



# WHEATON

SUMMER 2008

QUARTERLY

## SHADES OF GREEN

**Alums embrace earth-friendly efforts**

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*By Mary Howard '85*

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Yes! Summer is back.

Photo by Keith Nordstrom





## **WHEATON QUARTERLY**

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**Editor** Sandy Coleman

**Assistant Editor/Class Notes** Karen Mateer

**Senior Writer** Hannah Benoit

**Art Director** Barbara Dill P'92

**Designer** Michael Kurgansky

**Staff Writers** Betsy Cronin, Scott Dietz, Josh Kessler,  
Anna Wistran Wolfe

**Assistant Vice President for Communications** Michael Graca

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# Hey, that's not trash!

True story. I have a colleague (who shall remain nameless) who will pluck certain trash right out of the garbage if she sees you discard it. I saw this firsthand recently when I carelessly tossed the empty box from my frozen entree into the trash. My colleague raced over and fished it out. "Hey, I can recycle that," she said smiling.

This same colleague also washes plasticware so that it can be reused. Got to admit, not too sure about that one. But I do greatly admire her commitment to save the planet one act of kindness at a time. Our alumnae/i have that same passion for green. For them, green is more than a fad that will fade. It is a calling to a greater good. This *Quarterly's* cover story by writer Mary

Howard '85 takes a look at their varied earth-friendly efforts.

And speaking of green, biology student Alexandra Sabella '08 has seen a lot of it. She has spent months researching plant specimens in Wheaton's herbarium. We take a look at the work that state officials think could aid regional conservation efforts.

There are two other great reads in this issue. Tom Nugent has written a profile of social scientist Helen Zarsky Reinherz '44, who is responsible for a landmark study on child development. And Hannah Benoit gives us an inspiring story about Alida Adams '08, who went to Guatemala and helped women create a sustained way to support themselves. 



Megan Luce '03 helps Clean Vibes with recycling at a music festival. Find out more about her efforts on page 30.

## ▶ LETTERS

### A nice treat

What a surprise and treat to see myself, in the blossom of youth, on the End Page of the spring *Quarterly*. The class pictured is the great Class of '60, one of the many classes to enjoy Leota Colpitts's dinners.

We are all close friends. Jill Walsh is behind Leota. I am to her left and Nancy Greer is to her right. Vicki Christensen is to my left. I can't identify the others. Miss Colpitts also had the tradition of embroidering our names on a tablecloth. We would sign it at dinner, and she would present it to the class at graduation.

Thanks for the memories.

*Karen Greenland Dyer '60*

### Stirring up memories

Your End Page on Leota Colpitts brought back memories and sent me to the depths of a cabinet in

search of my old packet of Wheaton recipes. I retrieved the cards (vintage 1967), complete with the recipe you printed for her Chocolate Delight.

Stains on my cards reveal that I experimented with some of the recipes, mostly desserts. At some point in the '70s, perhaps when I began subscribing to a cooking magazine, I reorganized my clipped recipes and stowed the Wheaton cards away. I suspect that I contemplated tossing them out, but old memories must have held me back. Maybe I should pass this bit of history on to a senior at Wheaton, my niece, Alanna Myrick. Thanks so much for the article.

*Tiggy Myrick Green '67*

### Thanks for recipes

I have all the cards Leota Colpitts handed out to the Class of 1968. My

**Web extra: Check out Leota Colpitts's recipes at [www.wheatoncollege.edu/Quarterly/Q2008Summer/](http://www.wheatoncollege.edu/Quarterly/Q2008Summer/)**

favorite I made yesterday, L.C.C.'s banana nut bread. *So-o* good for Sunday night supper with a salad!

Thank you for thinking of these recipes. I enjoyed many a night at her house with fellow classmates and the ever-present lovable huge dogs.

*Joan Bowie Brown '68*

### It's a small world

I was reading the *Wheaton Quarterly* this afternoon. My husband and I receive it because our son, Nicholas Gordon, is a junior this year at Wheaton. I was pleased and amused to see the article about our "neighbor" Hope Pettegrew. I thought the magazine might get a kick out of the fact that Nick's father, Michael Gordon, was also a Peterborough Citizen of the Year in 2004. It's a small world!

Thanks for your always well done publication.

*Betsy Gordon P'09*

## What's on your mind ?

The *Quarterly* welcomes letters to the editor on topics you've read in these pages or on other topics concerning the Wheaton community. Please address your letters to:

Sandy Coleman, editor,  
*Wheaton Quarterly*,  
Wheaton College,  
26 E. Main St.,  
Norton, MA. 02766

You can also e-mail us:  
[quarterly@wheatoncollege.edu](mailto:quarterly@wheatoncollege.edu).

# Cultivating learners

Wheaton hosts many fascinating guest lecturers during the course of the year, and attending those events is one of the many pleasures of college life. Some visitors, however, shine just a bit brighter, even among an all-star line-up. Barbara Damrosch '64 wowed the crowd in Hindle Auditorium this semester with her knowledge of the art and science of agriculture, her passion for a return to more sustainable farming practices and her sense of humor.

I took particular delight in the lecture, because it demonstrated the creativity that can arise from an interdisciplinary approach to the world. An English major at Wheaton who went on to earn a master's in writing at Columbia, Barbara dove into horticulture, and she developed a passion for gardening and the scientific knowledge to complement it.

The key to farming lies in good soil, she said, discussing the complex mix of animal, mineral and vegetable that is required for healthy flowers, fruits and vegetables. "Garden soil is not a thing, it's a process," Barbara said. And that remark has stayed with me in the weeks since she visited campus. The same might be said of education, particularly the type of high-quality personalized learning experience that Wheaton offers students.

What makes Wheaton special is the enduring value of the liberal arts, which takes root on campus but grows and evolves along with the individual. The motto inscribed above the Madeleine Clark Wallace Library, "That they may have life and have it abundantly," references the value that the college places on lifelong learning. On campus or around the world, alumnae/i tell me regularly that their Wheaton education continues to influence their lives. Once nurtured, the love of learning continues to grow.

The use of gardening as a metaphor for education is not new at Wheaton. Former provost Hannah F. Goldberg held regular gatherings with members of the faculty to talk about the art of undergraduate teaching. Their meetings led to a variety of curricular innovations, such as an emphasis on non-Western cultures and the creation of the First Year seminars. Hannah has been quoted as saying, "The curriculum is like a garden that needs work and pruning."

The cultivation continues. Faculty members recently completed a two-year examination of the college's new Connections curriculum, and they will be making recommendations on how the program can be improved for the future. A committee of faculty and staff from across the campus is engaged in a yearlong study of the college's programs as a precursor to Wheaton's reaccreditation visit in the spring of 2009.

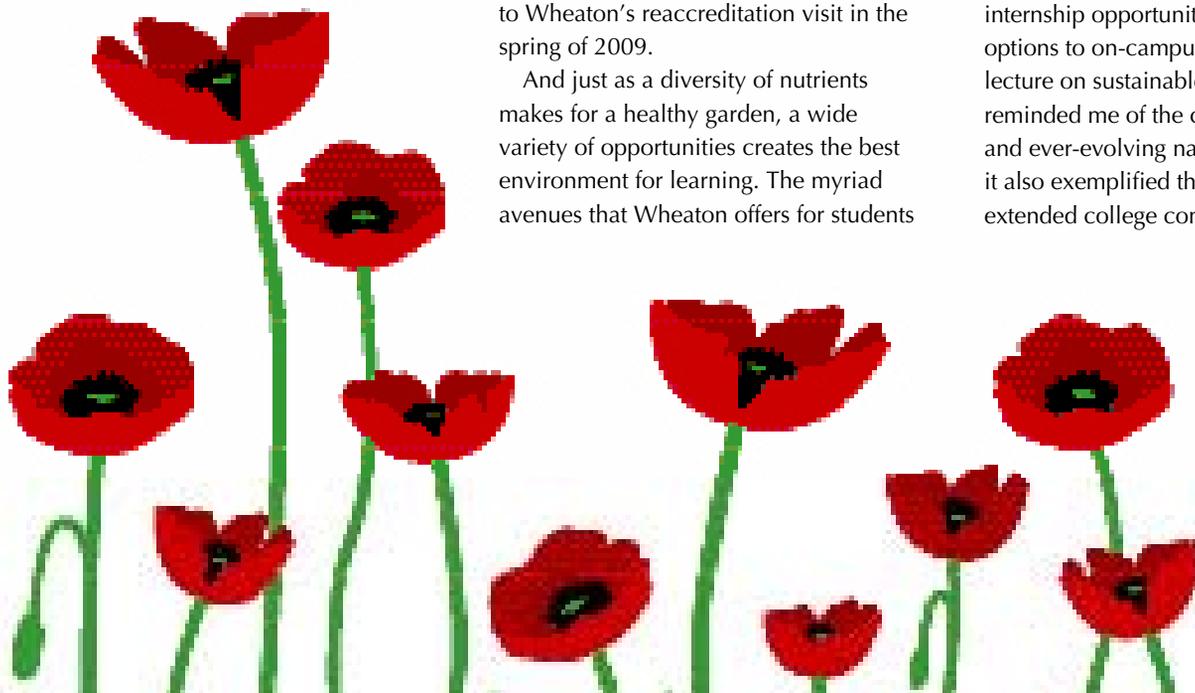
And just as a diversity of nutrients makes for a healthy garden, a wide variety of opportunities creates the best environment for learning. The myriad avenues that Wheaton offers for students

to explore their interests and test their talents is critical. It provides the conduit for students to grow as leaders and active citizens. First and foremost, our faculty members' commitment to teaching translates into many special opportunities for students. Wheaton's 10-to-1 student-faculty ratio ensures that every student has the chance to be mentored by outstanding professors.

In addition, the college facilitates internships and jobs arranged through the Filene Center for Work and Learning; independent and faculty-led study abroad; community service and social advocacy facilitated by the Office of Spirituality, Service and Social Responsibility; leadership on campus through student organizations; and athletic competition.

The variety of ways in which students can combine learning in the classroom and beyond encourages creative and critical thought and sharpens their ability to communicate with clarity. These opportunities also develop leadership skills and the ability to solve problems.

In a sense, we are all gardeners: faculty and staff, students, alumnae/i, parents and friends. Each of us plays a critical role in tending to the growth of our educational community. Generosity provides funding to sustain and enhance many programs. Active engagement fuels numerous unique learning opportunities—from special internship opportunities and networking options to on-campus events. Barbara's lecture on sustainable gardening not only reminded me of the cyclical, complex and ever-evolving nature of learning, but it also exemplified the rich talents of our extended college community. 





Matthew Hinton

## New Orleans: A second helping

For a second year in a row, a group of dedicated Wheaton students, faculty and staff headed south to New Orleans to contribute to the relief efforts and rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina, which happened almost three years ago.

Thirty-five Wheaton volunteers spent a week in New Orleans during January break with Relief Spark, a nonprofit organization based in Louisiana that helps communities respond and rebuild during and after natural disasters. Members organized the Wheaton volunteers' week of projects, as well as provided food, accommodations and a tour of areas in New Orleans that are still in ruins.

Each day the group tackled a different project, including working at the Animal Rescue of New Orleans and at an

apartment building where they installed 2,400 energy efficient lightbulbs. On their final day, they worked at City Park, which was under six feet of water after the hurricane hit. The group mulched trails and cleared brush at the park that once had 220 employees, but now has 18.

"My favorite day of volunteering was at the park because it was nice to see the progress the group made at the end of the day," said Joseph Donahue '10, one of the team leaders. "Having done a similar project last year, I know how grateful the residents of New Orleans are to have even the simplest things, such as parks, restored. Countless residents stopped their cars and said 'thank you' for helping to restore their park."

The students began planning for the trip last fall. They

raised more than \$19,000 through family, friends and the Wheaton community. Students applied for spots, and they had frequent planning meetings throughout the semester. "All 35 of us worked really hard to get to New Orleans," said Greta Phillips '09, head of the planning committee.

"It makes everything we've heard on the news the last two and a half years more real to hear it from the mouth of a survivor and to drive the streets and see the devastation that still exists," said Phillips.

Last year, the Wheaton volunteers helped rebuild five local parks. Donahue was on the inaugural trip, and this year revisited a site where he worked. "It was rewarding to see that kids were playing at the park and the neighborhoods were much

more alive," he said. "While progress has undoubtedly been made, there is still an immense need for help. It is inspiring to see some of the neighborhoods come to life again, but it is also unsettling to realize just how much work has to be done until the communities are back to 'normal.'"

Wheaton's Office of Service, Spirituality and Social Responsibility (SSSR) helped the students coordinate the trip. Katherine Jennings, community partnership specialist in SSSR, was part of the planning and also traveled with the students. "Everyone was very responsible and the community was grateful for our work," she said. "We were such a large group that people would stop us so they could tell us their story." 

—Anna Wistran Wolfe

# Computer hookup

A group of Wheaton students have taken a small but significant step to address global inequities in access to educational technology. They have established a computer clinic for rural schoolchildren in the Philippines, working in partnership with a grassroots organization.

Rodrigo Bacus '10, Pierre Dizon '09, Ryan Letada '08 and Christine Panzarella '10 collected 11 Windows-based computers and raised more than \$10,000 for the project. The students spent three weeks during January break setting up the Pinoy Computer Clinic for the students of Lucena East 1 Elementary School in Quezon Province. ("Pinoy" is a vernacular term for "Filipino.") Many of the school's 1,850 students come from needy families who can barely afford adequate food and school supplies, the Wheaton students said.

The group's partner organization in the Philippines was Uplift Movement, Inc., a



nonprofit foundation that focuses on affordable health care, education and community-based entrepreneurship. The computer clinic is housed across the street from Lucena East at the Harmony Christian School, a more affluent institution that enrolls fewer than 90 students. Harmony Christian is

building a facility for the clinic and hosting it as a community service to Lucena East.

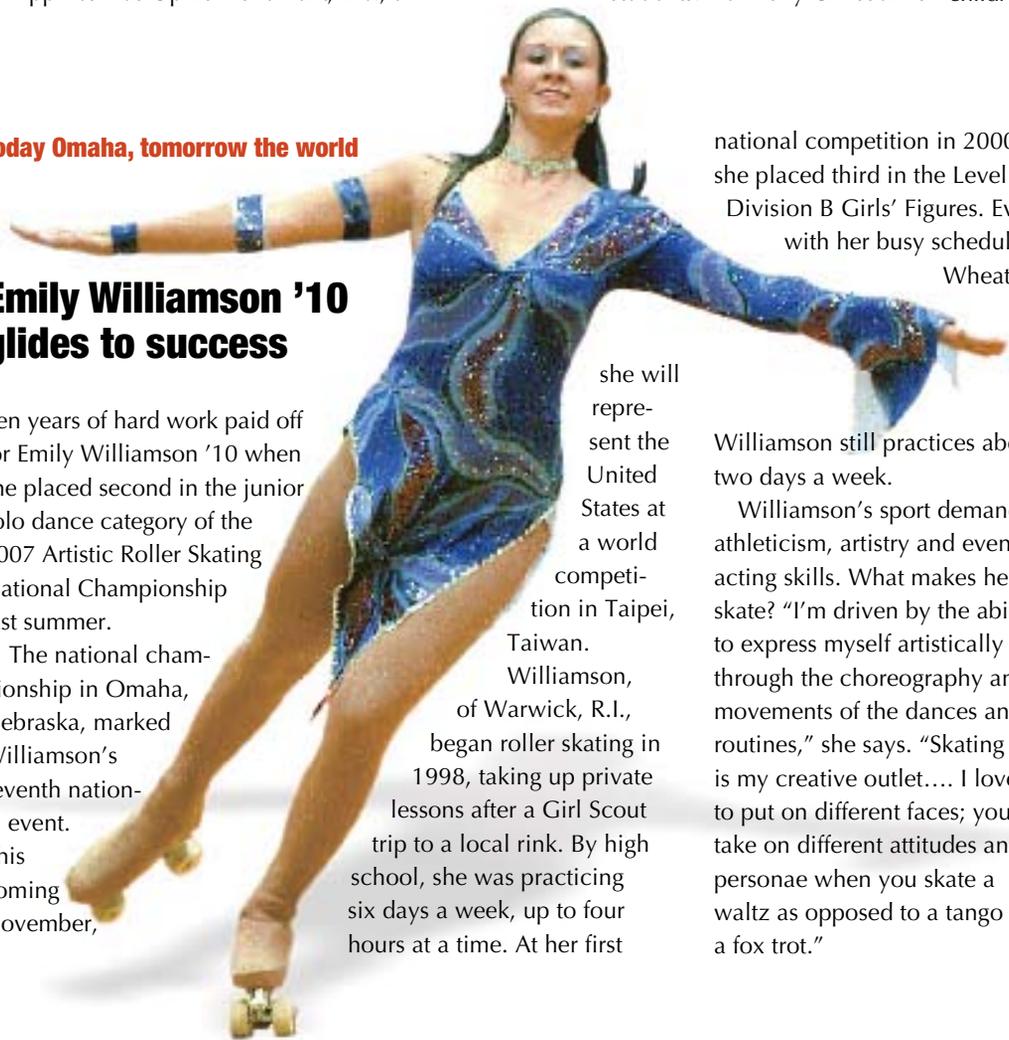
"We have plans to replicate our program throughout the country," said Letada. "Now, more than ever, I believe that we can have a major impact on the lives of less privileged children." □

## Today Omaha, tomorrow the world

# Emily Williamson '10 glides to success

Ten years of hard work paid off for Emily Williamson '10 when she placed second in the junior solo dance category of the 2007 Artistic Roller Skating National Championship last summer.

The national championship in Omaha, Nebraska, marked Williamson's seventh national event. This coming November,



she will represent the United States at a world competition in Taipei, Taiwan.

Williamson, of Warwick, R.I., began roller skating in 1998, taking up private lessons after a Girl Scout trip to a local rink. By high school, she was practicing six days a week, up to four hours at a time. At her first

national competition in 2000, she placed third in the Level II Division B Girls' Figures. Even with her busy schedule at Wheaton,

Williamson still practices about two days a week.

Williamson's sport demands athleticism, artistry and even acting skills. What makes her skate? "I'm driven by the ability to express myself artistically through the choreography and movements of the dances and routines," she says. "Skating is my creative outlet.... I love to put on different faces; you take on different attitudes and personae when you skate a waltz as opposed to a tango or a fox trot."

In Omaha, Williamson also teamed up with her brother Andrew, 16. The pair placed sixth in the Sophomore A Team Dance event after just four months' practice together.

A biochemistry major, Williamson approaches her studies with as much vigor as she does roller skating. She is a member of the pre-health society, works for the Chemistry Department in the labs, and is a student ambassador for the Office of Admission. Williamson participated in the January Chemistry Scholars Program at Wheaton and in August presented research with Professor Laura Muller to the American Chemical Society. After graduation, she hopes to pursue medical or graduate school. □

—Prima Bartlett '10



▶ A MINUTE WITH ...

## Roxanna Azari '10

One year later, the impression that Roxanna Azari '10 made at the Women's History Month luncheon lingers like an unforgettable song. At the annual gathering, the award-winning spoken word performance artist let loose one of her poems that touched upon her Iranian heritage and sexism.

**POETIC JUSTICE:** "That poem is called 'Seen Not Heard.' It was written in response to a man who told me and my friends in the movie theatres in New York City that 'women are supposed to be seen not heard.' I compare this incident to another incident in Iran when another man told me and my cousin that our pants were too far above our ankles. I intertwine these two experiences of being a woman in different countries to point out that sexism is still prevalent no matter what part of the world one comes from. I wrote this piece to address the struggle of being a woman in the world today." **RHYME AND REASON:** The English major has been writing poetry since she was 7 and has deep roots in the art form. "My grandmother is an amazing poet. She used to write all the time and I used to just listen to her. She would write in Farsi and although I am fluent in the language, the poetry was very hard to understand. But with time, I was able to understand little by little." **POETRY IN MOTION:** In 2006, Azari won both the New York Knicks Poetry Slam and the Urban Word NYC Poetry Slam, beating out more than 500 others. "Spoken word is written from the heart. There are no restrictions; you make your piece what you want it to be. That is why I like it so much. It gives me space to break rules and write outside the margins that often restrain my thoughts." **SPEAKING UP:** The preceptor and social justice intern in the Office of Service, Spirituality and Social Responsibility this year founded iSpeak! at Wheaton, a spoken word poetry club. "In my old high school we had a group called the Live Poets Society. We met every week, and it was just a beautiful thing. I found my voice in that club. Believe it or not I was extremely shy in high school. We're talking never-raised-my-hand-in-class-once-type shy. But this club helped me." ◻

Nicki Pardo



## A time out

One cello. Five poets. Four hundred African drums. And 200-plus sophomores wondering: What in the world is this Sophomore Half-time thing about?

That was the scene during the opening day of Sophomore Half-time, which was held this winter in the Beard Field House of the Haas Athletic Center. For the first time, sophomores were asked to return early from winter break to participate in three days of events, discussions and workshops designed to give them time to reflect halfway through their college journey and to connect with their classmates on the common challenges they face. Some may have wondered at first how all of the activities connected to their college experience, but there was a method to the madness that became clear by the end.

On opening day, President Ronald Crutcher, donning his red Bill Cosby-style sweater, played

an original cello piece written for him; five Wheaton spoken word artists performed a poem about education; and members of the New York-based Drum Café led the more than 200 sophomores in attendance in a raucously fun African drumming workshop that was about more than music. The interactive call-and-response session offered lessons about working as a team, appreciating differences, supporting each other and realizing that there is a basic beat that unifies.

Sophomore Half-time was organized and led by a team consisting of Dean of Students Sue Alexander, associate deans Claudia Bell and Vereene Parnell, several faculty and administrators from the Academic Advising Center, and Deborah Bial, the Posse Foundation president and founder, who brought a half-dozen of her Posse Scholar facilitators to direct discussions and icebreakers. Senior Associate

Dean of Students Jack Kuszaj provided technical support.

One of the icebreakers required the sophomores to stand in two circles facing each other and take turns answering questions that ranged from the bizarre (Angelina Jolie: Angel or evil maniac?) to the personal (Talk about something most people don't know about you).

"At first, I was a little skeptical about the program. I think a lot of kids were a little hesitant because we didn't know what was in store," said Prima Bartlett '10. "But after the first evening, the majority of the class seemed to agree that it was a really fun and worthwhile experience."

Said Elizabeth Mundy '10: "Knowing that the college isn't solely interested in those students who have just entered and those who are about to leave is really helpful. I don't feel like Wheaton is a college where a student begins and then is forgotten about.

Sophomore Half-time helped to solidify this idea."

On the last day of the event, students watched a film by Blair Rossetti '09 about the resources available at Wheaton. As a final activity, students wrote letters to themselves about their hopes and intentions for the next two years. Those letters will be mailed to them in the spring of senior year.

"I loved watching some of the interpersonal barriers fall as the program progressed," said Dean Alexander. "We also got some great suggestions from sophomores about what would make Wheaton a better place and we will share those across the college.

"Students were overwhelmingly positive in their evaluations, but made good suggestions for future programs," she said. "We will undoubtedly tweak the schedule next year." 

—Sandy Coleman



## An apple not far from the tree

Not just any man could get away with—or would even want to try—wearing a shoulder-length, curly wig, frilly shirt and floral print vest. Of course, Harrison “Chuck” Straley is not just any man. Wheaton’s teaching associate in mathematics and computer science is so into his subject matter that he is more than willing to dress as Sir Isaac Newton to spark interest in math and science.

“My students claim I am crazy, but I think I am just colorful,” said Straley, who is very interested in exploring practical ways to improve school mathematics and instruction at all levels. A few times a year, he is invited to appear as Newton as part of a lecture performance at professional meetings and gatherings for historical and student groups.

He was even invited to write “An Interview with Sir Isaac Newton” for the November issue

of *Math Horizons*, a leading mathematics journal. In the article, the good-humored Straley basically interviews himself—as Newton, of course.

The role-playing all began in the early 1990s when Straley, his wife, Charlene Straley, and his son, Forrest Straley (a professional actor), received a grant to research the conflict between mathematicians Wilhelm Leibniz and Isaac Newton over who first developed calculus. The research led to, among other things, their writing a one-person play, *Isaac Newton, A Dramatic Lecture*. (When most people think of Newton they picture him sitting under a tree and an apple falling on his head as he comes up with the Universal Law of Gravity.)

The Straleys’ 45-minute play, which delves into Newton’s life and his conflicts, is designed to interest young people in mathematics and science through

drama and history. “The dramatization is historically accurate and tries to portray Isaac Newton as a human being.

“Newton is a perfect example of ‘blind luck’ changing the course of human history,” Straley notes. “His father [Isaac Newton Sr.] died before Isaac Jr. was born. Had Isaac’s dad lived, Isaac Jr. would have been brought up to work the farm and would likely not even have learned to read (Isaac’s dad was illiterate) or at most would have learned to read and write at a very basic level. He would likely have been an ignorant, clever, happy, unknown farmer. He would never have gone to Trinity College, and history would have been without Sir Isaac Newton.”

Straley, who in 1989 was honored at the White House for his teaching excellence, has taught most grade levels, from kindergarten to graduate school. While teaching AP calculus he became

very interested in the conflict between Leibniz and Newton over who first discovered calculus.

Straley’s own love of math began early in life. His father has an undergraduate degree in math. And Straley recalls playing number and measuring games as a boy, especially during an extended childhood illness when he was 6.

“Math is like a puzzle, you start with only a few pieces and finally you have a great beautiful design,” he said. “I wish I knew how to significantly increase the number of math lovers. I suspect that young people who have unpleasant emotional experiences with math learn to dislike it and those who have pleasant emotional experiences with math learn to like it. The core problem is to minimize the unpleasant experiences with math and increase the pleasant.”

Sir Isaac Newton might just do the trick. 🍏

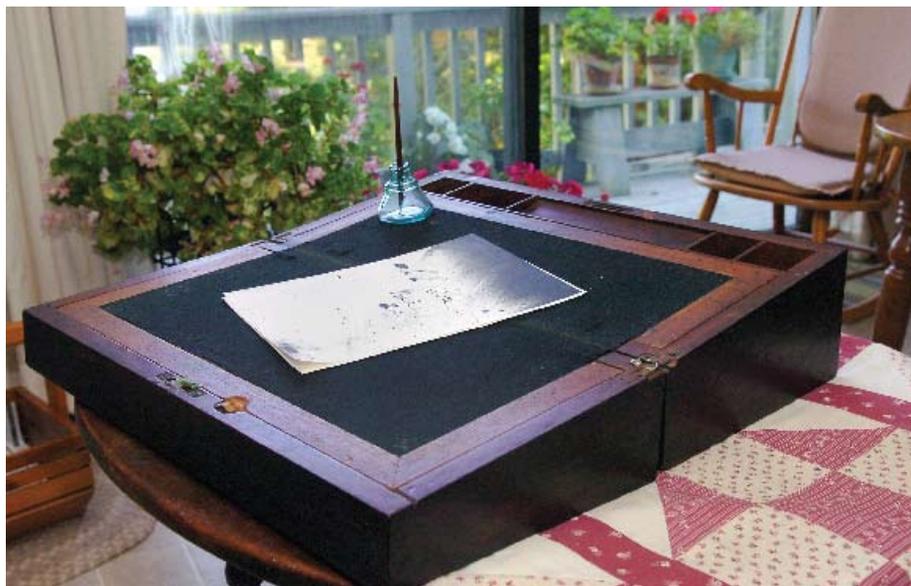
# Thanks for the *regift*

In the home of Robert Hawes and Alice McKinstry Hawes, a modest but historically significant wooden lap desk has been under the guestroom bed collecting dust. For years, it has been one of those cute little gifts that gets a chuckle then gets put away and forgotten.

But thanks to house cleaning, the desk will again see the light of day. Samuel Valentine Cole, Wheaton's president from 1897 to 1925, is believed to have owned the desk. The Maine couple, whose daughter-in-law is alumna Belen Wieler '89, has donated the desk to Wheaton. Regifting is OK in this case.

Measuring 22 by 22 inches when open, the wooden box has a writing surface that is covered in felt. It has small compartments for writing instruments and storage for papers under the writing surface.

"It is in quite good condition considering the age," said Hawes, a retired animal scientist. "This case was supposedly owned by Dr. Cole when he was a student at Bowdoin College in Maine. His name and the words 'Bowdoin College' are written in pencil under the writing surface."



Bridget Brown

Hawes and his wife (a retired schoolteacher) have owned the desk since 1967 when his father-in-law gave it to them as a gift because Hawes and the desk are from Maine. The story of how it ended up in his in-law's possession is quite the tale, worthy of a sit-down in a rocking chair to listen. But long story short: Hawes's father-in-law was given the desk when he was 9 years old by a minister of his Chicopee, Mass., church who was married to Cole's sister. The father-in-law then gave it to Hawes when Hawes finished graduate work. Now, Hawes and his wife are

simplifying their lives and want the desk to be in a proper place. (Coincidentally, Eliza Baylies Chapin Wheaton and Alice Hawes are linked genealogically as descendants of Deacon Samuel Chapin.)

Wheaton archivist Zephorene Stickney said the college is thrilled to accept the gift. "Not only because Cole was such a crucial figure in Wheaton's history, second only in importance to Eliza Baylies Wheaton, but because it reveals that this very forward-looking and modern man was a product of the 19th century." 

## Preserving the past

By Zephorene Stickney, college archivist



Detail of Byron cabinet

Whether you have been a part of Wheaton for many years, or you are a relative newcomer, you have memories and perceptions of objects and traditions that are a part of the college's past and present.

To identify and preserve these important parts of Wheaton's past, Provost Molly Easo Smith has formed the Preservation and Stewardship Team (PaST), which will examine a wide range of things, from landscape to buildings and artifacts to cultural events. Chaired by college archivist Zephorene Stickney, the members of PaST will include the provost or her representative, the curator of Wheaton's permanent collection of art, and faculty. PaST is seeking specialized preservation grants, as well as volunteer contributions of expertise, and the purchase or return of artifacts that have a bearing on the college's history.

One of the top priorities will be the revival of Founders' Day, which began on Sept. 27, 1889, when students presented red roses to Eliza Wheaton in honor of her 80th birthday. Another goal will be to restore the "Byron" desk and cabinet, which many generations of Wheaton students will remember from the Cole Memorial Room or the library lobby. Over the years, much of the desk's ebony and ivory inlay became loose, and pieces were occasionally popped off as souvenirs. Photos reveal the dramatic changes in the desk's appearance over the past 80 years.

In 1983, an anonymous alumna returned an ivory cherub, along with a note explaining how much she had enjoyed studying in the Cole room and that she had taken the "souvenir" as a memento. Other alumnae/i who have bits of the desk should return them to the college archives, along with the story of how they acquired the piece. The college gladly offers "artifact amnesty"—and anonymity. 



Sophomore Neil Kathok '10, who contributed to the book, looks over Perl code with professors Dyer and LeBlanc.

Keith Nordstrom

## Programming for the curious biologist

The emerging field of bioinformatics has opened up exciting new research opportunities for biologists, but it also has presented them with a problem: learning how to harness the computational power of computers.

To advise travelers navigating the unfamiliar terrain of computer programming, Wheaton professors Betsey Dyer (biology) and Mark LeBlanc (computer science) have written a guidebook, *Perl for Exploring DNA*, that serves as an introduction to computer-aided searching of biological sequences.

The book, which was published by Oxford University Press, represents an accessible approach to the use of Perl for genomic research, a subject that Dyer and LeBlanc have been exploring with students in laboratory research and through “connected” courses

in biology and computer science that they began teaching in 1998. The text for the book began in 2003 with a series of primers written for students in the pair’s team-taught class, DNA, and grew from there.

“Mark and I realized that we ourselves needed this book and so did colleagues that we were meeting at various workshops and conferences,” says Professor Dyer. Professor LeBlanc adds that “our Wheaton students were our first readers” for the second complete draft of the book, which was used as a text for one of the pair’s courses. Programs written by students working with the professors are included in the book and its companion Web site as examples from which readers can build their own customized program.

“The book is for students of all ages (including professors) who are moving in an interdisciplinary direction,” says Dyer. “This is such a new field that everyone is a student.”

Indeed, professors at other institutions are discovering the book as they try to learn the field themselves. “Having been assigned the task of starting a three-class bioinformatics programming intensive..., I researched every available resource and had chosen a combination of texts with which I was not completely satisfied,” one college professor wrote in an Amazon.com review of the book. “Then I got a copy of this text and had the bookstore send the others back.”

LeBlanc confirms that he and Dyer have heard from a number of colleagues who are adopting their text. “We are receiving good feedback from professors who were looking for a new book to help programmers enter the field of bioinformatics,” he says. “Colleagues at UNH, WIT, Vassar, Hiram and more have either used it or are about to this coming spring semester.”

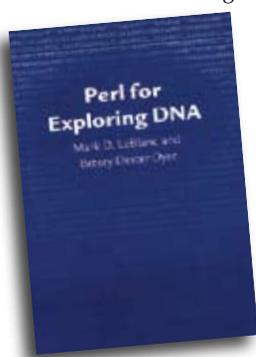
The swift response reflects the intense interest in the use of computers to map and translate genes and proteins. Large-scale

genome-mapping projects, such as the human genome effort, have developed enormous amounts of DNA sequence data that is, for the most part, not yet understood. In their collaborative research with students, Dyer and LeBlanc have put computer power and their students’ curiosity and energy to work in exploring this massive new field.

“Biology has returned to an age of discovery, perhaps not seen since the days of nineteenth century scientific expeditions,” Dyer and LeBlanc write in the book’s introduction.

LeBlanc and Dyer’s research has yielded a number of journal articles in this field, many of which boast students as contributing authors. And their work has been funded by several grants, including awards from the National Science Foundation, the college’s Mars Student-Faculty Research Collaborative Fellowships, Davis Educational Grants, Wheaton Research Partners and Wheaton Foundation Grants. 

—Michael Graca



# Business *unusual*

Many people dream about starting a business *someday*. For several Wheaton students, *someday* is now.

Smart and ambitious, they have drawn on the resources of Wheaton's Filene Center for Work and Learning, balanced the demands of academics and college life, and started businesses—way before leaving Wheaton.

Juliann True '08 created Booli Bags, which features the colorful handmade purses that she designs. She sells her bags on campus and in several shops in Worcester, Mass., and Newport, R.I. Rubin Cronig '10 started his company, Rubin Douglas (his middle name), while in high school and sells his designer handcrafted watches to high-end jewelry and fashion stores. With a friend, Victor Martinez '09 developed 206 Freshcity, which is in Lawrence and Lowell, Mass., and offers men's apparel customized with graffiti-style art. Inspired by his economics classes at Wheaton, Michael Wright '09 started an entertainment management business

called Neks Generation (spelling intentional for branding). He currently manages rapper P-Rich, whose songs are getting a lot of radio play in New York.

True's business draws from her childhood passion and nickname, Juli Booli. "I've always been a big bag girl—I used to stuff bags inside of bags and carry them around the house. I collected them and eventually it led me to drawing up designs for them," said the Italian studies major who has double minors in studio art and women's studies. "I was hesitant to actually do anything with the designs, but my best friend, Emily Perkins '09, who owns a jewelry business called Elephant Rocks, encouraged me and motivated me to start doing some sewing."

But how do they do it all?

"The question of how I juggle outside activities and studies always arises," said Wright, an economics major, men's track and field team captain, residential advisor and part-time employee at Putnam Investments. "My answer is



Juliann True '08

just do it. I was raised by my mother, who had me at the age of 20, had to drop out of school and later had to take care of two other children. Never were there complaints of cannot or signs of failure. It was just do it, complaining does nothing and sitting watching the world go past is worse. For me, the more responsibilities and activities that I have on my plate, the more I feel in tune with myself."

The common factor among them all, besides drive and business savvy, is the support of the Filene Center, which helps students get out-of-the-classroom experiences. Although

there is no formal entrepreneurship program, those who want to start their own businesses are well prepared, said Lisa Gavigan '83, Filene Center off-campus employer relations liaison.

"At Wheaton, students are encouraged to look at issues from all perspectives, to be problem solvers, to be resourceful and self-motivated—not only in the classroom but through co-curricular activities and work experiences as well. They are encouraged to think outside the box, that success and failure are not ends in and of themselves, but the lessons we learn along the way." 



Rubin Cronig '10

# Meehan plays beyond traditional theatre

Associate Professor of English and Playwright-in-Residence Charlotte Meehan, who has written 15 plays, likes to go beyond the boundaries of traditional theatre. *Sweet Disaster*, which debuted this spring at the Perishable Theatre in Providence, where she is also a playwright-in-residence, is described as “a hybrid of theatre, music and film navigating the moments between explosions.” It combines fictional conversations that take place before, during and after the 9/11 terrorist attacks with biblical excerpts, life insurance company claim forms, and the real pathology reports charting the cancer of her now deceased husband David Hopkins, whose animated film series will also be included in the work. *Sweet Disaster* marks their last collaboration together and a bittersweet ending for the newly tenured professor. The *Quarterly* recently talked to Meehan about *Sweet Disaster* and her work.

## Describe your work.

More and more, I am seeking to create a theatre in which contradictions within the language drive the energy more forcefully than conflict between characters. My most recent plays are collages of sorts in which people are talking past each other with no seeming acknowledgment of what has just been said and yet, obviously, the dialogue is being manipulated by me. So what appears as a stream of non sequiturs is actually a series of lines packed with subtextual communication. It’s a political act, this way that I’m writing now, an attempt to confront the fact that we as a culture increasingly don’t talk to each other. We don’t listen. We talk to ourselves. That is the mess we are in.

## Is there a theme to your work overall?

When I look at my plays in totality, they are all cries against oppression of various kinds. And of course war is on my mind constantly now. Recently, my six-year-old daughter Margot proclaimed, “I wish God was peace.” That’s what all my plays are about, I think.

## Tell me about your most recent play, *Sweet Disaster*.

It’s about the moments between explosions, before and after catastrophes, but not in the eye of the storm—moments of grief or panic, without the goal of reaching a singular climactic moment. It’s also a huge response to 9/11, which we experienced when our daughter was three months old in our apartment in downtown Manhattan, two blocks above the evacuation line. I call the style of this play a fractured realism in that seemingly real people in seemingly real places say things out of the blue from far-flung contexts as if “normal” conversation has been replaced by random lines on paper falling out of the sky. My director, Ken Prestininzi, says the play is about the bittersweet reality that when you fall in love it’s certain one of you will eventually die first, leaving the other behind. The play ends at the beginning, with excerpts of the love letters David and I wrote to each other from across the Atlantic after our first meeting.

## What was the inspiration?

The original inspiration was David’s series of short animated



films, also called *Sweet Disaster*, that were commissioned by Channel 4 [in the UK] during the Reagan/Thatcher years. He wrote, produced and directed the films, working with five different animators to create tragic-comical versions of the end of the world. When 9/11 happened we looked at the films again and realized how current they are today. So I decided I wanted to write a text through which to interweave the films. When David was diagnosed with terminal cancer, we decided we would include his pathology reports in the play. He was too ill and I was too busy running back and forth to the hospital for a year to make any of those ideas

come to fruition at the time. But I’ve been working on this piece since he died in May 2004.

## How did you write through the loss of your love?

Writing through the grief was my way of holding onto David. He had been my collaborator for seven years and I have continued our collaboration by completing this work. But I’m very aware that it is our last collaboration. So finally, four years after his death, I begin to let go.

## What led you to become a playwright?

My mother liked the theatre and used to let me skip school occasionally to go to a Wednesday matinee on Broadway. I was

about fifteen when my older sister and I went to see Hugh Leonard's play *Da*. In this play, the father is dead already and the whole story takes place in flashback. When the play ended, I couldn't move and just sat there speechless for at least five minutes. My sister kept saying, "You're the weirdest person I know." The idea that you could bring back the dead really grabbed hold of me. And when I think about it, all my plays do that.

### Why do you use multimedia in your productions?

I actually only started doing it in *Sweet Disaster* and my other recent play, *Looking for George*, based on a series of Dadaist letters some Wheaton students and I wrote to the President begging him to end the war. But I'm pretty sure this is the new direction of my work because I now see how powerful it can be to re-contextualize television and other media

images on the stage with live performers.

### How do you keep it from overstimulating the theatre audience?

People are so saturated with images in their everyday lives that it's amazing how much we can all take in at once. The trick is to create a situation in which the images, words, sounds and gestures come together in such a way that the memory wants to linger on them.

### Are people still interested in live theatre?

The theatre has been declared a dying art form on and off for centuries. But somehow it remains. As Gertrude Stein said, "Human beings are interested in two things. They are interested in the reality and interested in telling about it." I would add on the audience side that we want to sit in a room together and watch the telling. It's an ancient, primordial desire and those don't disappear so fast. 

## PUBLICATIONS, HONORS AND CREATIVE WORKS

### Faculty

Assistant Professor of Hispanic Studies **Francisco Fernandez de Alba** published the article "El día de la bestia: Recasting Madrid" in the *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, Volume 85, (2008).

**Michael Drout**, William C.H. and Elsie D. Prentice associate professor of English, published the essay "Reflections on Thirty Years of Reading the Silmarillion," in *The Silmarillion—Thirty Years On*, Allan G. Turner, editor (Walking Tree Publishers, 2007). He also co-authored (with Scott Kleinman) the article "Philological Inquiries 1: Methods and Merovingians," in *The Heroic Age*, Issue 12 (2008).

Professor of Sociology **John Grady** wrote the entry "Visual Methods" in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, George Ritzer, editor (Blackwell Publishing, 2007).

**Jake Mahaffy**, associate professor of art and film, opened a two-month gallery show of his fine artwork on February 1 at the Pennsylvania College of Art and Design. In March, Mahaffy's latest feature film, *Wellness*, won the narrative feature grand jury prize at the South by Southwest Film Festival (in Austin, Texas), the biggest festival for low-budget independent films in the United States.

Associate Professor of English and Playwright-in-Residence **Charlotte Meehan** was awarded an Alpert/MacDowell Colony Fellowship, which offers talented individuals an inspiring environment in which to produce their work.

Professor of Biology **Scott Shumway** is author of *The Naturalist's Guide to the Atlantic Seashore: Beach Ecology from the Gulf of Maine to Cape Hatteras* (Globe Pequot Press, 2008).

**A. Javier Treviño**, professor of sociology, has written *Talcott Parsons on Law and the Legal System* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008).

### Alumnae/i

**Dorothy Ciner Armstrong '65** received the 2007 Glenn A. Niemeyer Award at Grand Valley State University (Grand Rapids, Mich.) for "excellence in all aspects of a well-rounded academic experience."

Las Vegas and the surrounding areas of Nevada have been lovingly photographed in *Las Vegas, Nevada: A Photographic Portrait* by **Randa Bishop '63** (Twin Lights Publishers, 2007). The book features residents and visitors to the Vegas area, as well as architecture, wildlife, and the nightlife and glitter of the Vegas strip.

**Mary Wickens Davidson '65** recently retired from the American University of Cairo and was honored with the President's Distinguished Service Award.

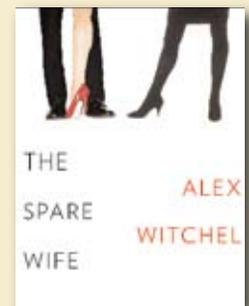
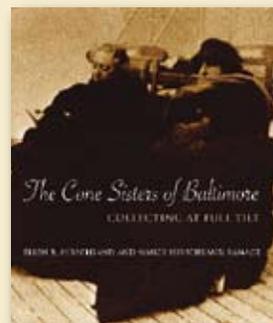
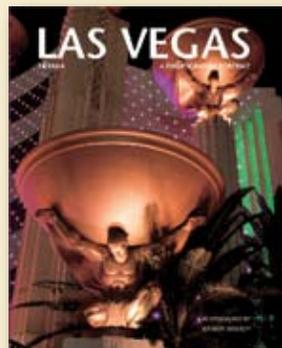
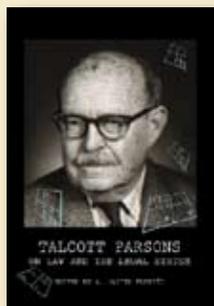
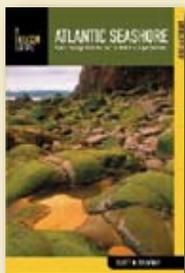
Filmmaker **Anne Flournoy '73** is producing a series of short format (under two minutes) films titled *The Louise Log*. They are available for viewing (along with Anne's other short films) at [revver.com/u/anneflournoy/](http://revver.com/u/anneflournoy/).

**Marjorie Gelb Jones '62** has published *Frances Yates and the Hermetic Tradition* (The University of Chicago Press, 2008), the first full-length biography of the British historian.

**June Bigelow Peterson '49** was honored in February by YWCA Delaware with its Rita Turner Award for her "lifelong commitment to improve the quality of life for those in need, especially women and families."

**Nancy Hirschland Ramage '63** and her mother, the late **Ellen Berney Hirschland '40**, co-authored *The Cone Sisters of Baltimore: Collecting at Full Tilt* (Northwestern University Press, 2008), profiling Claribel and Etta Cone, whose visionary art collecting spanned five decades and resulted in one of the most highly acclaimed collections in America.

In her second novel, *The Spare Wife* (Knopf, 2008), **Alex Witchel '79** has written about the loves, lives and ambitions of Manhattan's smart set, including "the intoxicating allure of getting ahead . . . and trying to stay there." 



# Women's basketball bounces back

The phones began to ring incessantly this winter, the e-mail and text messages poured in, and a pleasant reality took hold. Wheaton's women's basketball program, for which losing seasons once spanned five years, had returned to a familiar place—the national spotlight.

The Lyons, who had not seen an NCAA postseason since 1995, punched their ticket to this year's "Big Dance" thanks to winning their first conference tournament in 13 seasons.

Taking over the reins of a program that had gone 25–47 in the three seasons prior to her arrival, fifth-year head coach Melissa Hodgdon assembled a group that won 22 games to go alongside inaugural New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference regular season and tournament crowns.

Asked about her recipe for success, Hodgdon described a very simple approach.

"The biggest thing for me is that you respect one another," said the 2008 NEWMAC Coach of the Year. "There are many types of people, all uniquely different, and the goal is to make them believe in the same thing

and one another. Once they believe and become a true team, it's amazing what people will do when their individual motives and agendas are put aside."

Boasting a 22–7 record and the program's third-highest win total, Wheaton lost to eventual national quarterfinalist Tufts in the opening round of the NAAs. In the conference tournament, the Lyons defeated MIT and WPI in the first two rounds before downing league power Springfield in the final. Wheaton accumulated a program-best 12 conference wins en route to a 12–1 record during the regular season.

Hodgdon, who chose to embrace the program's history and tradition when hired, immediately began to form relationships with the alumnae base. Having been introduced to longtime history professor and avid basketball fan Nancy Norton (now deceased), who regularly traveled with the team during road trips, Hodgdon instantly felt a connection to the program's roots.

"Aside from what you do on the court, what you do off the court is just as critical," said Hodgdon. "Academics and community service are important,



but so is alumnae involvement. Celebrating the 1994 NCAA Final Four team last year was special. The alums from that era that I didn't coach or don't know have reached out and expressed their excitement for our team."

Assistant softball coach Cheryl Warren Powers '06, who played on the 1993–94 women's basketball team that helped put

Wheaton athletics on the national map and was the first to advance to an NCAA Tournament Final Four during the school's coeducational era, offers a unique perspective as a former player and current athletics staff member.

"We knew what it meant to accomplish what we did and had hoped it would have a lasting impact on the program,"

## History at a glance

**1984** Wheaton joins the New England Women's 6 Conference (NEW 6).

**1986** Wheaton qualifies for the NEW 6 Tournament championship game in the league's first year sponsoring the sport.

**1987** Wheaton defeats Babson in the NEW 6 Tournament title game to earn first league crown. The NEW 6 becomes the New England Women's 8 Conference (NEW 8).

**1989** Wheaton ties for first place to earn share of initial NEW 8 regular season championship.

**1990** The Lyons defeat WPI in Clark Recreation Center to capture first NEW 8 Tournament title.

**1992** Wheaton reaches the 20-win plateau for the first time while qualifying for first Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) Tournament.

**1994** The Lyons set program record for wins while making first NCAA Tournament appearance, advancing to the Final Four.

Wheaton earns league's regular season and tournament titles in the same year for first time.

**1995** The Blue and White makes a return trip to the NCAA Tournament, as Wheaton makes its way to the Sweet 16. The Lyons again win the regular season and tournament championships.

**1998** The NEW 8 becomes the New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference (NEWMAC).

**2003** Melissa Hodgdon is introduced as Wheaton's new head coach.

**2006** To put an exclamation mark on the program's first winning season since 2000, the Lyons defeat Springfield as the only loss during league play for the Pride.

**2007** Wheaton qualifies for first league semifinal since 1996 and advances to ECAC Tournament title game.

**2008** The Lyons down Springfield in Emerson Gymnasium to win the NEWMAC Tournament for the first time and punch a ticket to initial NCAA Tournament since 1995. For the first time in 13 years, Wheaton not only wins a league tournament but also finishes atop a conference's regular season standings.

said Powers. "There have been struggles, but this season was a pleasure to watch. I was very moved when they won the NEWMACs, and as an alum and basketball supporter it was important for me to be a part of it. The players might not realize what they've accomplished, but they'll certainly look back at it with great pride."

Lone senior captain Becky Aitchison '08, who was voted to the NEWMAC All-Conference second team this winter, knows.

"Ever since I've been a Wheaton women's basketball player I've been hearing about the 1990s NCAA teams," said Aitchison, Hodgdon's first recruit. "I believe this is only the beginning. Winning a championship and playing in the NCAA Tournament has been a dream of mine since I first picked up a basketball. With my eleven teammates, we have accomplished something remarkable, and it marks a turn for the women's basketball program."

And although the program's rich history is something the current team will continue to cherish, these Lyons are seeking new traditions. Each day during the season, they touch the sign mounted above the women's locker room entrance that reads, "I just got better." They slept on the gymnasium floor the night they won the conference championship and hope to do it again.

"I've received e-mails from former student-athletes that have been in every class since my arrival," said Hodgdon. "Even though they had to go through the growing pains, they're so proud to be tied to it now, including the ones who didn't play four years. My response is that they're a part of the championship. None of this would have happened without them, and I believe that from the bottom of my heart." – **Scott Dietz** 📍

### Men's basketball

Wheaton (13–12, 3–9) was in familiar territory when advancing to the NEWMAC Tournament semifinals, as the Lyons are the only conference team to appear in nine semifinals in the league's 10-year history. Wheaton posted its fifth winning season in six years. Anthony Coppola '11, who became just the fifth Lyon to score 500 points to go alongside a first-year record 85 three-pointers, was named D3hoops.com Northeast Region and NEWMAC rookie of the year while being selected all-region and all-league.

### Men's and women's swimming and diving

Both Wheaton teams surpassed last year's win totals and conference placements. The women (154) turned in an especially impressive year, exceeding the program wins mark for the fourth straight season, recording their highest finish at a NEWMAC Championship and setting 12 school records. The Lyons placed third at the 10-team conference championship, and athletes surpassed national meet qualifying standards on six occasions. Abigail Pratt '08 and Dania Piscetta '11 matched a school record with four all-conference honors. The men (7–10) placed fifth at the NEWMAC meet while breaking four school marks. Edward Gillie '11 set or matched the program standard in two events, while Matthew Hurley '08 and Matthew Jordan '08 each broke one school record.

### Synchronized swimming

The Lyons began a new era under first-year coach Rebecca Story in successful fashion, placing among the top 10 at the United States Collegiate Championship for the 20th consecutive season. Wheaton advanced to the finals in the team, trio and solo routines, with Laura Montes '10 competing in all three, as she was one of three Division III swimmers to earn All-Collegiate honors. Sonvje Ryen '11 was the national champion in C figures, becoming the third Lyon to capture the C figures title in the last five years.

### Men's and women's indoor track and field

A trio of All-Americans led the Wheaton teams at this year's NCAA Championship. Chizoba Ezeigwe '09 picked up her third straight All-America honor in the 400M dash, while Howard Powell '10 and Erin Neville '11 accepted their first All-America awards in the 55M hurdles and high jump, respectively. The women tied for 25th at the national meet, and the men finished in a tie for 61st place. Megan Brousseau '08, Lilian Calderwood '09, Natana Jules '09, Celeste Karpow '09, Kelly Libert '10, Renee Thompson '10 and Marcus Kohlman '11 also represented Wheaton at the national championship. – **Scott Dietz** 📍



Howard Powell '10, All-American in 55M hurdles.

**JUNE**

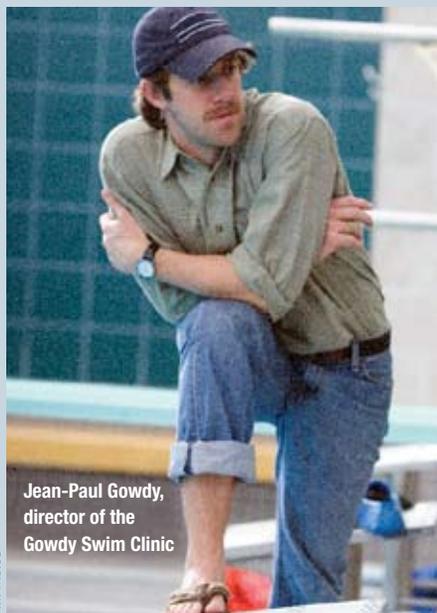
**23–27 and June 30–July 3 Basketball Dimensions** | A day camp directed by Wheaton’s head coach for men’s basketball, Brian Walmsley, for boys entering grades 3–9. He develops fundamentals of basketball, promotes team play, and involves all players in positive and competitive situations. The goal is to develop the desire to improve and excel while having fun and making new friends. For more information, contact Walmsley at [bwalmsle@wheatonma.edu](mailto:bwalmsle@wheatonma.edu) or (508) 286-3991.

**23–27 Miller Tennis Camp** | A day camp directed by Wheaton’s head coach for men’s and women’s tennis, Lynn Miller. For more than 20 years, this camp has served the youth of Norton and surrounding towns. It offers campers a 1-to-4 instructor-to-camper ratio for players of all ability levels. For more information, contact Miller at [lmiller@wheatonma.edu](mailto:lmiller@wheatonma.edu) or (508) 286-3992

**29–July 3 The Matt Light Football Camp** | An overnight camp, with commuter options, for boys ages 8–18, run by Sports International, Inc. Campers will learn individual and team techniques on both offense and defense from an outstanding coaching staff and top NFL players. For camp information and registration, visit [www.footballcamps.com](http://www.footballcamps.com) or call 1 (800) 555-0801.

**JULY**

**6–10 Loudenburg Softball Camp** | An overnight camp with a commuter option, designed for girls in grades 6–12. Directed by Wheaton’s head coach for softball, Gina Loudenburg, this camp will include skills, drills and games at night. For more information, contact Loudenburg at (508) 286-3360.



Jean-Paul Gowdy, director of the Gowdy Swim Clinic

Tim Morse



Rebecca Begley, director of the NIKE Field Hockey Camp

Keith Nordstrom

**7–11 Gowdy Swim Clinic** | A weeklong clinic for competitive swimmers, boys and girls, ages 8–17. The clinic is directed by both Wheaton’s head coach for men’s and women’s swimming, Jean-Paul Gowdy, and by former swimming coach at Middlebury College and MIT, Mel McLaughlin. The clinic will feature work on both stroke skills and training techniques. For more information, please contact Gowdy at (508) 286-3989 or [gowdy\\_jp@wheatonma.edu](mailto:gowdy_jp@wheatonma.edu).

**7–11, 14–18, and 21–25 Soccer’s Future Academy, Inc.** | A camp for boys and girls ages 6 and 7 as a half-day camp; ages 8–15 as a 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m. camp and goalkeeper training for ages 10–15. Directed by Wheaton’s head coach for women’s soccer, Luis Reis, this camp will feature technical and tactical training with coaches who have a passion for the game. For more information, contact Reis at (508) 397-1716.

**13–August 1 Dave Cowens Basketball School** | An overnight camp, run by former Celtic Dave Cowens, for boys and girls ages 10–17. Each camper is encouraged to develop his or her specific athletic capability while giving particular attention to team involvement. This camp runs four consecutive five-day sessions. For more information, visit [www.dcowens.com](http://www.dcowens.com) or contact their camp office at (781) 849-9393.

**14–18 NIKE Field Hockey Camp** | An overnight camp with a commuter option for girls ages 10–18. Directed by Wheaton’s head coach for field hockey, Rebecca Begley, this program is committed to making players better and stronger, to improving techniques, helping to train smarter and to develop self-confidence. For more information, contact Begley at (508) 286-3755 or visit [www.ussportscamps.com](http://www.ussportscamps.com) for more information.

**21–25 (rain date on July 25) Rookie League Baseball School** | Sessions will run Monday–Thursday, from 8:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. each day. Friday, July 25, will be held as a rain date. The Rookie League Baseball School will be overseen by Wheaton Baseball Head Coach Eric Podbelski, directed by Wheaton Baseball Assistant Coach Jesse Woods, and staffed with other Wheaton baseball assistants and players. The camp’s focus will be on younger baseball players to instill a solid fundamental base, while also trying to heighten the youngster’s passion for the game. For more information, contact Podbelski at (508) 286-3394 or [epodbels@wheatonma.edu](mailto:epodbels@wheatonma.edu).

**AUGUST**

**3–8 Sarah Behn Basketball Camp** | An overnight camp with a commuter option for girls ages 9–17. This camp is directed by Sarah Behn and is geared to instill confidence in young girls by teaching basketball fundamentals, which in turn will raise their individual level of play and make the game more fun. For more information, visit [www.behncamp.com](http://www.behncamp.com) or contact their camp office at (508) 549-0997.

**11–15 Hoop School** | A basketball day camp for girls in grades 3–8 directed by Wheaton’s head coach for women’s basketball, Melissa Hodgdon, and Newton South’s head coach for girl’s basketball, Liz Leonard. College players, college coaches and high school coaches will instruct the attendees in the fundamentals of basketball in a supportive environment focusing on learning the game of basketball. For more information, please contact Hodgdon at (508) 286-3990.

For pricing and availability, please contact each program directly.

**Endowment grows, *Sun Chronicle* notes**

During one of the most successful fundraising campaigns in Wheaton’s history, the college’s endowment grew more than 15 percent, according to a story that appeared in the *Attleboro Sun Chronicle*.

The college’s institutional fund has increased from \$165.8 million to \$191.3 million, the story noted.

“The strong performance of Wheaton’s endowment provides an important boost to the college’s overall financial health and helps to ensure an enduring source of support for our students,” Assistant Vice President for Communications Michael Graca told the newspaper.

**Global warming teach-in draws media attention**

The *Attleboro Sun Chronicle* featured a story about a student-organized teach-in that was part of a national event called “Focus the Nation: Global Warming Solutions for America.” Simultaneously held at schools, faith-based and civic organizations, and businesses nationwide, the teach-in and related activities addressed concerns about global climate change.

Students at Wheaton’s Environmentally Conscious and Community Oriented House and members of the Sustainability Committee worked on the event with Claire Anderson ’09, who led the project under the direction of Professor of Political Science Jeremiah Murphy. “At Wheaton, we like to make sure that all of the students are agents of change, that we know what’s going on in the world and how to make a difference,” Anderson told the newspaper.

**Professor speaks on presidency, women**

An article in the *Patriot Ledger*, which is based in Quincy, Mass., focused on how far women have come in the political arena and the possibility of a woman becoming president of the United States. Is the country ready? the story asked. Wheaton Professor of Political Science David Vogler commented.

“There’s no question we’re ready for a woman [president],” said Vogler, pointing out that women have served successfully as prime ministers and in other equivalent roles in Asia and Europe. “And there has never been a question about their will-

ingness to serve as commander in chief.”

**Inside Higher Ed spotlights study**

Insidehighered.com featured a story about the work of a group of political scientists, including Wheaton’s Assistant Professor of Political Science Marcus Allen, who examined textbooks to see how African Americans are portrayed.

The study by the American Political Science Association’s Standing Committee on the Status of Blacks in the Profession found that the textbooks reviewed generally placed the most in-depth coverage of

African Americans in chapters on the civil rights movement or civil liberties. The study appears in *PS: Political Science & Politics*.

The story quotes the concerns cited in the study: “Our analysis reveals that African Americans’ active participation in America’s political development has been treated as a separate entity from the rest of the country’s development.... Because political science as a discipline typically studies institutions and elites as decision-makers, it thereby largely ignores the presence and questions of African-American politics.”

**Globe showcases Cisneros exhibition**

The *Boston Globe* featured a story about *Correspondences: Contemporary Art from the Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros*, which was at the Beard and Weil Galleries from February through April.

The exhibition of Latin American art from the collection of alumna Patricia Phelps de Cisneros ’69 and her husband Gustavo Cisneros featured 34 works and highlighted a collaboration between Cisneros and Wheaton students, faculty and staff.

“One of the most important lessons I learned at Wheaton was the value of building bridges among different cultures,” Cisneros said in the story.



Nicki Parodo

# TRACKING A GENERATION

**Social scientist stays close to “kids” for 31 years of study**

**By Tom Nugent**

In 1977, social scientist Helen Zarsky Reinherz '44 began to ask questions of and about several hundred kindergartners who were attending public schools in Quincy, Mass. More than three decades later, her ongoing study of their lives is still providing answers that offer a valuable understanding of the links between school adjustment, mental health and family relationships.

Reinherz, the 84-year-old director of one of the largest and longest-running psychological longitudinal studies in the history of American science, is still doing her best to figure out what makes these (now adult) “kids” tick. It all began when Quincy school officials developed a collaboration with Simmons College School of Social Work to study the best ways of ensuring the optimal school experience for kindergartners.

“When I first started working on this study, I thought it would only last until the children reached the third grade,” says Reinherz, a faculty member at Simmons in Boston. “But over the years, I’ve learned that I’m a rather persistent person who doesn’t like to stop working on a project once it’s under way. Of course, I also found that my curiosity about the lives of these kids was getting stronger with each passing year.

“If you study a group of children for a while, it’s easy to become fascinated by the kinds of questions that begin to emerge from the data. And that’s what happened to me. Each time I got

ready to wrap up the study, I would realize that I wanted to know more about the continuing lives of our subjects.

“One thing led to another . . . and the study we started way back in 1977 is still going strong. Along the way, it’s been absolutely fascinating—as well as a great privilege—to watch so many of these young people gradually turn into successful and thriving adults.”

During an award-winning 50-year career as a social work researcher (she won the National Association of Social Workers’ coveted Presidential Award for Excellence in 2005), Reinherz has gained a national reputation as a groundbreaking scientist whose extraordinarily wide-ranging study of childhood development became a landmark in her field.

Known as the Simmons Longitudinal Study, or SLS, her 31-year investigation into the connections between family life and the mental health of her subjects (initially 700, now down to 400 due to attrition) has opened a fascinating window on the dynamics of



## “ ... Helen Reinherz has done the country a great service by so carefully studying children.

childhood development. At the same time, her often unexpected findings have provided teachers, school counselors, social workers and family psychologists with crucially helpful insights about the ways in which family influences affect (whether positively or negatively) the emotional growth and maturation of children over time.

### Following in her mother's footsteps

Born and raised in Malden, Mass., as the daughter of a Jewish immigrant father from war-torn Lithuania, Reinherz grew up in a lower-middle-class world at the height of the Great Depression. “My father [Zachary Zarsky] was a pharmacist,” she recalls today, “and he worked in a drugstore in a lower-middle-class neighborhood where people were really struggling to get by. Every day of his life he dealt with people who had to make a choice between buying food and buying medicines—and quite often, he would simply *give* them the medicines. To this day, I honor his memory for that.”

A bright and inquisitive child (“I was trying to read Eugene O’Neill by the age of eight!”), Reinherz was also deeply touched by her mother’s stories of her own early career as a social worker on the streets of Boston—where she had struggled to rescue penniless young women from hopeless lives of prostitution. Imbued with her mother’s fiery idealism, the youthful Reinherz arrived on the campus of Wheaton College in 1940, just as Hitler was invading Poland and World War II was getting under way. In love with books and ideas, she declared her intention to become an English major.

“In those early days, I remember thinking that I might become a writer, and I even landed a job writing this gossip column for the student newspaper.... But I guess my mother’s influence prevailed, because I wound up getting a minor in sociology and psychology, and by the time I graduated, I’d already decided that I wanted to give social work a try.”

Having married her fiancé Sam Reinherz before her senior year at Wheaton (he would soon be fighting in the Philippines with the U.S. Army), Helen quickly nailed down her undergraduate degree and then signed on as a master’s degree candidate at the Simmons College School of Social Work. During the next two decades (and while earning her public health doctorate at Harvard in 1965), she would work as a staffer at a mental hospital for children and as a counselor at a mental health agency for dysfunctional families.

“I saw a lot of kids who were severely troubled,” she recalls today, “and that really provoked my interest.... By the time I finally joined the social work faculty at Simmons, I was eager to work on research that would provide both prevention *and* intervention for these struggling children.”

Reinherz hit the ground running with her marathon SLS study, and never looked back. “I’m very proud of the fact that we were among the first to study this issue with a longitudinal survey ap-

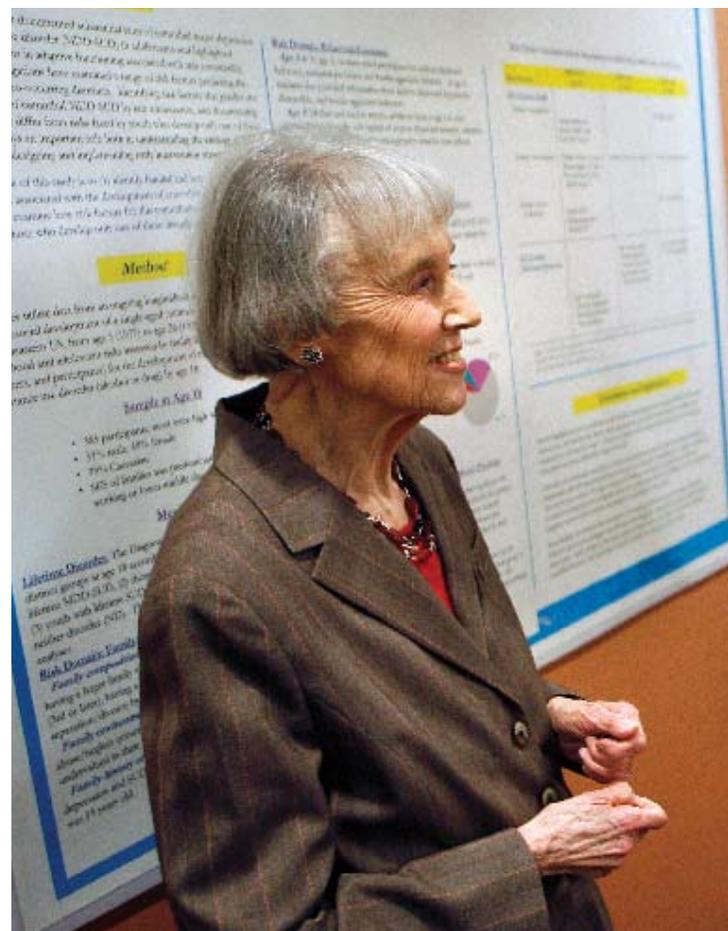
proach, and my great hope is that our findings will continue to improve the lives of children, far down into the future.”

### Learning from the students

Reinherz has returned to study the lives of the students all over again every few years. Among the most surprising of her findings—based on tens of thousands of pages of data gathered by her team of Simmons investigators—was the discovery that children whose parents divorce “don’t seem to end up any worse off psychologically” than kids whose families remain together throughout their childhoods.

“That was certainly an unexpected conclusion,” she says, “and there have been several like it. One of the most exciting things about this kind of long-term study is the way you often come up with unpredictable results, as you examine data that may cover 20 or 25 years of a person’s lifetime.

“We also learned from the data that we needed to expand our definition of ‘family’ a little bit. Over and over again, we found that a loving and supportive uncle, let’s say—or even a really dedicated and inspiring schoolteacher—could take the place of



## This is a set of information that people will be able to learn from for years and years. ”

immediate family members in situations where developing children faced neglect or verbal abuse or even violence.”

While describing several such “outside-the-family” support cases, Reinherz recalled the harrowing experience of “a young girl who was struggling in a family where substance abuse and violence were the daily norm. Yet she coped by *absenting* herself as much as possible; she would spend entire days at the local library.

“She also benefited greatly from her relationship with a terrific teacher at the school who gave her a lot of emotional support over several years during her late childhood and early adolescence. As a result, she not only survived the family trauma—she went on to become a very successful and mentally healthy adult.”

Ask some of the country’s most influential experts on childhood development to reflect on the value of the SLS as a scientific research tool, and they will tell you that it would be hard to overestimate the importance of this survey, which has been funded for nearly 30 years by the National Institute of Mental Health.

“I think the SLS is a national treasure. I also think Helen Reinherz has done the country a great service by so carefully studying children,” says William Beardslee, M.D., chair of the

psychiatry department at Children’s Hospital Boston. “This is a set of information that people will be able to learn from for years and years.”

Simmons College Professor of Social Work Mary Gilfus, Ph.D., a longtime Reinherz colleague who has published often on topics related to childhood trauma, agrees: “I teach courses to social workers on childhood behavior and growth and development—and I can already draw on her findings as a researcher who’s very interested in why some children seem to be so resilient when faced with trauma, and why others can’t handle it and seem to turn out badly. What Helen has done is to begin isolating and understanding the psychological and environmental factors that are at work as children struggle to overcome early problems and grow into healthy adults.”

### Going beyond studying

Although Reinherz describes her SLS working methods as “rigorously scientific,” she has always insisted on “helping our subjects, wherever appropriate, along with studying them.” In most cases, she says, the “help” was restricted to supplying psychologically struggling study members with the names and contact information for counselors who could help them deal with painful psychological problems resulting from family trauma. “From the very beginning,” she explains, “we always insisted on observing the medical principle that says: ‘First and above all, you must do no harm.’

“For me, that was an extremely important ethical issue. When we saw people struggling with emotional issues during our interviews, for example, we made sure to let them know that we could help them find the resources they needed to deal with their problems. *Not* to have done so would have been immoral, in my view, and that would have been absolutely unacceptable.

“We saw our share of tragedies, of course. Let’s face it: some of these outcomes were going to end badly, and they did, and that was very painful to watch. On the other hand, I’ve always been amazed at the high percentage of kids from troubled families who went on to build healthy, successful lives for themselves. For me, these frequent success stories have been a continuing source of hope.”

And the stories will continue. Reinherz has no plans to retire anytime soon. She still works five days a week on the study. “I love what I’m doing, and I still want to help kids as much as I ever did,” says the investigator, with a cheerful laugh. “Why in the world would I ever want to quit?”

*Freelance journalist Tom Nugent writes often about health and medical issues for newspapers and magazines, including the Chicago Tribune and Washington Post. He is the author of Death at Buffalo Creek (W.W. Norton), a book about the public health impact of coal mining on Appalachia.*



# New horizons

Alida Adams '08 expands her world—and the hopes of Guatemalan women

By Hannah Benoit

In Guatemala, they say that hope is the last thing to die, and it is very hard to kill.

Alida Adams '08 saw this hope in action early last year when she traveled to Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, to work in a shelter for abused women and their children. During her two-month internship, Adams was to work mainly with the children—playing with the younger kids and helping the older ones with their schoolwork.

But she soon realized that the families of Nuevos Horizontes needed more than short-term help. They needed a way to help themselves. The two months turned into seven, and hope turned into a dream fulfilled, when Adams stayed to help the women of the shelter start their own working business—a laundry that would open the doors to dignity and self-reliance.

As an international relations major at Wheaton, Adams had originally planned to study abroad for part of her junior year. Instead, she decided to pursue her interest in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) through consecutive internships in Guatemala, Belize and Ecuador. She banked some degree credits by taking summer courses and took a semester's leave from Wheaton beginning in January 2007.

The children of Nuevos Horizontes quickly won her heart, but their living conditions disturbed her. At Wheaton she had studied the social and economic situations in Latin America, yet she was shocked by what she encountered. Adams wrote in an e-mail to friends: "I honestly do not know what has struck me the most: the staggering lack of essentials or the children's overwhelming gratitude for what they do have."

Living mainly on a diet of rice and corn, many of the children were malnourished. Adams spent her own money on bananas and bread for the families' midday snacks. When she helped the children with their homework, she found: "They are all so eager to learn, but it is difficult when there are not enough pencils to go around. If I do not bring paper, the children would have nothing to draw on. I try to bring

books in so the children can practice reading, as the shelter has no library of its own."

Nuevos Horizontes is one of only two NGOs in Guatemala providing direct assistance to women escaping domestic violence, according to Inforpress Centroamericana, a news and analysis service. Violence against women, fueled by a patriarchal culture, is rampant, but experts say there are no reliable statistics to measure it fully. Often, women neither seek help nor report the abuse to authorities; they may cover it up or simply consider it "normal" male behavior. Among those who do seek shelter, about 75 percent eventually return to their homes.

Adams wanted to help break the cycle of violence—to make a lasting difference. "After about five weeks, I realized that maybe I was improving the daily lives of the children while I was there, but as soon as I left, would anything really have changed?"

It was a question she couldn't ignore.

Entirely dependent on foreign donors, the shelter had recently lost some of its funding. Adams started talking to United Planet (UP), the Boston-based NGO that had sent her to Guatemala, and to Marlo Mora, UP's Guatemalan coordinator.

"There wasn't always enough food, clothing, school supplies—everything—in the shelter," Adams recalls. "Daily survival was becoming an issue, and that's when we said, 'We need to step up and do something. We can keep sending money, but when the paychecks end, they will be back to square one. They will have nothing.'"

Adams learned that UP had won a grant from the Timberland Foundation to help the women of Nuevos Horizontes become more self-sufficient by starting their own laundry business—but there was no one to help organize the project.

Mora told Adams that UP was seeking someone who had studied American business. She thought they might be willing to pay the person \$10,000 to spend six months in Guatemala getting the laundry started.

Adams said, "I don't know anything about American business, but I know a thing or two





**Alida Adams '08 cuts the ribbon at Lavandería Planeta Unido with her mentor Marlo Mora; Carlos, son of the laundry manager; and Lily Wug, director of Nuevos Horizontes.**

about how Guatemala works, and the amount of patience you need” to get things done.

She told United Planet she would tackle the job if they would cover her living expenses. Then she canceled her two other internships so she could stay and help develop the laundry.

“In total, they only had to give me about \$350US a month,” she says. “I lived on \$13 a day.”

The first order of business was finding a location. After a month of searching and several dead ends, the group found a large space with affordable rent, running water and sufficient electricity. There were further delays as they sought the necessary permits, and then the group had to turn their fixer-upper into a working business.

“The place was full of trash. We had to clean it out and paint it, and I had to hire an electrician, a carpenter, and a plumber,” Adams says. “The last week I was there, we bought the equipment.”

Adams returned to Wheaton in the fall to begin her senior year, but she continued to help out by working on a marketing plan for the business. In January 2008, she returned to Guatemala to attend the grand opening of Lavandería Planeta Unido.

Although she had a bad fever that day, nothing would stop her from being there. “I gave a speech at the opening,” she says. “We had Guatemalan foods, and it was a great inauguration. The local newspapers came and ran photos.”

United Planet has agreed to underwrite salaries and rent for the first six months, and the laundry will employ three women at a time.

“Many women will have a chance to work there, make some income, and hopefully learn some skills,” Adams says. “Lavandería Planeta Unido has given these women the self-confidence and opportunities to promote self-sustainability.”

During her time in Guatemala, Adams fell in love with its people. “I knew the name of the woman who sold me bananas every morning. I became a regular in my favorite cafés. Even complete strangers say hello and offer a little blessing as you pass them in the streets.”

She also made many friends through the schools where she studied Spanish and took salsa lessons. “These people stepped up and helped me out with the laundromat project and truly supported me,” she says. “They have so much love and pride for their country and culture. I realized that I don’t want to *change* Guatemala at all, just offer the resources I can to the people—they are the ones who should be initiating change in their country.”

After graduation, Adams plans to return to Guatemala. She has purchased a one-way plane ticket and already has jobs lined up, one as a waitress and one as a teacher of English, math and science. She knows that societal attitudes change slowly, but she believes in the transforming power of education. That is why she wants to work with young people.

“I can’t explain to a 45-year-old man that he shouldn’t beat his wife,” she says, “but maybe I can help show his 10-year-old son that there are other ways of treating the women in his life.” **Q**

# ROOTING THROUGH WHEATON'S HERBARIUM

Biology student's research will help conservation efforts

BY SANDY COLEMAN

The six-foot tall army-green cabinets in the back of a classroom in the Science Center look like any other generic file cabinets. But approach one and open the doors, and Alexandra ("Lexie") Sabella '08 casually warns: "Be careful. Don't touch the felt, it's lined with poison."

These cabinets hold Wheaton College's herbarium, a collection of more than 100 years of dried plants, pressed between paper and protected by insecticide-lined felt from bugs that might not know the scientific worth of this historical representation of New England's plant species.

Sabella knows everything about these cabinets and the contents because she has spent 10 hours a week for the past two semesters studying the nearly forgotten herbarium as part of an independent study that turned into her senior honors thesis, under the direction of Professor of Biology Scott Shumway. Sabella, a biology and classics double major, has combed through stacks and stacks of plants, inventoried and cataloged the rare specimens in the collection, discovered 499 specimens of interest, used Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to map verified rare species from Bristol County (where Wheaton is located), and worked with a botanist from the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. The botanist is very interested in using her data to broaden the state's records.

"I've gone through the whole herbarium and pulled out the rare specimens. My data are largely historical. The state's data are based on a lot of herbaria put together. But they haven't looked at Wheaton's herbarium. So I have information that they don't necessarily have," said Sabella.

"This is aiding the conservation of these rare and endangered plant species. I'm giving them information about where these species used to be [which offers clues about areas that may need to be re-surveyed and potentially protected]," she said. "In our classes, we talk a lot about getting reliable baselines, a reliable idea of how the ecosystems used to look."

Melissa Dow Cullina, a botanist with the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, has been working with Sabella to

conceptualize the project and verify the species identification as the student does inventory. The verification validates the data collected and determines whether the plant pressed on each herbarium sheet is a species tracked on the *Status List of Massachusetts Rare Plants*. Sabella also points out that the verification process allows the information to be shared with the Natural Heritage so that the state may use the data to inform conservation activities.

"The value to the Natural Heritage, specifically, is that the project identifies and communicates to us locations of historic collections of rare plant species," said Cullina. "This is helpful in that it can provide 'leads' on where we can look for these plants today, and it helps us better understand the historical distribution of these

rare plant species. The value to the public is that, as with any new information gathered about rare species, it enhances [the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program's] ability to understand and potentially protect these species.

"I commend Lexie for taking on a project that has real-world conservation applications," Cullina added. "It has been a challenging project that required a special knowledge of plant nomenclature. Lexie has done a very good job sorting through many speci-





mens to determine which are the rare species that [the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program] is interested in—in some cases, the scientific names of the plants have changed and Lexie needed to be able to figure out and reconcile the old names as compared to the new names we use now.”

Sabella, who is president of Wheaton’s outdoors club, was drawn to this project after participating in an ecology and conservation study abroad program in South Africa. “We did a lot of fieldwork, including plant collections. I really enjoyed plant identification, particularly the field aspect of it.”

Shumway said he has been thinking about how to benefit from the resources of the herbarium since he got here 17 years ago. “Most of the specimens were collected between 1900 and 1940. [Sabella found one plant that dates back to 1890.] And very little has been done with the collection in several decades,” he said.

“Historically, almost every college had an herbarium. The problem is that the focus of botany has shifted away from collecting and away from naming and classifying. Now you’ve got plant ecology, people studying plants in other ways—physiology, biochemistry, molecular biology.”

So many herbaria tend to languish until someone shows interest, said Shumway, who was curator of the herbarium for four years at Tufts University during his undergraduate work-study job.

“A lot of institutions are getting rid of their herbaria. So they are either filtering their specimens into other herbaria or just kind of not looking at the data,” Sabella noted. “As our technology with

GIS is able to look at these distributions and see these comparisons, I think this historical data is going to be really important.”

Sabella has put a modern spin on her study and analysis of the herbarium. She said she has used ArcMap (a GIS program) and Internet sources to create data layers of the locations where Bristol County specimens were found to visually compare the locations with the state’s data of those species.

Cullina has suggested that Sabella research the possibility of registering the Wheaton herbarium with the *Index Herbariorum* of the New York Botanical Garden, which formally tracks herbarium collections and assigns an official herbarium acronym to each.

“I had no idea what Lexie was going to find when she started,” said Shumway. “This has gone from making a list to realizing, after talking to Melissa, that it’s very valuable information. And that it’s going to get used. It’s not going to just die when Lexie hands in a piece of paper.”

And, said Sabella, the experience will be invaluable after she graduates from Wheaton because she hopes to be an outdoor educator in her native California. “There were times when I thought, ‘Why am I doing this?’ But the bigger picture made it interesting to me. There is a kind of nostalgia working in an herbarium, like being a museum curator. These things are so old. It’s cool to know that people from Wheaton were collecting these species from the early 1900s and that these plants have been preserved since then. I really think it’s an important part of Wheaton’s history.” 

# Green giants

## Alumnae/i work to improve the environment

By Mary Howard '85

*What does it mean to be “green”? For seven Wheaton graduates who are addressing a range of environmental issues—from building locally based, self-reliant food economies to promoting the use of renewable energy—it means putting the earth first in their work and lives. “It’s about putting into the pot as much as you take out,” says Andrew Harkness '06, who makes biodiesel fuel for a living. Though the green issues they address may differ, their passion for their work does not. As United Church of Christ minister and organic farmer Kathryn (“Kate”) Stevens '69 says, “This is exactly what I want to be doing.”*



### Living green

Though she grew up in New York City, **Amy Young Todisco '85**, president and owner of Green Living Now, LLC, was introduced to healthy foods at an early age. “My mom was a follower of [nutrition guru] Adelle Davis,” she says. At the age of 14, Todisco, her mother and sister went on a brown rice fast, and she began shopping at health food stores.

But it was 15 years ago, when she was pregnant with her daughter, that the seeds for Todisco’s life’s work were sown. She found a book titled *The Nontoxic Baby* and began reading about the toxic chemicals found in everyday products like shampoo and dish soap. “That’s when my quest to find truly safer household products began,” she writes on her Web site, [www.greenlivingnow.com](http://www.greenlivingnow.com).



Ryan Mercer

Her love of research, honed when she was a psychology major at Wheaton, led her to investigate not only healthy alternatives to traditional cleaning products, but also the causes behind high cancer rates in her town. “I went from being a polarity massage therapist to an activist, almost overnight,” says Todisco. She founded the Marblehead (Mass.) Cancer Prevention Project and launched her community’s first Earth Day celebration.

A move to Vermont and a stint running a nonprofit organization for Seventh Generation, a company that produces green cleaning products, followed before Todisco started her own nonprofit, the Consumer’s Healthy Home Center. “My goal was to raise enough money to hire independent toxicologists to test a

variety of household products for their inhalation health effects,” she says, adding that consumers end up being the test subjects because manufacturers “aren’t testing their products before they hit the shelves.”

She had a great board, but Todisco found that keeping a nonprofit organization afloat was too much of a struggle. So in 2004, she founded Green Living Now, LLC, where she sells healthy cleaning and personal care products and offers information about green living.

“I’m really picky about what I offer,” she says. “I won’t sell anything that I haven’t researched and used myself.” Products offered on her site have to be completely nontoxic as well as ef-



fective, and their packaging must be recyclable. “I’m particularly annoyed by companies that pretend to be ‘nontoxic,’ ‘organic’ and ‘natural,’ while using many of the same toxic chemicals as conventional companies,” Todisco notes.

In addition to running Green Living Now, Todisco offers consulting sessions for individuals and companies pursuing a greener lifestyle. She’s training to become a life coach and is writing a book on how to live green on a budget.

In November 2006, the producer of *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, asked Todisco to be a guest on the show. “They were doing a show on people who live a green life.”

Unfortunately, the episode was canceled, but Todisco is keeping in touch with the producer. “I’m hoping that my book-to-be will appeal to Oprah and her audience. It is one of my personal goals to be a guest on her show.”

## On a mission

In her freshman biology class, **Kathryn (“Kate”) Stevens ’69** was given a small quadrant of land to observe for the semester. “I wrote a report on it,” says the minister, organic gardener and

activist. Though her environmental work did not start until years later, she finds herself frequently talking about her Biology 101 experience. “It was an important part of my time [at Wheaton].”

For 15 years, Stevens and her partner, John Hoffman, lived in Dorchester, Mass., where Stevens immersed herself in the problems of the inner city—poverty, drug addiction, homelessness—as an activist for social change. But in the mid-’90s, at Hoffman’s urging, the couple purchased a 100-acre farm in Charlemont, Mass. Hoffman wanted to farm, and in 1996, Wilder Brook Farm offered its first CSA (community supported agriculture), where consumers purchase a share of the farm and receive a basket of produce weekly from June through October.

“We grow everything except corn,” says Stevens, who was a history major at Wheaton. The farm currently has more than 40 shareholders and also grows produce for low-income senior citizens. Hoffman is the main farmer, but Stevens is involved in all aspects of Wilder Brook and grows flowers to give away to shareholders each summer.

When she first heard environmentalist Bill McKibben (author of *The End of Nature*) speak, she sobbed. “I knew I had to do something [about the environment],” she says. Stevens serves as minister of the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Ashfield, Mass., and is a faith-based organizer of several environmental groups, including Religious Witness for the Earth. Ten years ago, she was arrested for protesting against oil drilling in Alaska outside the U.S. Department of Energy in Washington, D.C.

Last May, Stevens helped organize and participated in an eight-day Interfaith Walk for Climate Rescue from Northampton to Boston. “It was fantastic,” she says. “We had programs every night and an interfaith service at the end of the walk.” More than 300 walkers participated in the event.

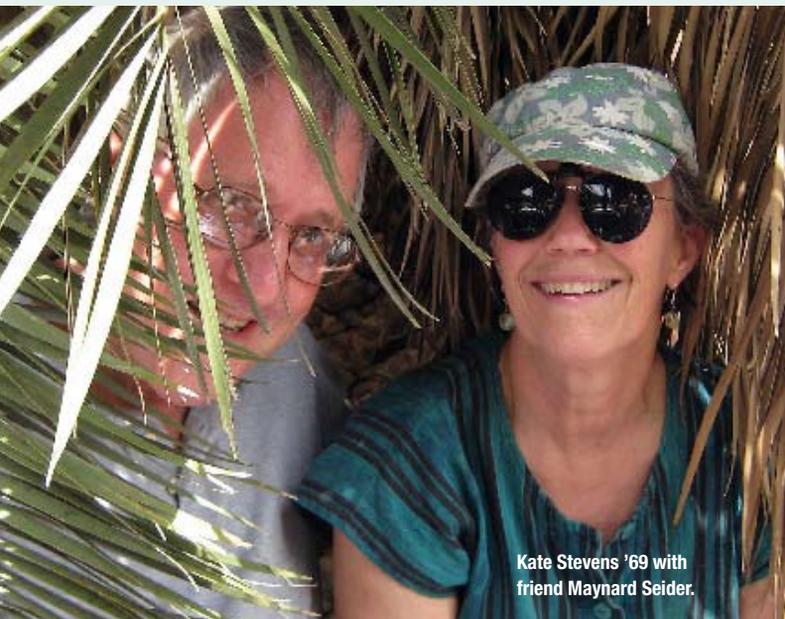
She was inspired to create a food co-op of locally grown, winter storage crops, and she holds local food potlucks and lectures at her church. Stevens and Hoffman shop locally, buy used clothes and heat their water with solar power.

“My faith, my understanding of creation and the magnificence of creation, informs my concern for the environment,” she says. “I feel the interconnectedness, the oneness, of all beings on Earth very deeply.”

## The power of one

**Megan Amsler ’93**, executive director of Cape & Islands Self-Reliance Corporation, was speaking to her son’s fourth-grade class when he raised his hand and asked, “How come we don’t use solar power or wind turbines? Why don’t you drive a biodiesel car?”

“All of the advocating that I do came back at me in that moment,” says Amsler. Being green, she says, means doing what you can for the environment. Though solar and wind power are not practical for her current home, she now drives a biodiesel car.



Kate Stevens ’69 with friend Maynard Seider.



Megan Amsler '93

has installed three wind turbines as part of hands-on installer workshops, including two at the technical high schools on the Cape. "Overall, we are committed to growing the clean energy workforce to support the expanding industry. We want trained people to be doing good installations."

A sociology and French major, Amsler says her Wheaton education helps her every day.

"I look at things from a sociological perspective, and it helps me understand the way other people think and why they do what they do."



## Driven to problem solve

"A bit of me is very mechanical," says **Andrew Harkness '06**, who was a European history major at Wheaton. "I've always loved to tinker and problem solve." When the Ipswich, Mass., native heard that his college roommate's father was running a car on B-20 (20 percent biodiesel, 80 percent regular diesel), it peaked his interest. "I started researching and experimenting and made my first batch of biodiesel in a blender. I started with a liter, then I figured out how to make five gallons." By his senior year, Harkness was driving "an old beater diesel" car on biodiesel he had made.

"Maybe you can't do biodiesel, but you can use compact fluorescent lightbulbs. It's all about reducing your ecological footprint," says Amsler, who makes a game out of seeing how little electricity she can use each month.

After graduating from Wheaton, Amsler landed an internship with Ocean Arks International, where she worked on an ecological wastewater treatment project that included an off-grid lake restorer. "It was my introduction to hands-on experience with wind and solar power," she says. And that exposure, along with being raised on an organic farm, set the tone for her future work.

Executive director of Cape & Islands Self-Reliance ([www.reliance.org](http://www.reliance.org)) since 2001, she devotes herself to educating the public about renewable energy and environmentally sound technologies. The organization conducts workshops on solar and wind power for businesses and individuals, runs a heating oil cooperative and promotes the use of biodiesel fuel. They established Cape Cod as a Million Solar Roofs partner, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy, and they facilitate the installation of local renewable energy projects.

Though there are only four staff members in the organization, their accomplishments are impressive. "We do a lot through collaboration as members of the Cape and Islands Renewable Energy Collaborative," says Amsler. Self-Reliance



Andrew Harkness '06

"I've always been conscious about the environment. I've always recycled. I'm happier outdoors than in the city." His concern for the environment spurred him on to learn more about biodiesel and its benefits to the planet.

"It was at Wheaton that I learned how to research, how to weed out the bad answers," says Harkness, who credits Associate Professor of History Anni Baker with motivating him and giving him direction.

After graduation, Harkness started Northeast Biofuel Solutions, making and selling residential biodiesel processors. Though he had success in his small business, several months ago Harkness accepted an offer from MBP Bioenergy LLC, based in North Conway, N.H., to partner with their company as vice president for bioenergy. "Now, I kick out a couple thousand gallons of biodiesel a day," he says.

Harkness takes a very practical look at environmentalism. "I really think that to make a difference, you have to be able to make a profit." Good environmental practices coupled with good business sense will have more impact in the long run, he says.

"There's no silver bullet to the [global warming] problem." Biodiesel and renewable energy sources, like solar and tidal power, are a "piece of the puzzle," says Harkness. "Being green is all about sustainability. It's about buying locally grown food, turning the heat down, and turning the lights off when you leave a room."

## Giving more, taking less

Columbia, S.C., native **Nathan Herring '05** strives to live a simple life. "You don't have anything coming in, so don't leave anything behind," he says. An actor, writer and director currently freelancing at the Trustus Theatre in Columbia, Herring walks or bikes instead of drives, buys used clothes and tries to reuse as much as possible. "Recycling is good," he says, "but it takes energy to recycle. It's better to reuse your things over and over again."

A psychology major, Herring says he was "pretty green" coming into Wheaton. But a "Religion and Ecology" course he took with Assistant Professor of Religion Barbara Darling-Smith inspired him. "She talked about 'leavers,' who leave the world like they found it, and 'takers,' who destroy the environment."

For the past few years, Herring has been working part-time with Clean Vibes, an environmentally friendly company that cleans up after music festivals. Along with fellow alumnae/i Megan Luce '03 and Josh Arnold '05, he has worked at the Bonnaroo Music



Joshua Arnold '05, Megan Luce '03 and Nathan Herring '05

Festival in Manchester, Tenn., for the past three summers, helping Clean Vibes divert as much waste as possible from landfills, through composting and reuse or recycling of materials.

After the trash is cleaned up, the Clean Vibes crew scours the land for every last cigarette butt or bottle cap. "At the end of the festivals, it looks like a giant landfill, but when we're done cleaning, it's pristine farmland," he says.

With trash cans placed no further than 20 feet apart, it shocks Herring to see festivalgoers throw trash on the ground. "Once, I saw a fan throw a bottle on the ground, and he said, 'Clean Vibes will get that.'" But education is part of Clean Vibes' mission, and Herring makes a point of talking to fans about the importance of respecting the earth. "People think that their one SUV or their one piece of litter won't matter, but it all adds up," he says.

## Raising awareness

In the decathlon of environmentalism, **Joshua Arnold '05** is a gold medalist. At 25, the global sustainability major (self-designed) has started a nonprofit, GALA (Global Awareness, Local Action), serves on his town's energy committee, works as a sales representative for Recycled Office Products, is the manager for Clean Vibes (going on

seven years) and serves on a youth delegation to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. But the Wolfeboro, N.H., resident is uncomfortable being called “green.”

“It evokes a bit of sarcasm and pessimism in me,” he says. Arnold worries that commercializing the movement will dilute its potential impact. “I’m concerned about people believing that they can buy their way out of the current environmental crisis, and I think that is the mentality the whole ‘green’ movement really encourages.”

His efforts with GALA ([www.galacommunity.org](http://www.galacommunity.org)) focus on building community through ecologically sound practices. “We’re trying to increase social capital while reducing ecological impact,” he says. GALA offers a monthly film series, potluck suppers and workshops on homesteading techniques like composting, wool spinning and native foraging. They’ve created a “Buy Wisely Locally” guide and work with their town government to establish indicators of sustainable development. “It’s my hope that the GALA model can be used by other communities,” he says.

Arnold is very grateful that Wheaton allowed him to develop his own major. He studied public and environmental policy and even spent a semester at Naropa University in Boulder, Colo., a Buddhist-inspired institution that brought a “contemplative approach” to Arnold’s environmental education.

When he’s not running his nonprofit, cleaning up at music festivals or selling recycled office supplies, Arnold shovels snow, splits wood and works as a substitute teacher. His limited downtime is spent hiking, playing music or tinkering with his “bio-Benz,” a Mercedes diesel that runs on 100 percent vegetable oil. “I call her Shirley, as in ‘slowly but Shirley.’”

## Gaining a global perspective

In her freshman year at Wheaton, **Megan Luce '03** took a class with Jack Dempsey, an adjunct professor in the English department, called “Language as Empowerment.”



Megan Luce '03

“I learned then that being able to verbalize your thoughts—whether through speech or writing—puts one in a place of power,” says Luce, who is working on her master’s degree in service leadership and management at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vt. Luce, whose research interests focus on the crossroads of environmentalism and social justice, hopes to work in advocacy training and education. “I definitely see international work as part of my future,” she says.

Luce has already spent quite a bit of time abroad. During a three-year stint teaching English in Taiwan, she was amazed at how the heavily populated island deals with waste management. “They have a very intense system,” she says, recalling separate bins for trash, recycling, compost and used clothes. “What I learned about recycling in Taiwan was very applicable to my work with Clean Vibes at the music festivals.”

The English major spent two months in the western part of Australia volunteering for an organic farm and learning about biodynamic farming practices and permaculture. “I was inspired,” she says. Last winter, Luce worked on organic and traditional farms in South America, mainly in Argentina. “I love vegetable and fruit farming,” she says. “I think it is very important to reconnect to our food sources.” A vegan, Luce confesses that she wasn’t as excited about her time on a dairy farm in Chile, “though I learned a lot.”

As a member of the SIT Environmental Working Group, Luce helped organize a conference on social and ecological renewal, People, Plants, Possibilities. Held on March 22 in Brattleboro, the conference brought together academics, professionals, students and the public to address issues of environmental and social justice. “I’m very interested in combining the science side of environmentalism with the social side,” she says. 

*Mary Howard is a freelance writer and editor, who lives in south-eastern Connecticut.*



Joshua Arnold '05

# Working for Obama



Indira Henard '03 knows what it means to work for change. At Wheaton, Henard was one of the most active student leaders on campus; since graduating, she has channeled her drive into a career in politics. It is fitting, then, that Henard is now working for a man whose own meteoric rise has been fueled by a powerful call for change: Illinois senator and Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama.

"I am not surprised that she is working for Obama," says longtime political science professor Darlene Boroviak, whom Henard credits as one of her mentors. "'Change' was Indira's mantra when she was at Wheaton."

So was hard work. As a student, Henard kept a busy schedule—she served for years on the student government's executive board, leading both the intercultural and the education councils, and served on a host of other student and adminis-

trative committees—all while earning her degree in political science.

Henard, who is special assistant to Obama's chief legal counsel, says her passion for politics flows out of her desire to tackle the inequalities that still plague our society—whether in her hometown of Chicago, on campus at Wheaton, or across the country as she works on Senator Obama's presidential campaign.

And it was Henard's days as a student activist at Wheaton that gave her a crash course in how politics works. "I really learned the ins and outs of negotiating, building coalitions, and working with people who are different than I am—but also coming together for a common purpose," Henard, now 27, said in a recent interview from the campaign trail.

In recognition of her leadership on campus, Henard won the college's Joseph M. and Susan Stampler Paresky '68

Fellowship, and used it to earn a master's degree in political science and international relations at the University of Chicago. After graduate school, Henard won another fellowship, spending a year in Washington, D.C., as a liaison to the federal government for the governor of Illinois.

Soon after that experience ended, Henard got an e-mail from a fellow Wheaton graduate, suggesting that she apply to a training program that her fellow Chicagoan, Senator Obama, was setting up with the goal of bringing more minorities into the top ranks of political campaigns. Henard was one of 10 people selected for the Yes We Can program, and during the intense, weeklong seminar the group learned every detail of campaigning.

After working on the 2006 midterm elections, Henard took a position in Obama's Senate office. Henard is particularly proud of her role as Obama's

liaison to the powerful Congressional Black Caucus, where she focuses on issues of interest to the black community, such as the recent controversy over the Jena Six in Louisiana.

Henard began working for Obama just as his presidential bid got under way, and soon she had a second job—as an aide to his presidential campaign. Like most campaign workers, Henard does a little of everything; she tromped through the snow in New Hampshire, meeting voters before that state's pivotal primary, and later went to South Carolina to travel with Obama's wife, Michelle, as she campaigned for the senator there.

Henard is relishing her role in a historic campaign. "It's a great job," she said. "I look at [Obama] and his conviction and what he stands for, and I see that it is possible, it's very much possible, to move this country in a new direction." □

—Ted Nesi '07

# Love and care

Long before they arrived at Wheaton, Kendra Ward '00, L.Ac., and Igor Schwartzman '98, N.D., each had an interest in the practice of healing. That mutual interest deepened and drew them together as psychobiology majors. And now the married couple share a medical practice that has a natural-healing approach.

After several years of working separately, they combined their efforts in January to create the Whole Family Wellness Center in Portland, Ore. Ward is a licensed acupuncturist, and Schwartzman is a trained naturopathic primary care physician.

Ward suffered severe asthma and allergies when she was young and her mother took her to an acupuncturist for help. "Not only did my asthma improve, but I was left deeply fascinated by this very different

way of approaching the body," she said.

Now Ward, who has a master's of acupuncture and oriental medicine from the New England School of Acupuncture, provides a range of healthcare services under an Eastern model of working with and understanding the body. She primarily uses acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine, and a range of other techniques, such as traditional Chinese massage and heat therapy to address women's health issues.

Schwartzman's grandmother was a physician. "As a young child, I had several opportunities to observe some of her patients come in and out of her office. What I noticed the most was the smiles on people's faces as they left her office. When I asked her about what she did with people that put a smile on their faces,



Kendra Ward '00, L.Ac.

she replied, 'The most important thing you can do for any person is to listen to them...not simply with your ears, but your heart.'"

Ward and Schwartzman both aim to do that everyday in their work. "As a doctor, I encourage people to be empowered and active in their health process," he said.

They have been married for two years. They were research partners at Wheaton, which was a great source of inspiration for them both.

"Wheaton helped me distill out all of my varied interests so that I was able to find a path that suited me as an individual," said Ward. "And I feel thankful to Wheaton for offering a major like psychobiology, which is unusual in its own right. It really allowed me to take my interest in science to a whole other level."

After Wheaton, Schwartzman spent several years at the Harvard School of Public Health, involved in asthma

research studies. During that same time, he pursued a doctoral degree in anatomy and physiology at Boston University. Ward worked at the Mind/Body Medical Institute at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, helping with clinical studies in her field, such as investigating the connection between stress, aging and memory.

Using a natural approach to healing can be challenging in a society that wants a pill for everything, but the two are very successful in their work. "Within our culture, we are trained to expect quick fixes," said Ward. "But our philosophy toward medicine is to not simply treat the symptom, but to understand the core reasons for why the symptom has arisen in the first place. This approach requires education, time and patience, but is much more effective over the long term." 

For more information about the practice, visit [www.wholefamily-wellnesscenter.com](http://www.wholefamily-wellnesscenter.com).





## A new anti-discrimination commissioner

Sunila Thomas-George '91 has been named a commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination by Governor Deval Patrick.

An expert in employment discrimination, Thomas-George has been an attorney with the commission since 1997, serving in a number of capacities. The agency investigates and prosecutes cases on discrimination based on race, national origin, sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation and age to name a few. It also handles discrimination claims in employment, housing, places of public accommodation, credit and education.

"I am thrilled to be part of the Patrick administration, knowing that the governor is passionate and concerned about civil rights and the importance of our agency and mission," she said.

At the commission, Thomas-George has managed a staff of attorneys and worked closely with the commissioners, the chief of enforcement, and the

general counsel on substantive and procedural issues before the commission. She also assisted in drafting the MCAD Disability and Sexual Harassment Guidelines. She has been a Certified Trainer in Discrimination and Harassment Prevention since 2001. She is one of three commissioners for the agency and works in the Boston office.

Thomas-George says she became interested in discrimination law in law school, but credits Wheaton with motivating her to become an attorney.

"My desire to go to law school started in my junior year at Wheaton when I took one of Professor [of Political Science] Jay Goodman's classes," she recalled. "It really got me thinking of the possibilities that one could achieve by having a background in law. Also, the classes that I took as a political science major were instrumental in my decision to go to law school."

Thomas-George has received a number of awards including

the Executive Branch Award for Excellence in Government Legal Services in 2004 and the Manuel Carballo Governor's Award for Excellence in Public Service in 2001. After earning an undergraduate degree from Wheaton, she received her law degree from Western New England College School of Law in 1995.

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination is the Commonwealth's chief civil rights agency. The commission works to eliminate discrimination on a variety of bases and areas, and strives to advance the civil rights of the people of the Commonwealth through law enforcement, outreach and training.

In addition to the Boston location, the commission has offices in Springfield and Worcester and is planning to open another office in New Bedford. "Hopefully, this will ensure that people know we are out there and reachable for many," said Thomas-George.

Grants recently received from the EEOC and HUD will help

the commission start programs that will target discriminatory practices against certain socio-economic groups. There are also plans to develop a Discrimination Prevention unit to focus on employers, landlords and businesses to help them create and develop anti-discrimination policies and be better prepared to implement them.

"We have also begun more outreach to many agencies, employers, bar advocates and community groups looking for assistance in helping us reach our goals on case processing and timely completion," said Thomas-George. "I am looking forward to the many challenges we face in trying to increase our funding so that we can continue to improve on the quality of processing these important cases and also be able to expand our outreach efforts to more communities that may not understand what their rights are and how we can be of help to them." □

—Michael Graca

# Alumna inspires dining room honor

The oldest women's college club in America, The College Club of Boston, will honor member and Wheaton alumna Janet Carr Bayley '45 by naming the soon-to-be-redecorated dining area The Wheaton Dining Room.

Bayley (who shies away from the spotlight and asked that her photograph not be taken) has been a member of the 117-year-old club for more than 25 years. She has not attended many programs at the club and has only stayed at the 11-room guesthouse once. But her friendship with and admiration of two of the club's members has kept her connected and interested in supporting the club, which hosts social events, professional development programs and lectures, and raises scholarship money for high school seniors.

She first met her two friends at the Old South Church, where she was the treasurer of the women's guild. "I used to go to church every Sunday.... Churches are very busy places and you meet a lot of very interesting people," Bayley said during an interview this spring.

A chemistry major at Wheaton, Bayley worked for a time in a Washington, D.C., lab for Lever Brothers, a soap manufacturer. In later years, she worked for a bookstore chain and traveled extensively. In 1996, she took a world tour with her brother, and she has gone on trips organized by Wheaton graduates. She remains a generous supporter of Wheaton.

These days, Bayley stays close to her north of Boston home. She has given up golf and bowling, but still plays bridge every week. She has been particularly energized by the upcoming renovations at the club, which is located in a Victorian brownstone.

Some of Boston's most prominent designers will redecorate the

drawing room, dining room, and 11 bed-and-breakfast guest rooms, which are named in honor of Boston area colleges.

Bayley was a prime catalyst for the restoration project, said Kim Clark, a member of the club's board of directors. "So extraordinary was Janet's commitment to the project, the executive board of The College Club was moved to name the dining room in honor of her alma mater.

"She is a woman possessed of clear vision and cheerful determination. She has been a source of inspiration to many," said Clark.

"It will be done and done right" is an oft-quoted phrase she's been known to pronounce when faced with an important task."

Starting in June, the dining room will be redecorated by Boston designer Lisey Good. "My nods to Wheaton will be in the color choices for the fabrics in the room—school colors, royal blue and white, and possibly the new wall color. One of my favorite colors is called Whole Wheat, so that seems oddly appropriate," said Good, who also plans to hang historical photos of Wheaton. 



The Wheaton Dining Room at The College Club of Boston before renovation

## SELECTED REGIONAL EVENTS

### Boston June 11

*El Greco to Velazquez* exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts. Reception and lecture by Professor Evelyn Staudinger Lane prior to viewing, 5:30–7:30 p.m. Coordinated by the Alumnae/i Office.

### Seattle August 24

Seattle Mariners vs. Oakland A's (and outfielder Christopher Denorfia '02), Safeco Field, Seattle. Game time, 1 p.m.; reception, time to be determined. Coordinated by Deborah Kreutzer Wintner '92.

### Boston September 20

Walking tour of the Flat of Beacon Hill, led by Margy Bratschi '78, followed by a reception at the home of Sandra Sable Gilpatrick '95. Time to be determined. Coordinated by the Greater Boston Wheaton Club.

### Boston September 25

Boston Red Sox vs. Cleveland Indians. Fenway Park, Boston, game time, 7:05 p.m.; reception, time to be determined. Coordinated by the Alumnae/i Office.

For the latest events calendar, please visit OnLyon at [www.wheatoncollege.edu/alum/](http://www.wheatoncollege.edu/alum/) and click on the calendar grid. Also, for the list of Wheaton clubs, regional contacts and Filene Center Liaisons, go to [www.wheatoncollege.edu/alum/class/clubcontacts.html](http://www.wheatoncollege.edu/alum/class/clubcontacts.html)



## A photographer reflects

By Robin Bowman '82

*(Excerpt from an essay by Bowman in her recently released book, It's Complicated: The American Teenager, which features intriguing black-and-white Polaroid portraits of teenagers and their candid stories. Reprinted here with permission from Umbrage Editions.)*

This story begins in the summer of 2001 when a friend invited me to spend a couple of weeks with her extended family in a remote cabin in Canada. Seeking an escape from humid New York, I gladly accepted. The cabin was filled with teenagers, an age group that didn't even exist in my world in New York at the time, but I was immediately caught up in the excitement, openness, vulnerability, and idealism that infuse so many young people, regardless of circumstances. I was riveted by them and spent most of my two weeks there in the woods taking photos of these young people and learning the stories of their lives.

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I traveled the streets and subways of New York City looking for more teens to photograph. In the still pre-digital age, the Polaroid's ability to provide instantaneous footage piqued young people's curiosity, and when I gave them a chance to tell their story, it was remarkably easy for me to convince them to pose for and talk to me.

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Meeting these teenagers began to have an effect on me—I couldn't get enough. Each one was so different, so compelling, and so earnest. I felt that by connecting with these kids, I was growing as a human being; their stories were enriching mine.

Before long I became absorbed by the notion of discovering the "American Teenager." It became obvious that I couldn't accomplish this by staying in Brooklyn, so I decided to get in the car and go. In March of 2002, I embarked on the first of eight trips I would ultimately take over the course of four years. By the time I finished this

project I had traveled 21,731 miles through most of the regions and corners of the nation, met thousands of young men and women, and formally photographed and interviewed four-hundred nineteen of them, all of whom are represented in this book.... I remain honored that these amazing young people allowed me into their lives.

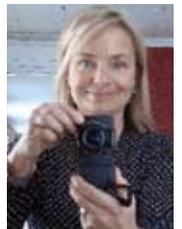
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This project drew me in, in part because of my own intimate recognition of the dichotomy between the surfaces and depths of people. My own teenage portrait would have shown a blond-haired girl who looked privileged and sheltered. But if I had had the opportunity to be interviewed, I might have said something about my father's alcoholism, and abuse, and my parent's divorce, and our fractured family. I was never able to fully express my feelings about those experiences at the time. Would my life have been different if my story had been told and if the real image of my life had been taken and shared?

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This project underscores the similarity and diversity that make up this country and this generation, and remind all of us that people are not necessarily who they appear to be.... We were each a teen once, and many of us will one day have teenagers who will become adults and our future leaders. It is undeniable that our children affect and reflect who we are as individuals and as a nation. Perhaps by coming to know our kids, adolescents on the cusp of adulthood, we can become acquainted, or reacquainted, with ourselves. 📷

*Robin Bowman's images are in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Chrysler Museum of Art, Cleveland Museum of Art, and the International Center of Photography, among others.*





**My gift. My way.**

## **Christie Wyman '87**

**Kindergarten teacher**

**Married 17 years**

**Maynard (Mass.) Education Foundation trustee**

**Food pantry and community dinner volunteer**

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# Help deliver great futures.



## Stefani Filak '77, M.D.

Ob-gyn with solo practice for 22 years

Deliverer of 60 to 70 babies a year

M.D.–R.N. liaison

Annual Fund supporter



### Knows that everyone needs help.

“I had a mother with twins whose delivery of the second twin took six hours after the first. We had to be patient. I practice in a hospital where the nursing staff is very supportive. I also had a colleague assist me. We all worked together. Eventually the second girl came and all was well. I have found that it never hurts to ask for help when the unexpected occurs.”



### Knows that a good start is important.

“Wheaton gave me confidence. My teachers identified in me strengths that I hadn’t connected with yet. I made friends that I have to this day, who helped make me the person I am today. Wheaton was an absolute foundation.”



### Knows that change is part of growth.

“After Wheaton became co-ed, it took me a few years to believe it could be just as good as when it was a women’s college. In my heart I wish it were still single sex, but changes happen. Fortunately, Wheaton continues to be committed to equally motivating both female and male students who are eager to meet the world’s challenges. That’s why I continue to support the next generation of professionals and leaders.”

## Wheaton

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