in educating and engaging the public in the process of preserving the planet’s biodiversity. As someone who doesn’t believe that great apes should be kept in captivity at all, I certainly gained a greater appreciation for the many important social, educational, and environmental roles that zoos play during my time at the National Zoo that day.

Our final day of the academy was spent back at headquarters. We were whisked away to yet another wing of the NMNH to the bird collection. On the way we passed by cabinets with bird specimens collected by Darwin and Wallace, at which I was dying to take a peek. When we reached our destination, an ornithologist displayed numerous bird specimens from the Hawaiian Islands and discussed issues that islands face with preserving biodiversity and reducing extinction rates. We then examined a large boxful of known avian femur bones and attempted to classify an unknown bone based on subtle structural characteristics.

When we left the museum that day, I felt excited to be armed with new information, resources, and contacts. I was ready to revisit the biology unit on biodiversity with a new set of eyes and an expanded sense of the concept. Now with only 1.8 million known species on the Earth and an estimated 30–100 million unknowns to manage, I should have this biodiversity thing covered!

# An Insight into Chinese Calligraphy

子曰: 学而不思则罔, 思而不学则殆.\*

Grace Wang / Modern Languages

*A teacher is to teach students the fundamental relationship between oneself and society, the knowledge and skills to live in society, and to help them answer questions in the learning process (Han Yu, Teacher's Theory, 768–824).*

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Han Yu was a poet, essayist, and advocate for Confucianism. In his *Teacher's Theory*, he eloquently points out the role of teachers and reasserts Confucius's principle of moral development. This principle transcends the realm of the classroom, allowing us to envision the larger role of education in society and our responsibility to future generations. As a teacher, I had not fully realized until this past summer—when I attended a two-week workshop on culture and language in Taiwan—the subtle yet effective ways in which, through our classroom practices, we teachers set the example that will shape our students' moral development.

The workshop I participated in this summer focused on enhancing teachers' understandings of Chinese philosophy, classical literature, and calligraphy. I was particularly impressed with a calligraphy session that I participated in as part of the workshop, where I learned for the first time to appreciate the implications of calligraphy teaching for moral development. In this session, I learned about the planning, patience, and care involved in the process of writing each stroke of a character.

I was humbled by the elegance and complexity embedded in the art of calligraphy, an ancient practice that requires careful planning, discipline, and attention to detail. When one does calligraphy, one has to clear one's mind; focus on nothing else but the word, its form, and its meaning; be patient with one's self; think about the direction of each

stroke; and have the vision of the final product in one's head. In this artful, disciplined, and coordinated exercise between mind and body, there is no turning back once one puts the brush down on the rice paper, as it absorbs the ink quickly.

I will never think about calligraphy in the way I used to—as a traditional and obsolete writing technique. In order to pass down to the students the knowledge that I have learned this summer, I will teach Upper School students in several ways. First, there will be an open discussion about the ideas and philosophy of calligraphy: the art form as it relates to one's personality and the fact that Chinese people promote spiritual growth and personal value through persistently practicing calligraphy.

Then, I will show students a short video illustrating that before writing, a calligrapher clears his or her thoughts through meditation, carefully plans for writing each stroke, and practices the balance between nature and the mind. Students need to understand that calligraphy is both a meditative process and a tangible product of a moral development that requires a huge amount of discipline and persistence. I plan to emphasize that *how* one writes is as important as *what* one writes. Next, I will demonstrate in class the character “sun” and use it to explain how the use of the space, the writing style, and the density of ink all convey a writer's personality. Finally, I will have students follow the principle and practice of writing characters on rice paper.

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*\*Learning without deeper thinking makes one confused, and thinking without further learning gets one into perilous state (Confucius, The Analects of Confucius, 551–479 BC).*

# Down South at the Sewanee Writers' Conference

Brad Whitehurst / English

This July, I attended a 12-day conference of poets, playwrights, and fiction writers at the University of the South, a small liberal-arts college commonly known as Sewanee (which refers to the nearby town perched on the leafy edge of the Cumberland Plateau in eastern Tennessee). My admission to Sewanee had been based on a competitively vetted manuscript of poetry, and that preliminary sign of institutional approbation helped to calm my jitters before I arrived at my first writers' conference.

The opening reception seemed a scene from my Virginia childhood: conspicuously courteous adults with soft-spoken, lilting accents and a penchant for bourbon. My own Proustian madeleine being a shot of Jack Black straight up, I felt irresistibly drawn into the family fold. All around me, yarns were being spun and drolleries drawn out (by Yankees, too) to charmed assents and appreciative laughter. In cool, dry air, unseasonably so for July in the South, I enjoyed unhurried conversations with famous writers in T-shirts and jeans—Alice McDermott, Richard Bausch, Richard Wilbur—each of whom paid the compliment of assuming the rest of us capable of discussing Robert Frost's metrics or So-and-So's latest book. High-minded intellectual debate stood alongside amusing anecdotes and (courtesy of irreverent poet Andrew Hudgins) racy and off-color jokes. Conversations also turned to everyday concerns: the perils of tenure; war stories from the classroom; how to write, pay the bills, raise the children, and still get sleep. Feeling expansive at a reception a few days later, I would manage to invite Claudia Emerson, a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and professor of writing at the University of Mary Washington, to give a poetry reading and seminar at Nightingale, an invitation she politely accepted. (The date remains to be scheduled.)

The next day, my first 90-minute workshop convened. Sixteen students, ranging from 23 to 66 years of age, were to be shepherded by two well-regarded poet-professors of creative writing: Alan Shapiro (University of

North Carolina at Chapel Hill) and Greg Williamson (Johns Hopkins University). I had long been impressed by Alan's poetry and especially Greg's—a bracing blend of formalist polish and wacky colloquial wit. Within minutes I knew that my first choice of workshop had been the right one. As my principal reader, Greg would read my unpublished manuscript and then provide a line-by-line critique at a one-on-one meeting. He and I met for an hour and ended up talking for nearly three. Our conversation continued over drinks that evening and in his car as he drove me and two other participants across campus to that night's reading. And when he asked me a few days later if he could publish one of my poems in *The Sewanee Theological Review*, I knew I had attained poetry nirvana.

Especially impressive among the conference's program offerings were readings given by the fellows, scholarship attendees with a first book published. Each one came well-prepared, read clearly and expressively, exemplified old-pro pacing, adhered to the predetermined time limit, and invariably entertained the audience. Who had ever heard of such a thing: a bunch of poets meeting such high standards in public speaking? Such enthusiastic, young talents, I found myself thinking, certainly speak well for the future of poetry as a public—indeed, a communal—art form.

The most common misconception of writers' conferences is that they provide time to write. While certain retreats and writers' colonies expressly provide free time and space for writers to write, conferences like Sewanee's usually offer "workshopping" (yes, in MFA circles, the noun is also a verb), poetry readings, craft lectures, and other such literary get-togethers. What we conference-goers had been given was not the time to write, but the restorative time to listen, learn, critique, schmooze, and generally feel a part of a larger community of like-minded souls. We were also given the inspiration to keep writing. As Professor Bikk might say, I was with my people. And now back in New York, the revisions continue.

# St. Paul's Suite

Courtney Birch / Head, Music Department

I arrived in London Saturday morning, two days after Commencement. Nightingale's Laura Davis Stahl '94 had used alumnae connections to arrange a stay with the Neubohn family, parents to Britt Neubohn Holt '89 and Olivia Neubohn '95, a former student at St. Paul's Girls' School (SPGS). The Neubohn's lovely house is in South Kensington, nicely situated between the High Street Kensington and Earl's Court tube stops and a quick 15-minute bus ride to SPGS.

I had not been in London since the summer of 1994, and I spent the entire first weekend walking around, fighting off jet lag, and refreshing my memory of how various neighborhoods fit together. I also visited many parks and the Tate Modern and attended Evensong services at St. Paul's Cathedral and St. Martin-in-the-Fields (a London church and choir that I particularly love).

When I arrived at SPGS on Monday morning, I was struck by the contrast between tradition and modernity. I had many pre-conceptions of what the school would be; many of those were spot-on, but some were very far off. For decades, I have been steeped in the English choral tradition, and my primary expectation was that I would hear fabulous choral singing every day. I guess I imagined that while Nightingale girls huddle together over iPods, talking about the latest episodes of their favorite reality TV shows, SPGS girls would be gathering together for spontaneous and fervent renditions of British Renaissance madrigals. Not surprisingly, this was not the case. The senior choir was not even in session, due to the national exams that had taken over the school, and the artistic focus of the music department was on the spring musical, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. When I told my St. Paul's music and drama colleagues that we perform a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta every year in Class VII, they laughed and told me how much their girls loved performing anything American, especially if it related to gangsters, flappers, or New York City (hence, their spring show).

Composer Gustav Holst (1874–1934) was head of the music department at SPGS from 1905 until 1934. The room where I attended many lessons is the room where Holst taught and wrote *The Planets*, among other pieces. The school is justifiably proud of this legacy, and performances of Holst's music are very common. While I was there, I watched the orchestra rehearse three pieces by Holst, including the *St. Paul's Suite*, composed for his students at SPGS.

There are over 45 faculty members in the music department at SPGS. Most of them are adjunct teachers who come in for a day or an afternoon of private lessons. Almost all of the private lessons happen during the school day. The music wing of the main building is vast, with a large auditorium/concert hall/rehearsal space, two classrooms that were about the size of our room 102, several offices, and about 20 practice rooms. The master schedule of lessons alone is an amazing organizational feat. A full-time music administrator took care of much of the logistical (and non-academic) running of the department; she ordered music and instruments, arranged for accompaniment of lessons and classes, handled tickets for concerts, and made sure that everything ran smoothly.

The focus in music classes is very different than at Nightingale. Since SPGS starts with the equivalent of our Class VI, the singing, playing, and moving-to-music classes that are an integral part of Nightingale's Lower School are not necessary. At St. Paul's, there is a huge separation between music classes (called lessons), which are very academic, and performing opportunities. All girls take music twice a week through eighth grade. A standardized national curriculum dictates which concepts, terminology, and history need to be covered in each grade and tested at the end of each year. The music faculty at SPGS decides how to implement each of these required elements and frequently utilizes music from popular culture to illustrate their points. For example, while the Middle IV (Class VI) final exam contained sections on Hildegard of Bingen and



medieval music, Holst's *The Planets*, a Haydn minuet, and Indonesian gamelan music, the Lower V (Class VIII) final exam contained units on reggae music, pop arranging and Lady Gaga, and film scoring. The teachers used brisk comments to keep class in line: "Sensibly and without any damage, put your sheets on the floor"; "You must speak clearly. I hear this and therefore I think that."

Academic music lessons become optional in Class IX. The girls who continued were planning on taking a GCSE exam in music at the end of Class X, and the content of their classes became more intense and serious. We have no equivalent in the U.S. to the four years of music lessons offered to these older students. I sat in on the highest level class (Class XI, since the seniors had already finished their A level exams and moved on) and was amazed by the level of discourse. The teacher asked the three girls: "Which city was the most important in terms of culture in the first decade of the 20th century?" One chose Paris and one chose Vienna, and they were off on a 40-minute discussion involving art, literature, psychology, history, and music. These girls were also able to analyze musical scores, compose, and perform at a high level.

Performance opportunities are entirely separate from the academic lessons. More than 40 performing ensembles, ranging from senior choir to symphony orchestra (with full instrumentation and 70+ members) to "Scat Cats" and "Saxidentelles," meet before school (8:00–8:55 a.m.), during one of two lunch periods, or after school from 4:15–5:30 p.m. The girls went to whatever lunch period was available, depending on their rehearsal schedule. The students were given frequent opportunities to perform in small recitals, more significant "platforms," and major end-of-term concerts. Unlike Nightingale, the concerts

featured many more solo performances than ensemble pieces. Our US Chorus, for example, generally learns six pieces for each concert. The SPGS choir generally performed one or two. However, solo performances were very advanced: movements of concerti, opera arias, and close harmony arrangements of pop songs intermingled.

During my time at SPGS, I attended history, art history, and English lessons in classes VIII–XI. In addition, I attended many rehearsals of *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. I marveled at the utilization of space in the small theater with a very strong 60+ person cast. Because of the national GCSE and A level exams, the girls in Class X and XII were not able to participate in the musical. Girls in Class IX were in the ensemble, and girls in Class XI took the lead roles. The orchestra included students and faculty and played at a very high level.

When I heard singing in other contexts—for example, when the girls pulled out their hymnals at the end of Morning Meeting—I heard a beautiful vocal tone from all of them. There was no discussion or concern about who could sing well and who couldn't. All of them sang well, and all of them were very comfortable singing hymns from a religious tradition that was not even relevant to many of them.

Outside of school, I attended many wonderful theatrical performances, including *Arcadia*, *Warhorse* (formerly at the National Theatre, now on the West End), and *A Little Night Music*. My husband and almost-four-year-old son joined me for the second week. Together, we attended a performance of JM Barrie's *Peter Pan* in Kensington Gardens, which is right around the corner from where Barrie lived and wrote. Kensington Gardens is also the site of the most amazing playground I have ever encountered: the Princess Diana Memorial Playground, also known as the Peter Pan playground. There is a full sized pirate ship, complete with masts and rigging and ladders for climbing on; a group of teepees (accessible by tunnel underneath an embankment); various tree houses of different heights; streams; and lots and lots of sand.

Although much of what the SPGS Music Department is doing is not feasible for our significantly smaller school, I greatly enjoyed being able to compare the two programs. I loved my time in London, and I am grateful to Nightingale for this wonderful opportunity.

# A Memorable and Necessary Vacation

Todd Flomberg / Head, Science Department

"Thank you for calling Walt Disney World Resorts. All of our lines are currently busy. A customer service representative will speak with you as soon as the other customers ahead of you are helped. The next available representative will take your call in approximately... 25 minutes." More than a thousand miles from Space Mountain, and I was already stuck in a long queue.

My fears about spending our family vacation waiting in lines to ride the attractions, much to my relief, were unrealized once we got to Orlando. Thanks to the generosity of the Ann and Andrew Tisch Foundation and the faculty Travelship Award program, we were able to take our first family vacation in six years (I can almost hear the reader's gasp as I write) and do so in style. Explaining why it had been six years without a family vacation is the subject of another article—one that I would rather not write and the reader would not want to read. It goes without saying that the family Flomberg sorely needed a vacation, and the summer provided us with the soonest opportunity to take it.

Disney World was our chosen destination because it was a favorite vacation spot for both me and my wife when we were children. I was 10 when I visited the Magic Kingdom for the first time, and I was dazzled by the scale of it, the lights, and the attention to detail. To this day, my fondest memories of childhood vacations with my parents and brother go back to our stay there more than 30 years ago. Sam, who turned seven this September, had no memories of a family vacation so we decided to make this the one that he will (I hope) never forget. We spent seven days visiting all of the parks that make up the greater Orlando Disneyverse: Epcot, Animal Kingdom, Typhoon Lagoon, Blizzard Beach, Hollywood Studios, and, of course, Magic Kingdom. Like our universe, the Orlando Disneyverse has expanded at an ever increasing rate; it was not nearly this vast when I last visited 25 years ago.

Our favorite park based on the attractions and the food (yes, I was amazed by how good the fare was in some of the restaurants) was Epcot, but every park had its own highlights. What surprised my wife and me the most was Sam's need for speed. After two pedestrian rides on the Frontier Railroad and Peter Pan's Adventure, the boy announced that he wanted to go on rides that "weren't lame." This was the moment when we discovered that Sam was entering a new phase in his life, the pre-tween years, and that my wife can no longer tolerate any ride that accelerates above one g (i.e. what one normally experiences standing on level ground). Being the parent who does not get motion sickness, I was the one who rode with Sam on notable Disney thrill rides including Splash Mountain, Cowabunga Falls, Expedition Everest, Dinosaur, Test Track, and Mission Space—Orange! Waiting in lines (which were surprising short, especially with Fast Pass) afforded me the time to contemplate what kind of father I was for letting my 49-inch tall, seven-year-old boy ride attractions with a minimum height requirement of 48 inches. He never fell out, and he loved it, so I guess that makes me a good one—for now.

Epcot may have been our favorite park, but our favorite day was probably spent at the Magic Kingdom and Contemporary Resort. If you have ever been to Disney World, you would recognize the Contemporary Resort as the modern looking one through which the monorail passes. We enjoyed the character breakfast at the resort, and it was there that Sam reminded us that, although he wants to be a big boy, he is still really a little boy. Goofy, Donald, Mickey, and Minnie began dropping by our table while Sam was munching on his carefully selected bacon strips, waffles, and fruit. He eagerly posed with most of the characters, but he drew the line at Donald Duck. Sam decided that he wanted to get a picture of Donald by himself for reasons known only to Sam, but it did result in some of the funnier photos we took that morning.



After a fun and satisfying breakfast, we spent our midday lazing in the water at the Contemporary Resort while Sam went on the pool slide about 150 times and flirted with a lovely actual teen who was twice his age before heading back to the Magic Kingdom for a full day of fun, thrill rides, and one too many trips to the Haunted Mansion.

The parks were fantastic and memorable for the three of us, and Sam and I will always have the Tower of Terror, but it was also true that some of our most relaxing and enjoyable times were spent frolicking in the Walt Disney World Resort swimming pools.

# Mr. Meikle in China

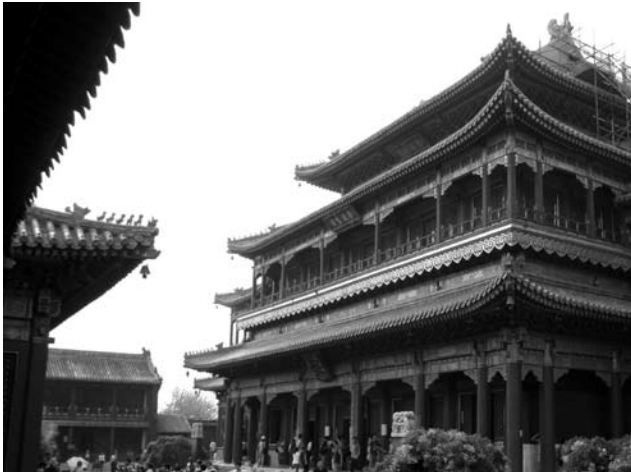
Scott Meikle / Art



Three years ago my son Ross decided that he wanted to live in China. He began to learn Mandarin and within a year had an apartment in Beijing. Chinese culture has always fascinated Ross, and he finds living in China an exciting and interesting experience. I'd been looking forward to seeing him in Beijing, and last spring I was fortunate to receive a travelship grant for just that purpose. He's also a teacher, and so we were able to spend two weeks of our summer vacations together. Besides spending time in Beijing, we explored Shanghai and saw the Great Wall. The most gratifying part of my

trip was seeing my son thriving in China. He was confident and assertive, and I marveled at his fluency in Mandarin.

I saw many beautiful things in China. One evening I watched an elderly lady paint flowing Chinese characters on a park sidewalk. She painted with a long stick covered with strips of cloth soaked in water, and she'd attracted an appreciative audience. I'll never forget the image of the Great Wall below my feet, receding into the mist. Knowing that the "mist" was actually air pollution did nothing to diminish the experience. Ross and I explored forgotten



corners of the Forbidden City, which intrigued me more than the expansive plazas and throne rooms. The art and architecture in Beijing were impressive, and I found the Shanghai Art Museum collection lovely and extensive.

Some of my experiences seemed almost surreal. The bizarre and amazing Shanghai skyline impressed me in this way. Horrible air pollution sometimes caused strangely compelling effects. On a particularly bad day, the sky above Beijing appeared yellow, and all over the city it smelled like baking cinnamon buns.

I enjoyed many new dining experiences. Ross ordered unusual dishes, and while I enjoyed many of them, I was grateful that he thoughtfully ordered less adventurous ones as well.



A simple pleasure we enjoyed together was sitting back to watch local life swirling around us. It was great fun observing the local scene, and I found the experience was enhanced by my son's knowledge of Chinese culture. I noticed elderly people being treated with deference, and I was touched by how much Chinese people seemed to enjoy their children.

I had a wonderful visit. I'd like to thank the travelship committee for awarding me such a generous grant. The funding I received helped to ensure that my trip was a memorable one.

# Travels in Argentina

Lois Strell / Lower School Librarian

Argentina was a perfect trip. I don't say perfect too often or about too much, but this trip combined everything a great trip should.

This was my first time visiting South America. I studied Spanish in high school and took an adult education course or two along the way, but it all came together and I managed to speak Spanish non-stop during my month in Argentina. Somehow I dredged up words from my past (must have been a past life) that I never thought I knew. I landed in Buenos Aires and met my cousin Rosita on my first evening. In 1902, my grandmother came to America from Poland. Her brother soon followed but was denied entry at Ellis Island and continued on to Buenos Aires. He married and had three children, and Rosita is one of them. Rosita speaks only Spanish and Yiddish, but over café con leche we managed to gossip, laugh, and get to know each other very well. We spent a lot of time together in Buenos Aires, seeing museums, sight-seeing, and eating great food.

I am sad I never met my grandmother's brother; he died in 1982. Rosita had many pictures and stories of her father, and it was wonderful to see the family resemblance. My grandmother wrote to her brother, but they were never able to see each other again.

My travelship proposal included a desire to explore the Jewish community of Buenos Aires, past and present. My other cousin, Gabriella, is the head of a private Jewish school in Buenos Aires, but unfortunately the school was closed due to the swine flu (*la grippa*). Gabriella and I did visit the Holocaust Museum in Buenos Aires, a stark, minimalist building that housed a collection that showed the holocaust years from the Argentinean-Jewish perspective. I was surprised to learn about the gauchos Judeos (the Jewish cowboys). In the 1880s, the German Baron Maurice de Hirsch formed the Jewish Colonization Association and bought up land outside Buenos Aires to set aside for Jews fleeing the pogroms in Russia. Growing up on Long Island, I thought Jewish cowboys



were synonymous with the movie *City Slickers*, but learning about the number of Jews that found homes in the pampas was fascinating. On display were newspaper articles and photographs examining South America's early connection to Germany and its politics, including photos of Nazi rallies in Buenos Aires as early as 1937. The entry visa of Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann (under the alias Ricardo Klement) was signed by the International Committee of the Red Cross and on exhibit at the museum. He arrived in Argentina in 1950 and worked in different engineering companies until 1960, when he was captured and brought to trial before an Israeli court in 1961.

After this sobering experience, my cousin and I were happy to visit the Central Synagogue, one of the oldest in Buenos Aires. Built in the 1860s, this beautiful stone building and museum showed the history of Judaism in Argentina. I went to services at my cousin's synagogue and enjoyed the experience of hearing the service and the music in Spanish and Hebrew. I was also fortunate to view an art exhibit, a moving but unexpected addition to my exploration of Jewish culture in Argentina. The exhibit showed political cartoons, memories, and commentary on the 1994 bombing of the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina Building, the Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires. Eighty-five people died in the explosion.



It was both sobering and uplifting to learn about the Jewish experience in Argentina through art, architecture, and personal histories. It was similar to and different from the Judaism with which I grew up.

There was so much more to explore. Through the generosity of this award, I had the unique opportunity to relax and enter into the life of a *porteño*, a Buenos Aires local. I drank café at old world *confiterías* and enjoyed the splendor of coffee at El Ateneo, a glorious old opera house turned into a huge book store. Thanks to my cousins, I enjoyed amazing food and wine at small, out-of-the-way places known to the locals and enjoyed dark chocolate gelato (every day) that rivaled the Italian gelaterias. I soaked up art and architecture on endless walks around Buenos Aires, and one of the high points was taking tango lessons and going out with newfound friends to practice my budding dance skills!

Unlike many visitors to Buenos Aires, I chose to venture out and explore other parts of the country. I flew south to El Calafate, home to the magnificent *Petito Moreno Glacier* and the towering *Andes Mountains* to the east. It was winter in Argentina, all the better to breathe in crisp air while taking a boat ride in milky white waters, past icebergs, glaciers, and steep mountains. I next flew to Ushuaia, *El Fin Del Mundo* (the end of the world) at the



southern tip of Argentina, only 1000 km from Antarctica. What a special place: breath-taking mountains ring the small city, and the crystal clear water of *Beagle Sound* was filled with sea birds, cormorants, and sea lions lounging about. While there I went hiking, snowshoeing, dog sledding, and touring. Next I visited *Iguazú Falls*, a World Heritage site with miles of thunderous waterfalls that made *Niagara Falls* seem like a puddle!

My absolute favorite place was in the northwest, up in the *Corrientes province*. Called *Esteros de Iberá*, it was a wildlife conservation area filled with lagoons and the second largest wetland in the world. I never tired of seeing capybaras, the world's largest rodent; storks that were taller than I am; and a crocodile slurping down a snake. *Posada de Aguapé*, the place where I stayed, was a synonym for the word relaxation. Each morning I'd go out in a canoe or boat and silently glide by huge nesting birds, deer, capybaras, and flocks of colorful birds. It was paradise.

Traveling alone throughout all these natural and man-made wonders in Argentina opened me up to meeting many interesting people who enriched my time there and made my trip a memorable experience. I will stay in touch with the members of my newly discovered family and look forward to visiting again. It was a perfect trip.

# Our Croatian Voyage

Rebekah Zuercher / Mathematics



Croatia has emerged from many war-torn years to reveal its countless hidden gems. Descriptions of an endless coastline, well-preserved Renaissance towns, and extraordinarily good pizza were more than enough to pique my interest and prompt my travelship application to visit.

I began my two-week voyage with my husband in the southern, walled city of Dubrovnik. The two-kilometer walk around the ancient walls provided stunning views of both the Adriatic Sea and the sea of red clay roof tops that the walls served to protect. Little evidence remained of the 1991 Serbian siege of Dubrovnik, as the buildings and roofs had been painstakingly restored to their original style. As it was our first day in Croatia, we did not realize that the charming shade of the fig trees and olive vines, accompanied by a refreshing scoop of gelato, would become our afternoon ritual.

We spent the next few days island hopping up the coast, where we sailed past one of (yes, one of) the birthplaces of Marco Polo. We learned that the island of Korcula had been home to the well-established Polo family. According to local tradition, it was here that Marco Polo was born in 1254. Charmed by this story and the pride of the locals, it was only a week or so later, when we arrived at the second "birthplace of Marco Polo," that we raised our eyebrows. In the meantime, we reveled in the seaside beauty of Hvar, Split, and Trogir.

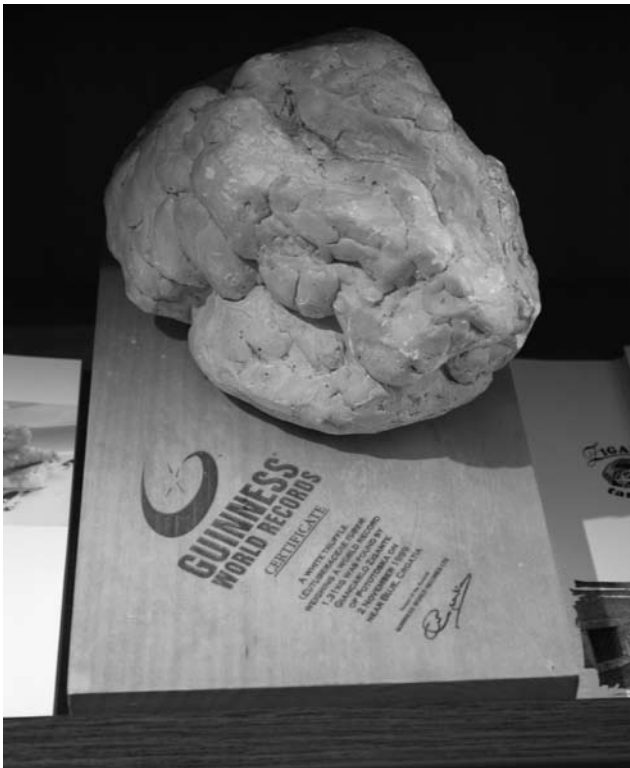
As we approached the northern Croatian coast we took our one foray inland, to the slaps of the Plitvicka Jezera National Park. We learned a pathetically small number of Croatian words on our journey, but "slap," meaning "waterfall," remains in our vocabulary, as the countless slaps in the National Park were labeled prominently. The waters of Plitvicka Jezera are most well-known for their otherworldly colors. Depending on the quantity of minerals in the water and the angle of the sun, the lakes not only shift from blues to greens to grays, but can also change from a milky, opaque appearance to a stark, clear-as-air quality. We toured the lakes until sunset, basking in the spray of waterfalls.

At this point in our trip we had been dining almost exclusively on freshly caught fish, seafood risotto, and outstanding pizza that did not disappoint. Delicious as these foods were, we were awfully excited to enter Istria, the unofficial truffle capital of the world. None of our souvenir spending thus far compared to our splurges at Zigante's, the world famous restaurant with an attached shopping mart. We sampled minced truffles, chopped truffles, white truffle butter, black truffles with olive tapanade, and six different olive oils infused with truffles. White truffles, by the way, are rarer, more expensive, and more delicate, thus most of our take-home supply featured the more affordable black truffle. The store is named for its owner, Giancarlo Zigante, who in 1999 found the world's largest truffle (featured in the *Guinness Book of World Records*).

Though our Croatian travels concluded in Istria, our homeward bound flight departed out of Venice, leaving one last day for exploration in Italy. It was on our Venetian walking tour that we came to another birthplace of Marco Polo. The locals here felt equally pleased to claim this explorer as their own, while we were pleased to witness a historical debate first-hand. Upon returning home, trading travel stories with colleagues continues to be a delight. I am so grateful to Nightingale for the opportunity to broaden my experiences through traveling in Croatia.



above: view of Dubrovnik taken from surrounding walls  
below left: bronze cast of world's largest truffle; below right: water reflecting sky at Plitvicka Jezera







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