

ALSO INSIDE

IS GOD THERE?

IS GUILT GOOD?

DOES LIFE FOLLOW DEATH?

DOES IT FEEL DEATH IS LEGAL, WRONG OR RIGHT?

**IS LEGAL WRONG OR RIGHT?
TECHNOLOGY GOOD OR BAD?**

TECHNOLOGY GOOD OR BAD?

The cover features the title "NOTRE DAME MAGAZINE" in large, yellow, hand-drawn style letters at the top. Below it, the word "QUESTION" is written vertically in large yellow letters, followed by "EVERYTHING" horizontally. The background is blue with white stars. Numerous thought-provoking questions are scattered throughout the design, such as "ARE YOU AWAKE YET?", "DO YOU LOVE YOURSELF?", and "WHAT'S WORTH BELIEVING IN?". The year "SUMMER 2011" and price "\$6" are also present.

SUMMER 2011 \$6

Q & A

I have always been comfortable living with questions. The world is an infinitely fascinating place, beguiling mysteries remain unsolved and my reply is a pilgrim's curiosity and cheerful bewilderment. Besides, I always figured that to ask, to question was to enter into a dialogue with God. I've enjoyed the repartee — although a lifetime's discourse has taught me that any answers are really further questions posing in disguise.

This magazine edition comes not with answers but with plenty of questions.

All the questions you read here come from Gary Gaffney '69M.S., artist, poet and mathematician. Gaffney did doctoral work in mathematics at Notre Dame. In 1969 he left the University — ABD, all but dissertation — to become an artist, earning two degrees in fine art. For the past 25 years he has created an impressive body of work and served on the faculty of the Art Academy of Cincinnati. "Art," he says, quoting the European playwright Eugene Ionesco, "is the collision of a man with the universe."

His questions — 1,000 in total — expose the heart and soul, mind and brain of a man engrossed with that elegantly designed universe, a man examining life's meanings with a penetrating and creatively facile intelligence . . . and a wry wink of amusement with the contradictions and absurdity of our world.

Gaffney's explanation for his questions, collected into a poem he calls "Mil Preguntas, (a meditation in 1000 questions)," is simple: "A student, Will Hutchinson, discovered that Japanese children in Hiroshima make 1,000 origami cranes as a prayer for peace, so he proceeded to construct a piece from 1,000 origami cranes himself. I wrote a short poem entitled '1000 Cranes,' and a poet friend of mine, Matt Hart, decided in response to write a poem of 1,000 lines. I responded with my poem of 1,000 questions."

Gaffney sent the poem to us and graciously allowed us to present it to you in a most unorthodox way — across the cover (wonderfully rendered by artist Michael Newhouse) and throughout our pages.

As we brought together other essays for this issue — an issue speaking mostly of summer and childhood — we realized they also had this in common: questioning.

One article deliberates the swirl of ethical, moral, legal and practical considerations in a personal scenario that is national in scope. Another challenges the power of prayer and the place of God in our lives, while another ponders life after death — and the possibility of a loved one reaching back across the divide to comfort those left behind. Others rethink conventional wisdom, accepted norms, the latest trends.

According to the poet-artist, the 1,000 queries are not set in rigid order. They are meant to be thought about, not read in a single sitting. In fact, we couldn't fit them all into this issue. All 1,000, however, are available at our website, magazine.nd.edu. And if you go there, you are invited to posit your own questions. You can supply some answers, too, if you'd like.

— *Kerry Temple '74*

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NOTRE DAME MAGAZINE

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FOLLOW
NOTRE DAME
MAGAZINE
ON FACEBOOK



MATT CASHORE '94

The Notre Dame women's basketball team had good reason to celebrate as they knocked off perennial powers Tennessee and UConn to advance to the NCAA national championship game, losing to Texas A&M in the final. Here Brittany Mallory and Skylar Diggins enjoy victory in the Final Four.

EDITOR
Kerry Temple '74

DESIGN & ART DIRECTOR
Kerry Prugh

MANAGING EDITOR
Carol Schaal '91 M.A.

BUSINESS MANAGER
Julia Bertini Ettl

ASSOCIATE EDITORS
John Monczunski
John Nagy '00 M.A.

COVER
ILLUSTRATION
Michael Newhouse

ALUMNI EDITOR
Liam Farrell '04

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574-631-6000

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IN A JUBILANT JUMP FOR JOY, some jazzed-up members of the Class of 2011 celebrate their graduation from the home of Touchdown Jesus and rejoice that they are now Notre Dame alums. The commencement leap — posing airborne for the traditional graduation photograph — is a new phenomenon among Domers jockeying for distinction. Photograph by Matt Cashore '94.





LETTER FROM CAMPUS

A tough, tough year

KERRY TEMPLE '74

My admiration for Notre Dame goes back half a century, though the time span gives me pause. My parents, devout in their faith, saw Notre Dame as the shining Catholic city on the hill. Neither had gone to college, and giving their son a Notre Dame education was a pledge they made and began sacrificing for the day I was born.

I'm certain they believed, although they would not have articulated it this way, that the University was — in Father Hesburgh's terminology — a beacon, a crossroads and a bridge. It stood for something good, and it provided rich soil for truth-seeking and the kind of honest, open and intelligent conversations that would establish common ground among diverse people in order to improve humanity's lot around the globe.

When she learned I was soon to visit Notre Dame, my sixth-grade teacher, Sister Eugenia, told me it was as close as I would come to heaven on earth. And the place felt like home the moment I set foot on campus.

My four years here as an undergrad provided some of the best experiences of my life, but it became clear immediately that Notre Dame wasn't perfect. Experiences during my 30 years as a University employee have given me a much fuller sense of the realities of the place. It is a human institution.

I have sometimes thought — and I do suspect there's some truth to it, though it sounds arrogant to bring forward — that there are more good people here than any other one place. There's a lot of goodness here, and a lot of well-intentioned people wanting to make the whole world better.

Of course, the place has let me down. But even when I've been disappointed or maddened, I have consoled myself with the belief that decisions were made not for profit, power or self-gain but because someone thought it was the right thing to do. People here want to do what they think is best for the place and the people who live, work and study here.

We don't always agree — all of us members of the Notre Dame family — on what that right thing is. But I am always grateful for my spot in the family tree, to be doing what I do, and relieved not to have to make those imponderably tough decisions.

I was a brand-new writer here, hired to produce promotional material for a fundraising campaign, when the person I was interviewing (the director of an important department with offices in the Main Building) said, "The problem with Notre Dame these days is that it's beginning to believe its own PR." It's a statement I've held onto during my three decades writing, editing and shepherding publications aimed to serve the Notre Dame family and advance the University's aspirations, whether as beacon, crossroads or bridge.

Throughout these years I have acted like most any family member. And I have been proud and loyal, irked and peeved. I have wanted it to be better, to rise to the occasion, and have been amazed by its successes and the achievements of its faculty, students and alumni. I have felt good to be associated with such a place, and I have personally hurt when the institution has been hurt.

As is true of any family, it feels a lot better — even healthy and therapeutic — for relatives to voice their complaints and concerns (how else do things improve?) than for outsiders to criticize, to supply their own

Kerry Temple is editor of this magazine.

FROM READERS

The letters we publish here are edited for space and are representative of those we receive. We print only those letters referring to an article in the most recent edition of the magazine, not those responding to letters or commenting on issues not addressed in the recent issue. For a fuller presentation of letters visit our website at magazine.nd.edu.

Vitamin D, not C

I liked Jordan Gamble's article very much, but I think there is one typo in the sidebar ("Battling winter doldrums") that may be significant to anyone battling Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). It quotes a psychologist recommending vitamin C as a way to fight depression. I think she probably said vitamin D. This is the vitamin that becomes deficient when one does not get enough sunlight. Lack of vitamin D is highly correlated with depression. I'd hate to see people stocking up on vitamin C when they really need vitamin D.

As someone who suffers from SAD and had her first major depressive break freshman year at Notre Dame, I wish the light box had been available then. I bought a light-box visor when I lived in London for a year and wore it when doing chores. It worked wonders.

JULIE KOSNIK HERSH '82
DALLAS

The other side of "The Global Good"

In "The Global Good," Carolyn Woo observes that globalization has been a boon for undeveloped and developing nations, particularly in Asia. No doubt. And no wonder. At the same time, the United States has been completely depleted of its wealth. Since our last trade surplus in 1975, our cumulative trade deficit is now approaching \$11 trillion. It's no mere coincidence that that figure closely matches the growth in our national debt during the same time frame. The USA has been transformed from the world's wealthiest nation and pre-eminent industrial power into a skid-row bum, bankrupt and begging the rest of the world for cash to keep us afloat.

The process of globalization that Woo praises led to trade imbalances that collapsed the global financial system in 2008. And, instead of bringing peace to the world, we are now beset by a global epidemic of unemployment that is fomenting unrest and revolution.

Economists are at a loss to explain how their free trade theories have led to such a state. They will remain perplexed until, if ever, they stop rationalizing away the effects of overpopulation and once again consider the full ramifications of never-ending population growth — not just a strain on resources and stress on the environment, but its role in eroding per capita consumption and fueling unemployment.

PETE MURPHY '71
CLARKSTON, MICHIGAN

Career calls

The article on Geoff Keating (“The Natural”) shows the hidden forces that guide our career choices. I began woodworking 30+ years ago, but devoted less time as I earned a Ph.D. and got a full-time teaching position at 49. Another successful wood artist, Thomas Moser, has a Ph.D. in English and taught at an Eastern college before turn full time to his craft. It takes courage to spend so much time training in one area, then to turn to one’s natural abilities. Geoff is talented and blessed that he discovered his “calling” after 10 years in grad school. When does his catalog come out?

MICHAEL P. BOCHENEK ’65
HOFFMAN ESTATES, ILLINOIS

One more memory

I was saddened to read in the spring issue of the death of Father Ernan McMullin, whom I met in 1959 when I was a graduate student at Notre Dame. My adviser, Thomas G. Ward, M.D., a lay Methodist minister, had a practice of inviting “special” people to have a brown-bag lunch in the laboratory. On one of those occasions Father McMullin was one of those invitees. We discussed the biologic and philosophic significance of the findings of Watson and Crick and the structure of DNA as a double helix. Father McMullin knew a great deal about DNA, and we all agreed the finding and the structure to be remarkable.

From time to time we met at the Huddle and chatted about this and that. Then I left Notre Dame to pursue a doctoral degree at Georgetown. Unfortunately for me, a Jew, I was required to take a philosophy course there taught by Father X, someone who had taught that course for 100 years and had not learned enough since he began teaching it. I was bored to death and told Father X that he was way behind in his understanding of biology, that the course was useless to me and that I was dropping it.

Then one day the phone rang and it was Father X, who had become dean of the graduate school. He said there was a visitor there at Georgetown, and that when asked whom he would like to see while in D.C., he indicated he would like to meet with me. Sure enough, it was Father McMullin, who somehow knew I was a student there.

We met for dinner, had some laughs, and I never saw him again. But I have thought kindly of him over the years and suspect he is now in a place where he can laugh and think as often and as hard as he likes.

CHARLIE CALISHER ’61 M.S.
RED FEATHER LAKES, COLORADO

judgments or grievances. It doesn’t help that Notre Dame — whatever it has done for decades to earn its reputation as a luminous example of doing right and being good — also has assumed the posture of a place of moral superiority.

It’s been a tough year for Notre Dame, a year of serial troubles. The police raids on off-campus parties back at the beginning of the school year — causing rifts among police and students, Notre Dame and South Bend — seem almost inconsequential now. So do lost football games and payouts to former coaches.

Assertions of campus sexual assaults and their investigations — one involving a football player and a Saint Mary’s College freshman who committed suicide nine days after reporting the alleged assault — have drawn national scrutiny. So did the DUI arrest of an All-American football player.

Much less visible but profoundly shocking was the apparent suicide (from a self-inflicted gunshot) of a Notre Dame sophomore whose body was found by the campus lakes one night in March.

The University also continued to weather harsh reprisals from advocates for the “Notre Dame 88,” the pro-life protesters arrested during the 2009 Obama furor, when many wanted Notre Dame to be more their personal beacon than crossroads or bridge. This past spring’s announcement that charges were being dropped was quickly followed by a protester filing a lawsuit against the University (even though she was arrested by county police on private property off campus).

The University even drew fire from those who complained that changing the arrangements for serving food at football games was another example of Notre Dame greed. University officials, however, indicate the change will result in better food and possibly increased revenues for local groups staffing the concessions.

Notre Dame also was publicly criticized by the mother of one of the swimmers killed in the January 1992 bus accident when the University announced it would allow the filming on campus of a movie celebrating the heroic comeback of Haley Scott DeMaria ’95, who was severely injured in the crash that killed two.

These and other incidents, both public and those sequestered, did not carry the pain felt so deeply and so widely as the tragic fall of Declan Sullivan, the student whose scissor lift was toppled by winds in October. It will long stand as one of the darkest days in the history of Notre Dame, and its shadow still drapes campus. Reports on the procedures, policies and causes of the tragedy kept reopening the wounds months after Sullivan’s death.

Whatever collective ache the University has suffered, however, is minimal when placed against the unfathomable grief and devastation that must come from losing a child, a family member or close friend and classmate. And much of the institutional pain surely comes from knowing how badly the families must hurt.

All the above incidents, of course, presented University leaders with a minefield of troublesome challenges. Many were legal, and responses obviously legalistic. Many dealt with personal privacy. Some dealt with confidential matters being played widely in the public eye, sometimes by media with inadequate knowledge, if not their own agenda. Some inquiries, too, identified areas where the institution was indeed vulnerable.

Institutionally, part of the year’s distress was protecting Notre Dame’s image, fending off assertions of cover-ups, of the University not being as forthright or as compassionate as it should be. And there were times when it was hard — but necessary — for Notre Dame to refrain from saying more when its integrity was being questioned. One can only have faith and confidence that the University keeps finding its way to do the right thing.

It was a tough year for Notre Dame, especially those responsible for the people and departments entangled in pain and controversy as well as those charged with maintaining the University’s character and its reputation. But it was difficult for anyone associated with the place, those who want it always to represent their best hopes. And it isn’t over. Some of the storylines were still unfolding as the academic year came to an end and this issue went to print.

So it’s easy to predict that more trials and adversity lay ahead. It’s what you’d expect from a place striving to be known internationally as a beacon, a crossroads and a bridge — and a place, ultimately, that’s as human as the people who make it what it is.

Barron: 'We want to create an experience people want to come back to.'



MATT CASHORE '94

The Imaginarium on the Irish Green

The Browning Cinema offers something for everyone — and that's not easy.

BY JEREMY D. BONFIGLIO

A flash of light pulsates above the audience as Benedict Cumberbatch breaks free of his fleshy cocoon, landing face first on the theater stage.

The actor lies motionless at first, then begins writhing and contorting his body in a painful attempt to understand how his limbs are meant to function in this strange new world.

So begins the National Theatre's production of *Frankenstein* in the Olivier Theatre on London's South Bank. The play, written by Nick Dear based on Mary Shelley's classic tale and directed by Academy-Award-winner Danny Boyle, alternates Cumberbatch and Jonny Lee Miller in the roles of Victor Frankenstein and the Creature depending on the night. It also tells the story from the Creature's perspective, which has made *Frankenstein* the hot ticket of London theater.

Nearly 4,000 miles away, about 70 people are comfortably scattered throughout the 202-seat Browning Cinema in Notre Dame's DeBartolo Performing Arts Center watching the same production of *Frankenstein* with popcorn in hand. The multiple camera presentation is part of National Theatre Live, which broadcasts the best of British theater.

Jeremy D. Bonfiglio is a South Bend-based writer and a frequent contributor to this magazine.

to cinemas around the world. The Browning, however, is the only venue in Indiana, and — outside of Chicago — the only cinema within 200 miles of campus, where this production of *Frankenstein* can be seen.

Since opening its doors in September 2004, the Browning Cinema has gone well beyond typical movie-house fare to become both an entertainment and educational hub for Notre Dame and the surrounding community. It is one of only a handful of college campus cinemas to receive THX certification, the program developed by George Lucas to set the industry standard for clarity in picture and sound. The Browning routinely broadcasts theatrical events presented by London's National Theatre and New York's Metropolitan Opera. It hosts, on average each academic year, at least 15 distinct film series and 60 world or regional premieres. It shows classic films from directors like Hitchcock, Fellini and Welles, award-winning documentaries such as *Waiting For the Moon* and *Wordplay*, and pop-culture favorites such as *Scott Pilgrim vs. The World* and *The Breakfast Club*. And it has hosted such notable filmmakers and actors as Tim Robbins, Phil Donahue '57 and Sean Astin, to name a few.

"The goal is to be as relevant as possible," says Ted Barron, DPAC's senior associate director and the cinema manager for the

Browning. "We want to create an experience people want to come back to."

Barron came to Notre Dame in July 2010 to replace the Browning's founding director, Jon Vickers, who left to build a cinema and a film program at Indiana University. Barron has added to an already robust cinema calendar a series of midnight movies; the Michigan Jewish Film Festival, a joint venture with the Jewish Federation of St. Joseph Valley; and the National Theatre Live productions of *King Lear* and *Frankenstein*. He's also maintained cornerstone programs like the PAC Classic 100 film series, highlighting the best films ever made, while finding a delicate balance by programming material that appeals to students, faculty and the community as a whole.

"Yeah, that's not as easy as it seems," Barron says, laughing. "As you can imagine, someone who comes to the cinema to see the Met's *Madama Butterfly* may not be all that interested in *The Big Lebowski*."

Barron previously served as senior programmer of the Harvard Film Archive and director of programming at the Coolidge Corner Theatre Foundation, which, given the wealth of independent cinemas around Boston allowed him to focus on niche titles for a tightly targeted audience. He has taught film studies at Harvard and other universities

and served as a juror and delegate for several international film festivals. That background has helped Barron program a schedule that must appeal to South Bend's more diverse town-gown audience and guide Notre Dame professors who may not be sure how to use the cinema in their courses.

Paulette Curtis was among them. Professor Curtis, an assistant dean in the College of Arts and Letters, teaches Science Fiction in an American Key, a college seminar that explores the genre from a sociological perspective. The seminar examines how science fiction often takes its cues from the fears and conflicts in contemporary society.

"I thought 'Why not show some films at DPAC?' They have that huge screen and all that support, but I just had no idea how it would work," Curtis says. "I think Ted had been here two weeks when I approached him, but they made it happen."

The Browning screened films such as the original *Planet of the Apes*, *Metropolis* and *Starship Troopers* that were open to the public but also were used to explore themes in conjunction with Curtis' class.

"It worked really well for us," she says. "Film gets audiences to think about things in different ways, and that's what I wanted my students to do. It's an amazing resource in that way."

In fact, more than half of the cinema programming directly supports the University's academic mission, and many of the film series

shown at the Browning complement other campus events with a series of panels featuring academic guest speakers, filmmakers and alumni in the industry.

"Not every class in every field has a need to use film in their class, but I can see how many faculty members could benefit just by having that conversation with DPAC," Curtis says. "Think of all the literature classes here. Think of Shakespeare. Why not dedicate a week to how Shakespeare has been adapted on film?"

Anthony Monta, the assistant director of Notre Dame's Nanovic Institute for European Studies, agrees. After all, he used Shakespeare in film as part of the annual European Film Series he conducts in conjunction with the Browning.

"What we have here [in the Browning] is a real cinema with a real, collaborative person at the helm who can show films at the highest technical standards — not only for faculty to teach their students but for the community as a whole."

Past topics of the European Film Series have included terrorism from a European perspective, and, most recently, the best of European film from the past two years. Among the seven films shown this past academic year were titles such as *Micmacs*, the French film directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet, and Terry Gilliam's *The Imaginarium of Dr. Parnassus*, actor Heath Ledger's final picture. The mysterious Dr. Parnassus leads a traveling sideshow

ND's Silver Screen

Moviegoing at Notre Dame has come a long way from the simple projector-and-screen setup in Washington Hall that first served the campus community through a formal "Concert and Lecture series" and casual Saturday afternoon matinees beginning more than a century ago.

What makes catching a film these days at the Browning Cinema, named for the family of Michael Browning '68, such a special experience?

For one thing the theater, which opened in 2004 as one of five venues inside the Marie P. DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, stands among the most technically savvy college movie houses in the United States.

It's one of about 10 university venues to hold THX certification. THX-certified theaters must provide high-precision playback to ensure that any film soundtrack will convey as closely as possible the intentions of the mixing engineer. These venues meet specific technical standards that require a special crossover circuit, acoustically treated walls and a distinctive kind of perforated screen, among other modifications to provide dynamism and continuity of sound.

Technowonks may appreciate the Browning sound system's Dolby Digital Prologic CP650 processor, the JBL cinema speakers and Peavey media matrix, the Crestron media controls and the Sennheiser assistance technology for the hearing impaired. They may get really jazzed by the pair of 35mm Westar projectors with reel-to-reel changeover, the 16mm Eiki EX-6120 projector and the two Strong Highlight II 2000-watt lamphouses up in the projection booth.

Aesthetes may recognize in the massive decorative panels along the side walls an abstraction of the façade of an old Vaudeville playhouse, itself inspired by the Doge's Palace in Venice.

The rest of us will be content with the theater's 202 stadium seats, the expert commentary that comes after many screenings and, of course, the films themselves.

— Jeremy D. Bonfiglio



MATT CASHORE '94

Ted's Top Ten

Voyage to Italy — After Roberto Rossellini met Ingrid Bergman, cinema was never quite the same. The romantic longing and idealization of *Casablanca* (a runner-up on this list) comes crashing down in this uncompromising portrait of a middle-aged couple at a crossroads in their relationship. See also: *Stromboli*, *Paisan*, *Open City*.



Meet John Doe — While *It's a Wonderful Life* is the obvious choice among Frank Capra films, I still find myself drawn to this earlier film that centers on a homeless man, thrust into the media spotlight, who rises up to serve the greater good. See also: *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*.



The Apartment — Arguably the best of the classical Hollywood directors, Billy Wilder achieved his greatest critical success with this Academy Award-winning portrait of a young executive whose ethics are challenged when he falls for a charming elevator operator. See also: *Some Like it Hot*, *Ace in the Hole*.

The Heartbreak Kid — A more twisted version of *The Graduate*, Charles Grodin stars as a young man with the world at his feet until he discovers that his newlywed bride drives him bonkers. Enter Cybill Shepherd.... See also: *Mickey and Nicky*, *Ishtar* (yes, *Ishtar*).



Il Posto — A young man takes an entry-level job at an Italian corporation. This understated post-neorealist effort captures the mundane aspects of working life with both humor and pathos. See also: *The Fiances*, *The Tree of Wooden Clogs*.



Gimme Shelter — While the merits of *cinéma vérité* have been debated (and debunked) over the years, the Maysles Brothers' document of the ill-fated Rolling Stones concert at Altamont remains a fascinating study of the complicated relationship between performance and reality. See also: *Grey Gardens*, *Salesman*.



Rebel Without A Cause — There's a reason why actors like James Dean and Marlon Brando were considered the best of their generation — because they were really good. A glorious instance of 1950s widescreen Technicolor melodrama. See also: *East of Eden*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *On the Waterfront*.



The Rules of the Game — Considered by many critics and scholars to be the greatest film ever made, Jean Renoir's richly layered portrait of a gathering at a country estate on the eve of World War II offers everything you could ever learn in film school in less than two hours. See also: *Grand Illusion*, *A Day in the Country*.



Close-Up — Despite continuous governmental pressures (including the recent imprisonment of filmmaker Jafar Panahi) Iran remains one of the most compelling sites of cinematic discovery. In Abbas Kiarostami's nonfiction hybrid, a man faces trial for posing as a famous filmmaker. See also: *A Taste of Cherry*, *Where Is My Friend's House?*



City Lights — The Tramp meets a blind woman and goes to great lengths to help her gain her sight. The film's final scene remains the most sublime five minutes in the history of cinema. See also: *The Great Dictator*, *Modern Times*.

— Ted Barron

The future is still uncertain for star wide-out Michael Floyd, whose blood-alcohol level was nearly two-and-a-half times the legal limit when he was arrested near campus March 20 on drunk-driving charges.



Floyd, whose 171 catches and 28 touchdowns have put him at or near the top of every major Irish receiving category, had already been cited twice for alcohol-related offenses since enrolling at Notre Dame in 2008. At press time, Floyd's attorney had said he expected to work a plea deal for the rising senior

on charges that could carry up to a year in jail and a \$5,000 fine. Meanwhile, Floyd was allowed to participate in workouts after an open-ended suspension had barred him from team practices in the spring. "If he changes the way he's lived his life, he'll play every game for us," head coach Brian Kelly told the *South Bend Tribune*. "If he doesn't, he won't play one down here at Notre Dame." . . . **Family and friends** said goodbye to two members of the Notre Dame faculty who died this spring. Professor John E. Renaud, 50, joined the aerospace and mechanical engineering faculty in 1992 and had served as department chair since 2008. His research on materials that will improve the blast resistance of U.S. military combat vehicles was featured last fall in "Fighting for those who serve," a TV ad that first aired during the Army game and may be seen on YouTube. Professor emeritus Norlin G. Rueschhoff, 81, taught accounting at Notre Dame for 37 years until his retirement in 2006 and chaired his department from 1979 to 1983. An expert in international accounting and accounting for nonprofit institutions, Rueschhoff won an award for excellent undergraduate teaching in 2002. . . . **Saint Joseph County prosecutor** Michael Dvorak dropped misdemeanor trespassing charges against the "Notre Dame 88" after the protesters, who objected to the honorary degree awarded President Barack Obama in 2009, signed an "agreement not to sue" the University or the county. Abortion politics are still active on campus. Forty professors have formally joined the Notre Dame chapter of University Faculty for Life, a national organization of scholars. The Notre Dame Fund to Protect Human Life honored Richard Doerflinger of the U.S. bishops' secretariat for pro-life activities with its first Evangelium Vitae medal, named for Pope John Paul II's 1995 encyclical on life issues. Meanwhile,

the Faculty Senate rejected by a 22-8 vote a resolution that would have affirmed the witness of University President Rev. John I. Jenkins, CSC, to the school's "commitments both to intellectual inquiry and debate and to the dignity of the human person and the sanctity of human life." The proposed resolution urged the administration to embrace "the full spectrum of Catholic social teaching, including especially the promotion of communal solidarity and a preferential option for the poor" and endorsed the recommendations of Jenkins' Task Force on Supporting the Choice for Life. Objections included concern that the measure would be perceived as partisan "payback" for the Faculty Senate's endorsement of the Obama invitation two years ago. . . . **Eddy Street Commons** will have a slightly different look from the campus side of Angela Boulevard this fall. Kildare's Irish Pub is out and O'Rourke's Public House is in now that the restaurant's alumni-driven investors decided to break with the Pennsylvania-based Kildare's and develop a unique identity for their establishment. But is it still Irish? Apart from the name and the menu, general manager Rick Stoner says his place is the top seller of Guinness stout in Indiana. . . . **Women's rugby** was so foreign to campus last spring that Notre Dame's newest club sport barely had enough players to practice. Now the club is a force to be feared. This spring, it emerged from a tournament field of 16 teams to vie with Radcliffe College for USA Rugby's Division II national collegiate



MATT CASHORE '94

that offers the curious a trip through a magic mirror into their own imaginations, where they may choose between lifegiving illumination or instant gratifications that prove deadly.

"Young people knew about Heath Ledger so they came into the film not knowing anything else about it," Monta says. "Afterward in the hallway I kept overhearing students talking about it or bumping into students who would tell me they've never seen anything like it before and how really grateful they were to have had that experience."

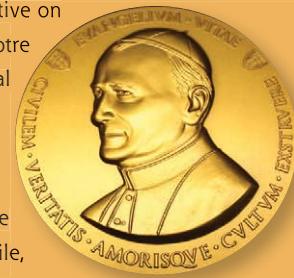
One of the things Barron says he's most proud of is getting students to see the potential of the cinema in their own lives, particularly in an era where technology has allowed the medium to be accessible on laptops and cell phones.

That, in part, is why he started the new *Midnight Movies* series that debuted in February. The eight-film series targeted to the student population projected such classic coming-of-age films as *Sixteen Candles*, *The Breakfast Club*, *Pretty in Pink* and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* onto the Browning's 14-by-27-foot screen. The series opened with the 1975 film *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, which is known more for its cult standing and audience participation than its cinematic achievements.

"We told everyone at the door, 'Please don't throw anything in the theater, especially rice,' which they did anyway, but it was a really fun evening," Barron says.

And that, he adds, is what makes the Browning so vital to Notre Dame.

"When you're watching a film with an audience, a lot of that experience can be shared by people from different backgrounds," Barron says. "I think once you get them in the door and they see what we're about, they're going to take a chance on something else. You do that and you're going to get them to keep coming back because we're not just showing a film, we're creating a bigger experience and we think people should have a sense of ownership, that this is their theater." □



TOM EVERETT '12

The man who took lacrosse to Uganda

BY BILL KRUEGER

A lacrosse stick is a tool, one that Kevin Dugan '01 uses to play the game he loves. It is a tool that helped Dugan realize his dream of becoming an athlete at Notre Dame. It's a tool that drew him back to the game, first as a college coach and then as the director of lacrosse operations for his alma mater. He loves the combination of skill, speed and athleticism needed for success with a lacrosse stick.

But it wasn't until Dugan saw Nakibira Fort holding a lacrosse stick that he realized how powerful a tool it could be.

Nakibira is a young girl from the village of Kkindu in southwest Uganda. Dugan visited the village in 2009 during the latest in a series of service trips that had taken him to such places as El Salvador, Guatemala and Ecuador to build libraries, work in schools and teach the game of lacrosse. At each stop, Dugan was overwhelmed by the poverty he saw. But he was also struck by the joy he found in people who had little to call their own.

"What I learned in El Salvador and all these Third World places was you can buy pleasure, but you can't buy happiness," Dugan says. "It was one of the most powerful lessons of my life."

Dugan was struggling to figure out how to help when he met Nakibira. He had brought a sackful of lacrosse sticks with him, figuring he could run a few clinics. The game was foreign to be sure, but the kids were enthusiastic — especially Nakibira. "She was having the time of her life, laughing to the point she almost fell down," Dugan says.

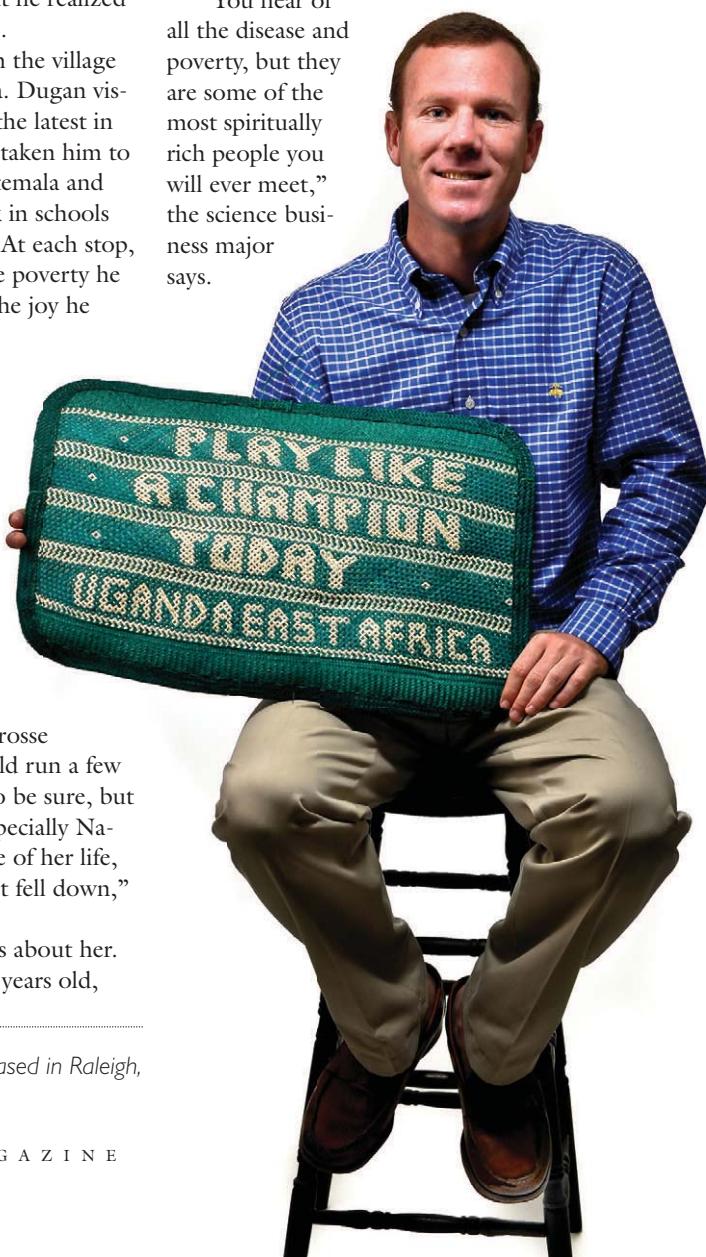
He asked one of her teachers about her. He learned that Nakibira was 8 years old,

was one of seven children, that her father had AIDS and her mother was HIV-positive. Her parents could not afford a school uniform. "All of a sudden poverty had a name and it had a face and it had a story," Dugan says. "I said, all right, this is where I'm going to dig in my heels."

Dugan founded a nonprofit organization called Fields of Growth to tackle poverty in Uganda through the tight-knit U.S. college lacrosse community. Former players now working on Wall Street have offered financial support and business acumen that can be useful in attacking some of Uganda's challenges. Athletes from different universities who want to give back can travel to the country to work on targeted service projects.

Jake Brems, a junior defenseman on Notre Dame's team, spent part of last summer in the small East African nation. Brems taught and played lacrosse, but his main task was to help launch a poultry-rearing business that could give some families a sustainable income.

"You hear of all the disease and poverty, but they are some of the most spiritually rich people you will ever meet," the science business major says.



"They will teach you so much more than you can teach them."

Such opportunities are rare for student athletes, whose team commitments leave little time for service or travel abroad. Dugan says he has been overwhelmed by the lacrosse community's response, and he is hearing from players who want to do similar trips in other countries. "It's almost come together a little bit too effortlessly," he says. "That's what the spirit of enthusiasm does."

Kevin Corrigan, the head coach of the Notre Dame men's team, says Dugan's passion drives him to do things others would consider impossible. Corrigan asked Dugan last year about getting his players more involved with the rest of the student body. A delegation of Sudanese bishops had visited campus in October to talk about the fear of renewed violence as a treaty-mandated vote on splitting the country approached. Corrigan and Dugan agreed to stage a peace rally, but Dugan didn't stop there. He got the

Kevin Dugan wants to use lacrosse to do good work in Uganda. He also wants to field some good lacrosse teams there.

Fields of Growth (fieldsofgrowthintl.org/) focuses on rural poverty. But the organization has also helped launch lacrosse as a viable sport in the country's capital, Kampala.

The organization has partnered with the Makerere University Business School to develop four lacrosse teams with about 120 total players. One goal is to have a Ugandan team compete in the 2014 World Lacrosse Games in Denver. An important step was the formation of the Uganda Lacrosse Union chaired by Davis Kamoga, who won the bronze medal for Uganda in the 400-meter race at the 1996 Summer Olympics.

Another goal: Tap student lacrosse ambassadors to teach the sport in poor villages.

"We will have Ugandans helping Ugandans," Dugan explains. The students become models of the possible to village children. "You can see the dreams being planted in their hearts. To see college kids coming and visiting their school, that has an invaluable impact on these kids."

— Bill Krueger

Bill Krueger is a freelance writer based in Raleigh, North Carolina.

SEEN & HEARD



men's basketball team and other campus groups to join the lacrosse team's effort. They organized a 3-on-3 basketball tournament to raise money for the cause. Dugan then led a trip east to visit Catholic Relief Services and talk about the Sudan situation with officials in Congress and the White House. Now he is working with the new government of Southern Sudan to develop an Olympic program.

Tom Hayes, another old friend and a longtime leader of the Federation of International Lacrosse, says Dugan's vision sets him apart in college sports. "We have a way of having blinders on, just seeing the game that week," the former Rutgers coach says. "Kevin has an ability to cast a much wider net in terms of what's going on in the world."

For Dugan, lacrosse and Notre Dame are an important part of that world. You can hear the wonder in his voice when he talks about walking on to the lacrosse team as a midfielder, looking over a teammate's shoulder during practice and seeing the Golden Dome.

After the team's season ended May 22 in a 7-5 loss to Duke in the NCAA tournament quarter-finals, Dugan became the director of youth and community outreach in the athletic department as part of a new initiative to fuse what he calls the "ethos of the University" into Notre Dame sports. In addition to his work in Africa, he is now charged with opening the doors of Irish athletics to children who live nearby. He says Jack Swarbrick '76, ND athletic director, wants "to see as many young kids as possible impacted with the ideals of Notre Dame."

But Dugan does not need to be convinced that sports can change lives for the better, even in a far-away place like Uganda where a lacrosse stick is a strange and wonderful object that somehow manages to bring disparate cultures together.

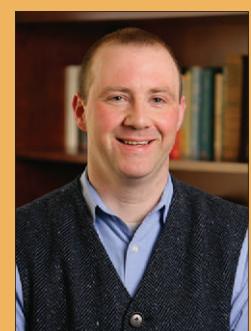
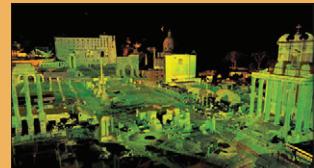
"You can share the game you love and do great things at the same time," he says. "That's the key that's opened the door to homes . . . and classrooms being built and poultry-rearing projects being started. None of that has anything to do with lacrosse, but the key to it all has been capitalizing on the spirit and enthusiasm of the lacrosse community." □

women's championship. The Irish led early in the May Day title match in Pittsburgh, but fell 22-10 to the more experienced side from Cambridge, Massachusetts. . . . **Funny things happened** to the Roman Forum in the centuries after Rome's fall. The buildings that housed ancient Rome's political life were taken apart and either put back together or used in churches and fortifications before the place became a dump — architectural and otherwise. Nowadays you need look no further than Bond Hall to see the Forum in its glory. Professor Gilbert Gorski's forthcoming *The Architecture of the Roman Forum* showcases his skills as a leading architectural illustrator, presenting buildings and monuments as they looked in the 4th century. Meanwhile, Professor Krupali Krusche and her students have documented the ruins — now a World Heritage site — with methods that included the use of a 3D laser scanner. Their work generated digital images and watercolor renderings showing the precise location and condition of buildings today. The scholars are talking to UNESCO and Italian authorities about a possible exhibit in Rome of Forum illustrations made over the last 200 years. . . . **An Irish-themed green soda** appeared on Huddle Mart shelves April 12, just in time to capture student palates before final exams. Twist O' Luck started as a business class team project for five Saint Mary's students, who created its formula, label and marketing plan. It sold so well at Saint Mary's that the partners took their shamrock-hued, citrusy beverage to select Michiana vendors and LaFortune's convenience store, where it sells for a cool \$1.99 a bottle. . . . **Spring shearing** is part of the routine for leaders on the football team these days. Dayne Crist and Mike Golic Jr. were just two who lost everything up top at this year's The Bald and the Beautiful event, which has raised as much as \$40,000 for pediatric cancer research. Coach Brian Kelly did not participate but promised to get clipped next year if his squad wins a BCS bowl game this season.

. . . **The so-called Hesburgh Challenge**, a drinking game in which participants consume one alcoholic beverage on each floor of the library, was no laughing matter for housekeepers who have had to clean up after the debauched for the last eight years and found as many as 1,300 beer cans in the stacks two years ago. Incidents typically spike just before final exams and last through Senior Week. This year eight students had been caught drinking in the tower when officials curbed the practice in April by checking patrons' bags at the door. . . . **Years ago Skaneateles, New York**, long a popular Finger Lakes getaway, became a bedroom community for professionals in the Syracuse area. Growth pressures threatening the hamlet's rural character and historical appeal for residents and visitors alike were the target of "Strategies for Sustainable Skaneateles," the work of graduate students in architecture Professor Philip Bess' urban design studio. Their project won the Grand Academic Prize at the Congress for the New Urbanism's 11th annual charter awards, the highest honor for students in their field. . . . **Wanna start an argument** in an Irish pub? Take a side in the Irish language debate — living treasure or waste of time? — says Brian Ó Conchubhair, associate professor of Irish Language and Literature. Once on the cultural endangered species list, Irish has enjoyed a youth resurgence in Ireland and on the campus of Notre Dame. "It's a hot-button issue," Ó Conchubhair told Chicago's WBEZ radio before St. Patrick's Day. "Always has been, always will be." □



MATT CASHORE '94



MATT CASHORE '94

What we've learned

Retiring Secretary of Defense Robert Gates spoke of our enduring need for a strong military. Laetare co-medalist Sister Mary Scullion, RSM, a stalwart crusader against homelessness in Philadelphia, challenged “the false values of excessive individualism and phony materialism.” Valedictorian Edward Larkin, a biological sciences major from East Lansing, Michigan, cast aside the statistics and rankings that have marked his peers’ achievements to date and sent forth his 3,100 fellow graduates with this piece of wisdom: “Greatness emerges when people engage the world of ideas and nurture their own rather than racing off to be the ‘best.’”

Every speaker at Notre Dame’s 166th commencement stood behind a grand, new tradition — the Notre Dame Podium, a gift from the School of Architecture designed and carved by Professors Robert Brandt and Kevin Buccellato. The May 22nd ceremony

honored former ND football coach Lou Holtz and Chuck Lennon ’61, ’62M.A., who would retire in June as director of the alumni association, alongside notable figures in education, philanthropy, science, human rights, business and the Catholic Church.

Before the big day arrived, senior Casey Cockerham asked his classmates to reflect on their growth and the wisdom gathered during four years at Notre Dame. Here are a few selections from what they had to say.

I have learned that “for everything there is a season.” That we must trust the seasons of our hearts, as we can trust the seasons of the year. Even when winter is heavy and gray and seems indomitable, spring always comes. I have learned to accept the deaths of autumn more gracefully and, as Wendell Berry says, to “practice Resurrection.”

— Kaitlyn Kiger, theology/peace studies

To see not only with my eyes but also with my heart.

— Claire Fisher, psychology

You cannot fix or control everything. Do your best to deal successfully with problems within your control. Think about the situations within your influence, and try to make a positive impact. Pray about the troubles that are out of your control, and trust that God will bear the weight of your worry.

— Melissa Nolan, biological sciences and history

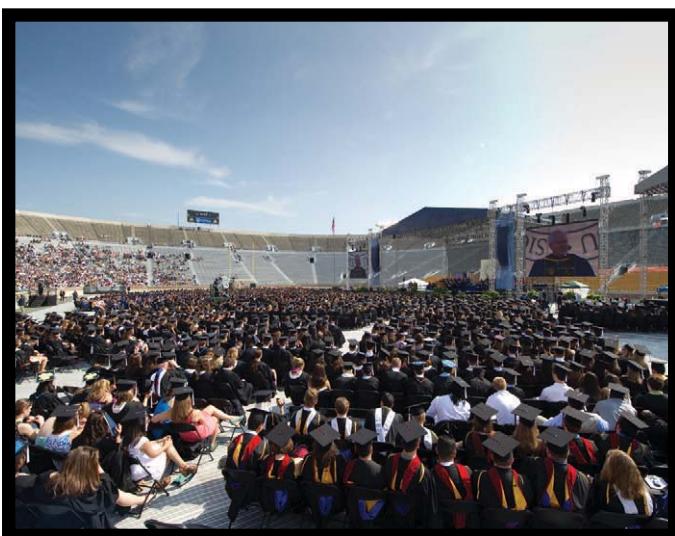
Whatever you’re afraid of, do it. That’s the only way you can ever grow.

— Casey Larkin, English and Irish studies

During my senior year, two students have passed away, Declan Sullivan and Sean Valero. As tragic as these times were, I will never forget how the student body came together at memorial Masses to mourn together; but also to pray for the repose



PHOTOS BY MATT CASHORE '94



of their souls. That is when I truly knew we were Notre Dame. We could stand together in the good times and in the bad times. We are not just Notre Dame when we cheer at a football game.... When everything we do is something Our Lady would be proud of, when we lead lives worthy of the namesake of our university, that is when I know we are Notre Dame.

— **Conor Rogers**, program of liberal studies

The most important thing I learned during my time here was to always view things with a sense of curiosity — to never hesitate to question the status quo and to never simply take something as fact or personal belief without really examining, questioning and accepting it for oneself.

— **Billy Teschke**, finance and psychology

Passion and desperation yield the greatest results.
— **Andrew Hessert**, anthropology

Follow your bliss, meet as many people as you can and sleep on airport floors if it means a cheaper flight abroad. Walk to class barefoot once it's warm, go on spring break at least one time and always eat Taco Bell after going out. Carry a flash drive and a couple bobby pins

wherever you go, don't talk about fourth grade slumber parties in a job interview and eat the cheddar crumbed scrod in the dining hall whenever you can (which is every time because it sounds so gross that nobody else wants to try it). But most of all, breathe in the magic that fills this oasis of a campus, let the sun reflecting off of Mary put a sparkle in your eye and never forget that you are, and forever will be, Notre Dame.

— **Emily Murphy**, marketing and graphic design

Always keep an open door,
Go meet people you don't know,
Build a family where you are,
Be the first to say hello.

— **Emily Rankin**, psychology

You learn a little bit of humility when surrounded by the best of the best and suddenly not being on top is a smack into reality. However: When you learn that you still have something unique and still have something to offer, now that's something special.

— **Margaret Skinner**, science preprofessional studies

Notre Dame has taught me to reach. To not always be comfortable. You won't have as much

fun if you never take any chances.

— **Andrea Bailey**, chemistry

Plan on deviating from most of your plans.

— **Isabel Chirase**, economics and Spanish

There's an overwhelming amount of talent at Notre Dame. Never forget, you are one of those amazing and talented people. So go forth with confidence, and be grateful for all that Notre Dame has given you.

— **Katie Heinzen**, electrical engineering

Think always of Christ. Think of how you can use the skills God gave you to help your fellow brothers and sisters.

— **Maria Lamas**, romance languages and preprofessional studies

I learned that by looking back and wishing you could redo your past Notre Dame experience, you actually take away from your Notre Dame present and future.

— **J.P. Gallagher**, science preprofessional studies

— Edited by John Nagy

Mix (second from right) was one of the ND members of the March workshop's housing committee. The engineers' work included a survey tool residents can use to collect and analyze local housing preferences.

Hope's plan

BY JOHN NAGY

In their 18-year fight against the pain, disfigurement and injustice caused by lymphatic filariasis, Father Tom Streit, CSC, and his bi-national team in the Notre Dame Haiti Program have grounded their scientific research and medical work in a consistent message: *We are here for you. We are one with you. We will not stop until this scourge is gone. We will not lose hope.*

The January 2010 earthquake in Haiti threatened all that. For months, disaster relief in the program's host community, Léogâne, eclipsed the effort to eradicate the tenacious tropical parasitic disease.

Eighteen months later, the program and its partners have regrouped, working through the setbacks to push forward on mass drug administrations and the distribution of table salt fortified with iodine and antiparasitic medicine around Léogâne and beyond.

Meanwhile, many thousands in Léogâne still live without adequate shelter. Schools, businesses and medical facilities are either closed or operating on a limited basis. Now the Haiti Program's credibility is making it a conduit for other kinds of help. In March, nearly 200 residents convened for the Re-build Léogâne Planning Workshop, conceived as an opportunity for emerging local leaders to share their vision with Notre Dame specialists and partners from academia, the private sector and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Months of dialogue between Haitian and American coordinators in each of eight focus-area committees preceded the workshop, which took place at the Haiti Program's guesthouse and next door at the Episcopal University of Haiti's nursing school. Participants described the four-day meetings, conducted in English and Creole, as grassroots-driven and intense. That already was an accomplishment, says Father Bob Loughery, CSC, '78, '88M.Div., a workshop organizer.



ALEXANDROS TAFLANIDIS

HAITI'S FUTURE BUMPER CROP: HOUSES?

Gingerbread it's not, but the answer to the permanent housing crisis in Port-au-Prince and Léogâne may lie in sugarcane. Or sorghum. Or a blend of Haitian crop fibers. Whatever the resource, a team of Notre Dame civil engineering professors and students think the future of Haitian housing might come down to a choice between masonry that can explode and crumble during earthquakes, or lightweight panels that would merely pop out under pressure.

Eighteen months after the earthquake that destroyed more than 80 percent of Léogâne's buildings, residents have little choice but to live outdoors or risk the "explosion." They can only build with brittle concrete block, heavy slab and cheapjack steel because — poor and deadly as these materials are for construction — that's what's available. Deforestation, mainly for fuel, has depleted the trees families once used for traditional timber frame houses.

Were it only as simple as finding better materials: Housing may be post-earthquake Haiti's most intractable problem. Right now, no one's building. Much of the rubble has been cleared, but for most families it represented their uninsured life's savings. Mortgage financing is a new experiment. Laws and customs governing land ownership are murky at best, discouraging foreign aid and investment. And simpleminded solutions like multistory tenements that ignore cultural precedent will fail the market test. As Dustin Mix puts it, "If they want it, the market's going to drive it. If they don't want it, the market's going to kill it."

Mix is a graduate student working with Professor Tracy Kijewski-Correa '97, '03Ph.D on lightweight drywall panels that could be made from crop fibers and hung on sturdy bamboo frames, all of it locally grown, processed and manufactured. Working with Professor Alexandros Taflanidis and a team of undergraduate researchers, they say the true test of their research into viable permanent housing in Haiti will come when they set up a testing frame of Mix's design and a manual winch in Léogâne's town square, applying identical forces to the concrete and the agricultural panel.

"The anticipated outcome is that the masonry unit will fall apart in a dramatic, brutal explosion and crumble to the ground," Kijewski-Correa explains, "very much like what they saw with their own eyes on the day of the quake. Whereas our system will withstand a greater load, and when it does fail [there] will be a lightweight panel that just pops out."

That day will come after months of tests to establish the panels' durability in Haiti's hot, humid climate and computer modeling to figure out how to build with them so houses can withstand both earthquakes and hurricanes. The National Collegiate Inventors and Innovators Alliance, on the lookout for new ventures that serve the developing world, is funding the work. The grant requires a business plan for the panels, so the engineers have turned to Notre Dame's Gigot Center for Entrepreneurial Studies and Executive MBA students to develop one. This fall, mechanical engineering and industrial design students will develop ideas for the manufacturing process.

The goal, Kijewski-Correa says, is to present two years hence an affordable, market-driven solution to the problem of permanent housing with which Haitian entrepreneurs could create manufacturing jobs, expand agricultural markets and potentially reduce construction labor costs.

Oh, and save lives when the next quake hits.

—John Nagy

Loughery says women, many of whom run small businesses, turned out in almost the same numbers as men. Breakout sessions covered quality-of-life needs from housing, infrastructure, public services and zoning to cultural promotion, economic development, education and healthcare. "The first thing that surprised me is that people came back for the closing session," Loughery says. "They're not passive. They're invested."

The immediate goal is the production of a master plan that translates local wishes into orderly, detailed proposals which could unlock the billions of dollars in foreign aid and development capital that accrued after the earthquake, all with Haiti's name on it. The problem is that right now "people are very hesitant to put the money into Haiti," says Gilbert Wirth, a Virginia developer whose involvement in the country goes back almost as far as Father Streit's. "They have to have a plan in place before they're willing to commit the dollars necessary."

Wirth, whose son attends Notre Dame, met Streit '80, '85M.Div., '94Ph.D. several years ago. He became part of the team advising the salt program and visited Léogâne several times before and after the earthquake. "No one was even thinking in terms of comprehensive master planning for the town of Léogâne," Wirth recalls. "And I said, well, guys, this is what I do for a living."

Wirth said the intention is not to turn Notre Dame into an overseas land developer, or even to tell people what to do, but simply to listen and offer expertise. "This is what the University does best: Bring people together for the facilitation of ideas," he says.

One invaluable resource is anthropologist Karen Richman, the director of migration and border studies at Notre Dame's Institute for Latino Studies. An authority on Haitian culture, language and economics, Professor Richman says the earthquake set Léogâne's families back decades. With no savings or insurance of any kind, they turned to the only safety net they have — relatives and friends.

Richman's insights oriented several American participants and shaped sessions on culture and economic development. She stresses Haitians' understanding of interdependence within extended families and their sense of success as something measured not by individuals but groups.

She also warns of Haitian antipathy toward wage labor. The best thing to come out of the workshop, she said before it began, "would be to help empower the Haitians to solve their own problems. It's going to take a realistic understanding of the situation."

In fact, while several NGOs have already produced plans for Léogâne, the Rebuild workshop was the first to try to coordinate them and invite residents' participation. NGO representatives attended, making organizers optimistic about sustained cooperation.

Pre-workshop meetings had prioritized chronic flooding, sewage and water supply. Father Loughery says deforestation in the mountains around Léogâne — a major factor in city floods — prompted talk at the workshop about energy alternatives and the planting of fruit groves to prevent erosion and generate income. Soon the focus shifted to education and healthcare. And an unexpected means of organizing potential solutions to the tangle of problems emerged: rara.

Léogâne is the home of this Haitian street music, most visible each Lent in processions — much like the krewes of New Orleans' Mardi Gras — that culminate in a downtown festival at Easter. The parades are organized by the 37 villages and neighborhoods that make up the Léogâne area. Their gathering points may mark natural locations for the

sites of new schools, markets, health dispensaries, water supplies and energy nodes. Parade routes map out important corridors for commerce, transportation and tourism. And promoting rara may raise the profile of a city that once enjoyed prominence in Haitian culture — a boost for civic pride and Léogâne's other arts.

Loughery says Haitian working groups meet once a week to continue the conversation and consult with their volunteer experts as they craft the workshop's preliminary report into a unified master plan. In the hammering out of these details lies real hope. □



The workshop identified nearby Ça Ira beach as an undeveloped asset.

SOME GOOD NEWS FOR CHANGE

When he talks about the need for a master plan for Léogâne, William DeJong quotes Proverbs: Where there is no vision, the people perish.

DeJong should know. As an education planner and co-founder of Schools for Children of the World, DeJong includes the facility master plan for the school system of post-Katrina New Orleans among his accomplishments. The project connected him with architect Steven Bingler, whose firm, Concordia LLC, produced the Unified New Orleans Plan, the basis for that city's official blueprint for the future.

Now DeJong, Bingler and Virginia developer Gilbert Wirth have fixed their minds on Léogâne as coordinators of the planning effort that gained momentum during the Rebuild Léogâne workshop. Their work is only one piece of good news concerning Notre Dame's involvement in Haiti.

- Last September, Cargill donated \$20,000 worth of salt to the Haiti Program, which will treat it for use as a dietary weapon against lymphatic filariasis.
- The Let's Share the Sun Foundation, founded by class of 1985 alumni Nancy and William Jordan to bring solar power to the developing world, made its first-ever donation to the Haiti Program. The first phase of an eight-kilowatt array is beginning to provide a stable power supply to the program's headquarters, Residence Filariose. The system

eventually will replace a diesel generator and eliminate as much as \$750 in monthly fuel costs.

- One of the 11 school projects DeJong's group has taken on in Haiti has them working with Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) on the reconstruction of the Congregation of Holy Cross' Basile Moreau School. ACE is also supporting the expansion of a Holy Cross primary school.
- Meanwhile, ACE staff are working with the Haitian Ministry of Education to develop the curriculum for a national Teacher Institute in the northern city of Cap-Haitien.
- Haiti Program business manager James Weber '10MBA has begun teaching basic business classes to local tradesmen and aspiring entrepreneurs. Weber is working with Economic Growth Initiative for Haiti, a nonprofit co-founded by Stephen Keppel '03, to develop a certification program.
- In June, Cindy Michel '04, '10MADU, a Haitian-American architect, received the Congress for the New Urbanism's 2011 Academic Award for her graduate thesis, a master plan for Cap-Haitien. Through a program designed to tap the talents of architects, planners and engineers among Haiti's diaspora, Michel has advised the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission and the U.S. Agency for International Development on projects in Port-au-Prince.

Three shining moments



Ariel DeSmet's winning touch at the NCAA championships secures an individual gold medal and an early lead for the Irish.



Sophomore guard Skylar Diggins battles Texas A&M's Karla Gilbert during the NCAA title game.



Left wing Jeff Costello, a freshman, celebrates after scoring on Minnesota-Duluth goalie Kenny Reiter during the first period of the semifinal matchup.

PETER LAFIEUR/COLLEGE FENCING 360.COM; MATT CASHORE '94; AP PHOTO/ANN HEISENFELT

FENCING

NCAA CHAMPIONS

Freshman Ariel DeSmet (men's foil) and junior Courtney Hurley (women's épée) took gold and both Irish sabers medaled to keep the team in contention. But it was freshman Rachel Beck's 3-2 win in foil over Katherine Chou of Harvard on March 27 at Ohio State's French Field House that sealed a six-point edge over second-place Penn State and a gleaming eighth national title for Notre Dame fencing.

SEASON-DEFINING MOMENT: “Some clouds rose up in December when Gerek Meinhardt [foil] got a serious injury and was forced to stop fencing and take a red shirt. There was a moment of nervousness about how the Irish could do without the team's top star, but his teammates did not give up. They maintained a No. 1 ranking throughout the season and set a record by winning all six gold medals at the Midwest Conference Championships. It confirmed that despite Gerek's injury, the team wanted the chance to be the best.”

— head coach Janusz Bednarski

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

RUNNER-UP, NCAA TOURNAMENT

Their stunning Final Four upset of the Connecticut Huskies earned them a spot in the April 5 national championship game in Indianapolis' Conseco Fieldhouse, where they fell in a thriller to the Texas A&M Aggies, 76-70.

SEASON-DEFINING MOMENT: “The turning point for us came right after Christmas in Seattle. We were playing Gonzaga and it was our last chance to get a marquee non-conference win to help our postseason resume. We were leading by four points late, and we got called for a technical. Becca Bruszewski called the team together and told them, in no uncertain terms, that the only thing we could truly depend on was each other and we weren't losing this game — and we didn't. Her leadership created a foundation of toughness that carried us all the way to the national championship game.”

— head coach Muffet McGraw

HOCKEY

NCAA FROZEN FOUR

Momentum built in regional bracket wins over Merrimack and New Hampshire couldn't carry them past the Minnesota-Duluth Bulldogs, who scored three goals on power plays and advanced to the championship in a 4-3 win April 7 at the Xcel Energy Center in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

SEASON-DEFINING MOMENT: “The turning point of our season came early in the year when we faced the defending national champs, top-ranked Boston College, at the Joyce Center. We beat them 2-1 and it helped our young team realize just how good we could be.”

— senior right wing Ryan Guentzel

Thank God It's Friday! Really!!

BY JORDAN GAMBLE '11

It's 12:04 a.m. and your email inbox adds one more subject line: "GREAT SCOTT, IT'S FRIDAY!!!" The caps lock and midnight arrival convey exuberant urgency.

When Laura McCarty '11 wishes everyone a happy Friday, she does it right on the edge. She's delivered these greetings every week for more than three years.

It started with a Facebook message in February of her freshman year. Like most college students, McCarty rolls around YouTube on a regular basis. She found a clip of the song "Oh Happy Day" from *Sister Act 2*, which expressed her feelings as things wound down into the weekend. Eighteen people received that first Happy Friday message with a link to the video. McCarty sent a similar note the following week.

Then Lent set in, and the future theology and psychology major sacrificed Facebook for 40 days. So the early morning messages went to email. The result was a flowering ministry.

The receiving end of the

Happy Friday Email began with friends from Celebration Choir and a Relay for Life team. From there, the list has grown to more than 300 people from all areas of her life: friends from McGlinn Hall, professors, Baraka Bouts teammates and others she's met through campus ministry programs.

Given the diverse readership, McCarty starts off accessibly. She opens with a "Preludio" typical of her demeanor: unfailingly earnest, witty and focused on making people happy. It might include a video clip from a favorite movie like *The Lion King*, and segue, somehow, into a rant about TI-89 graphing calculators. The Preludio and her own comic reflections prepare readers for heavier matters. You can't just start throwing theology at people, she explains. The goofiness eases them into the mood.

The "Heart of the Email" is where things get serious —

in topic if not in tone. McCarty's matter-of-fact language puts a digestible spin on spiritual discussions about belief, acceptance and choice. McCarty says the topics usually grow out of conversations she's had at Notre Dame.

"It's whatever has been on my mind that week or whatever I feel like I'm supposed to write about for people," she says. "It's grown as I've grown, too."



MATT CASHORE '14

The Happy Friday Email for May 5, 2011

No excerpted Laura McCarty Happy Friday Email could do justice to the whole. Readers will find a short "best of" collection at magazine.nd.edu. Those who wish to subscribe may send a request to lmccart12@gmail.com, but be patient because she's off at camp with no computer.

After a typical Preludio in which she marvels at a YouTube clip of the "Circle of Life" intro to Disney's The Lion King Laura takes it away:

HAPPY HAPPY FRIDAY, PEOPLE!!! HOLA, PEOPLES!!!

OK, folks: so hopefully at this point in the spring, folks' immune systems have stopped declaring war on the pollen in the air and reached a Treaty of Versailles, so to speak....

Then, after a brief dialogue between "Roomie" and "Sleep Deprived You," Laura takes us to

THE HEART OF THE EMAIL: Or, Work and Pray....

So Saint Augustine has this quote that's been perplexing me for a long time, and it goes: "Pray as if everything depended on God. Work as if everything depended on you."

So this sounds as though we're splitting the work of our salvation between God and ourselves. It's almost like the part of every Scooby-Doo episode where the gang splits up to look for the bad guy. So what part of this quote is real? Does everything depend on God or on us? ...

In all of this, there is one thing that we alone can offer that God will not take as His own task. That duty that He entrusts entirely to us is the chance to choose Him freely. He will not force us, cajole us, seduce us, or pressure us. He will only ask....

God bless you, my friends ☺ and I wish y'all, as ever, my Love, prayers, JOOOYYY!!! and a HAPPY HAPPY FRIDAY!!! HOODALALLLYYY!!!!

Laura

She doesn't request feedback, though when she does get a reply she says it brightens her day — even when it criticizes her interpretation of theology.

"People call me out, and I want people to do that," she says. "It starts a discussion, and I'm really very grateful when that happens. It's very humbling."

McCarty is humble enough on her own, even without the critiques. She doesn't allow herself to take too much credit for the sheer number of words she's generated. She says a lot of the writing, especially the Heart of the Email, just comes organically from things she's learned. She'll often hunt down a quote or two to jump-start her meditation. C.S. Lewis, G.K. Chesterton and Saint Augustine inform many essays, which most weeks run about 700 words.

She devotes at least a few hours each week to composing the messages and has written as many as 10 in advance. They went out even

during the three summers she spent without her computer at the Bay Cliff Health Camp for children with physical disabilities in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. She left the essays and contact list with a friend and headed north.

Degree in hand, McCarty will spend one more summer at the camp and return to her hometown of Knoxville, Tennessee, where she'll prepare for occupational therapy school and live a "quieter life" for a year. She plans to keep writing Happy Friday Emails as long as she can, partly as a way to stay connected to the people she met at Notre Dame.

When she feels it has run its course, she'll let it go. As for publishing, McCarty is wary of dealing with the hubbub of copyright. An email is more personal, she explains. No one has to navigate a website or buy a book. It just pops into inboxes with an ecstatic greeting but no obligation to respond or even read it.

"I just think of it as tossing pennies in a fountain," she says. "I relinquish ownership of it." □

Jordan Gamble was this magazine's spring intern.

Reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic? Try tobacco, pirates and lumberjacks

BY JOHN NAGY

Let's clear out the stereotypes right away. We parochial school kids all knew a Sister Ann who reputedly ran her classroom like a Soviet passport office and marched smartalecks and playground tomcats to the office by their ears. She was terrifying, nothing like mild Sister Susan the librarian or grandmotherly Sister George who taught the big kids upstairs. But maybe it wasn't until the day you passed her in the polished hallway, relaxed and swapping jokes with the janitor, that you decided the impossible rumors about her delivering groceries to the family whose mother had cancer might just be true.

Whatever you think you know about Catholic sisters is best left at the door when you enter the Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America museum exhibit coming to South Bend's Center for History in September. No mere collection of text, artifacts, photos and films, Women & Spirit tells lovingly documented stories about faith-filled women who sacrificed family ties and material comfort to serve and lead and help shape our nation into something ennobling and entirely new.

My family and I caught the exhibit at the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium in Dubuque, Iowa. There, in a segment about the Civil War, I fixed on a petrified plug of tobacco that Sister Anthony O'Connell, the "Angel of the Battlefield," had carried in her field kit to soothe wounded soldiers in triage. Sisters were among the first to volunteer for the U.S. Navy's nursing corps, and some 600 served during the conflict.

John Nagy is an associate editor of this magazine.

One anecdote told of a sinking hospital ship at Shiloh. Sensing doom, a doctor prepared to disembark, but his nurses refused to budge. "Since you weak women display such courage," he finally conceded, "I, too, will remain." Ambling by, an older Dominican volunteering as a docent leaned in and whispered, "I just love that quote."

I found my favorite moments later. It seems the war offered women religious yet



Sister Hilary Ross was an outstanding scientist and award-winning medical photographer who wrote more than 40 scientific papers on the biochemistry of leprosy.

COURTESY DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY

another front to encounter and overcome anti-Catholic prejudice. "I don't care what you are," one grateful Massachusetts private told a Sister of Mercy. "You're a mother to me."

Women & Spirit opened its national tour two years ago and has shared these and hundreds of other remarkable tales everywhere from the Smithsonian to Ellis Island to Cleveland's

Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage.

The exhibit begins with the first group of sisters to ship out for the future United States. Their tale foreshadows Father Sorin's quest to found Notre Dame, with a few extra perils that make the travails of Holy Cross' hallowed "band of brothers" a century later seem quaint: "Twelve Catholic sisters — muddy, mosquito-bitten, but bursting with hope for the promise of the New World — arrived in New Orleans in 1727, having narrowly escaped pirates during that transatlantic crossing." Pirates, eh? Moreau's missionaries famously renovated a chilly log cabin into a university; New Orleans' French Ursulines conquered the swamps in the full sweat of summer simply to care for abused women and orphans.

"Need brings out our talent," Sister Hyacinth LeConniat of the Daughters of the Cross wrote in 1855, as if she were thinking of all 220,000 Catholic women the exhibit numbers in its history. They fanned out quickly. Immigrant communities founded hospitals, schools and all manner of social services in Atlantic seaports, eventually following wagons, canal boats and steam locomotives to support their countrymen's settlements out west.

American-born women soon joined and formed new orders. Together, from Baltimore, Maryland, to Baker City, Oregon, they forged some of our most enduring institutions. They taught, prayed, visited the sick, built schools, soothed babies, held children's hands, planted, raked and hoed, gleaned and baled, spun and wove, made shoes and music — and their own habits. They begged, negotiated and nurtured whole communities. They practically defined on-the-job training and became role models of leadership to generations of Catholic girls, fashioning women's colleges and graduate theology programs with the same relish and purpose that found them devising health insurance for lumberjacks.

These are stories of inner faith issuing forth in determination and love. My sons loved "Sister Lumberjack," Amata Mackett, who baked pies, darned socks, listened to the woes of many a Minnesota logger and sold them tickets for medical care, but went after deadbeats with a poker. My daughter talks about the women who died trying to save their orphans from the hurricane that

Women & Spirit is organized by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, which represents 95 percent of Catholic sisters in the United States. The touring exhibit opened in May 2009, and it will run from September 2 to December 31 at South Bend's Center for History in association with Notre Dame and Saint Mary's College. The center is located at 808 West Washington Street, two miles from campus. Learn more at centerforhistory.org/ or womenandspirit.org/.

swamped Galveston, Texas, in 1900. One sister's body was found still clutching two small children to her chest. My wife, no stranger to sacrificial giving, marveled at Sister Mary Irene Fitzgibbon, who turned \$5 and a donated building into The New York Foundling, a safe haven for thousands of infants whose parents could not, or would not, raise them. "It gives you hope for what one person can do," she said.

True, but the sisters themselves seemed to prefer working by the dozen. Whether any felt regrets about the call to religious life isn't shown in Women & Spirit, which doesn't dive as deeply into their thoughts and prayers as some might like. We do find Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton, now a saint, speaking this challenge to contemporary ears — "I am so in love now with the rules that I see the bit of the bridle all gold, and the reins all of silk" — and some notably frank acknowledgments of this history's darker chapters, such as sisters' participation in the commonly accepted practices of corporal classroom punishment and their failure to transcend the mores of racial segregation prior to the civil rights movement.

Catholics, as a whole, may have mixed feelings about the exhibit's brief conclusion in the post-Vatican II era, "Signs of the Times," but what capped my visit was a conversation with Sister Elvira Kelley '62, a cheerful Franciscan and volunteer docent. Sister spoke warmly of her vocation and noted that she's now in her sixth career assignment since joining her order. That's a lot of hats, I remarked. It seems some things haven't changed. □

The Declan Sullivan Report

This is certain: An "extraordinary" gust of wind — recorded as 53 miles per hour at 4:54 p.m. October 27, 2010 — knocked over the Marklift MT40G hydraulic scissor lift and dropped 20-year-old Declan Sullivan to his death while the junior from Long Grove, Illinois, was filming football practice. But it wasn't the only ingredient contributing to the tragedy.

Other causes emerged as two teams of investigators examined the equipment, policies and practices that factored into the fall.

For one, the Indiana Occupational Safety and Health Administration (IOSHA) assessed the University \$77,500 in fines for a half-dozen violations. While those infractions probably would not have prevented the accident, the Indiana Department of Labor commissioner concluded in mid-March, "The evidence overwhelmingly demonstrated that the University made a decision to utilize its scissor lifts in known adverse weather conditions."

Notre Dame has appealed the agency's claims and disagreements have yet to be resolved.

A month later the University released its own report, a 145-page document resulting from an investigation approved by Peter Likins, the former president of Lehigh and the University of Arizona. The inquiry included test results and analysis from experts in wind engineering, aerial lifts and meteorology as well as interviews with more than 50 people.

The report (available at president.nd.edu/communications) pointed to several leading causes for the accident — the sudden burst of wind, staff members' not monitoring on-field wind speeds during practice and the susceptibility of the lift to toppling, particularly at the height to which it was extended at the time of the fall. But the investigation cited no individual as being responsible for the accident.

"After a thorough and painstaking study," University president John Jenkins, CSC, wrote in a letter accompanying the report, "we have reached the conclusion that no one acted in disregard for safety. Each individual involved based his decision and actions that day on the best information available at the time and in accord with the procedures that were in place."

Jenkins declared the University "collectively responsible," and again expressed his "deepest sorrow" to the Sullivan family, adding, "You entrusted him to our care, and we failed to keep him safe."

According to the report, University procedures dictate that hydraulic lifts not be extended to their full height in winds between 25 and 35 miles per hour and be grounded when winds exceed 35 mph. While Tim Collins, in his 20th year as director of football video and film, was concerned about the weather that day, the report says "he did not believe that the winds were strong enough to warrant grounding the lifts."

Collins and his staff monitored the winds throughout the day and noted speeds in the low to mid 20s, with afternoon gusts about 30 mph. The weather had been discussed by Collins and his crew, and the report provides Sullivan's tweets regarding his safety. But seeing no wind speeds reported in excess of 35 mph, Collins concluded the lifts could be safely used, although he cautioned the videographers about fully extending the lifts and instructed them not to go higher than they felt comfortable.

However, at 2:54 p.m., less than 10 minutes after staff checked the weather for the last time before leaving for practice, the National Weather Service updated its data, recording winds at 29 mph with gusts up to 38. Wind velocities increased as the afternoon wore on, but no one monitored those speeds once practice began.

Three scissor lifts were in use by videographers that day, but only Sullivan's Marklift — fully extended to 40 feet — toppled. The other two were each found to have a wind-speed "tipping point" in excess of 70 mph. The Marklift tested — similar in age and condition to the one Declan Sullivan manned, and raised to its full 40 feet — would reportedly tip over in winds gusting to 49 to 53 mph. Had the Marklift been extended to 30 feet, studies indicate it likely would have remained standing in gusts of 55 to 59 mph.

But on a day of surging winds, this one strong, sudden burst rocked the practice field and blew equipment, boxes, footballs, clothing and debris across the turf. Coaches and trainers, seeing the lifts sway, yelled, "Get down!" By then it was too late. One lift was gone, and with it Declan Sullivan.

—Kerry Temple '74

Our Lady's random friendship generator

BY MAURA K. SULLIVAN '11

It will be 40 years this fall since Chuck Katter '75 first heard the words "Squirrel Bait" ricochet through the hallway outside the Grace Hall suite he shared with Tony Malench '75 and four other freshmen. The nickname was Malench's, both a reference to his short stature and a sign of acceptance by the upperclassmen who bestowed it upon him.

"People continued to call him that for the next four years," says Katter. "It's not surprising to hear someone refer to him as 'Bait' even now, and it's usually one of those original upperclassmen."

Katter and Malench owe their lifelong friendship to a random pairing that took place in the old Office of Student Residences in the summer of 1971. Thrown into their freshman year at Notre Dame, the new roommates bonded over football games, dining hall meals, pep rallies and handball games at the Rock.

Both had several siblings, and fathers who were doctors, so there were some similarities at the outset. But Malench had no ND connections and didn't even visit campus before he arrived for his freshman year. Katter, on the other hand, came from a Notre Dame family — his father, George '41, had lived in Badin Hall. Malench was the quieter of the two, and a pre-med major, while Katter pursued business.

Nothing in this pairing would suggest that the roommates would or would not become lifelong friends. These days, in the name of compatibility and shared interests, dating and social networking sites invite us to take revealing quizzes and play games that match up our tastes in reading, games, movies and music to help us find new friends and learn

more about our old ones. Many schools use similar methods to assign roommates, but Notre Dame does not.

These days students are still placed randomly into the 15 men's and 14 women's halls on campus, only now a computer makes the assignments. There are no athlete dorms, no specialty floors organized by major or interest. And with nearly 80 percent of students living on campus, freshmen typically find built-in mentors among the upperclassmen from their hall.

Some exceptions do exist. Students with special medical needs, for instance, might be placed in newer dorms equipped with air conditioning or ramp access. Otherwise, Residence Life directors only alter the random room assignments if the computer hap-

people who are interesting," Shoup says. "You blend people from so many histories and majors, it makes the average student who walks through the door feel more welcomed."

"We are probably one of the few schools that does it completely randomly, but the data has said that random assignments work just as well as assignments done through matching interests," he adds. "And most students remain in the hall they are placed in as freshmen."

It's not hard to find happy roommate stories spanning the decades. Bob McGoldrick and Roc O'Connor, both class of 1956, were roommates in Zahm Hall as freshmen and stayed close throughout their lives. O'Connor was McGoldrick's best man at his wedding, and McGoldrick still keeps in touch with

O'Connor's widow, Mary, 20 years after his friend's death.

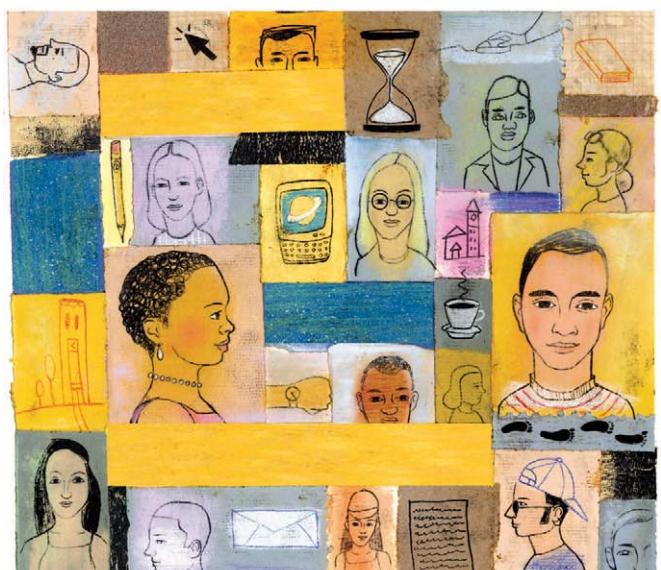
Jean Henegan '08 found a group of eight best friends who lived in the same section of Lewis Hall for four years. They still meet up each year and often joke that they should be featured on Notre Dame promotional materials.

"Among the eight of us, we literally spanned the gamut of races, socioeconomic backgrounds, majors, and we even had a top varsity athlete," Henegan says.

Katter and Malench also stayed in touch. They attended each other's weddings and made yearly trips back to South Bend for reunions and football games. Eventually, they brought their children back to campus with them, and Katter's oldest daughter, Anna '11, witnessed firsthand the lifelong friendships formed in Grace Hall.

When the younger Katter prepared for her freshman year, she had high expectations for her roommates and her residence hall. She confesses to looking up her roommates on Facebook and anxiously anticipating what their life together in Badin Hall might be like.

Maura Sullivan was the autumn 2010 intern at this magazine.



EDIEL RODRIGUEZ THEISPOOT.COM

pens to pair people from the same hometown or athletes from the same sport.

Jeff Shoup, the director of the Office of Residence Life and Housing, says Notre Dame has always used this approach, with overwhelmingly positive results.

"I think students can always find somebody with a common interest, as well as

"I looked up my three roommates, fabricated some seriously incorrect preconceived notions about each of them, and began to agonize about how none of these girls could possibly fulfill the expectations I had for a 'lifelong roommate' like my dad's," she says.

But despite those initial worries, she found her counterpart to Tony Malench in Kaitie McCabe '11. For the past four years, they have shared YouTube videos, late-night runs to LaFortune for milkshakes and a Notre Dame "bucket list" that included running through the reflecting pool outside the library and climbing the Stepan Center dome.

"It is hard to imagine that had we not been placed in the same minuscule quad as freshmen, we may not ever have known one another," says Katter.

And although some consider Notre Dame's single-sex residence halls a bit archaic, both young women think it's part of the reason they became such close friends.

"We're not concerned with flirting with the boys down the hall," McCabe says. "Instead, we're gossiping in the laundry room, playing ultimate spoons in the hallways and watching chick flicks in our RA's room. I think everyone is more unguarded — leaving their doors open and walking around in pajamas with no make-up on. You get to know people a lot better and faster that way."

Naturally, the scene was different in the corridors of Grace Hall in the 1970s, but Chuck Katter agrees with his daughter that Notre Dame's approach to dorm life relieves a lot of anxiety students may have had about fitting in. He and Malench stuck together, moving off campus after two years in Grace.

"We shared a lot of our growing up, a lot of our own family relationship evolution, a lot of our own personal development," Chuck Katter says. "I think a lot of what we went through for four years was easier because we were experiencing it together."

With email, cell phones and Facebook making it easy to stay in constant contact, the old roomies figure they connect — along with their extended circle of friends from Grace Hall and Saint Mary's College — at least once a week.

Now, with jobs in separate cities awaiting Anna Katter and Kaitie McCabe, they have to confront the prospect of not being an everyday presence in each other's lives. But as Anna learned from her dad's relationships, graduation doesn't have to mean the end. □

Go to magazine.nd.edu/news/roommates
to tell your own roommate story.

40291

BY BRIAN DOYLE '78

If huge things, like an education at the University of Notre Dame du Lac, which we collectively believe to be a different sort of creature than other educations for subtle and elusive but nonetheless substantive reasons, are composed of zillions of little things, not one of which is little and every one of which occurs under the sharp eye of the Coherent Mercy, then it matters somehow that our clean laundry came back from the laundry building wrapped in crackling brown paper and bound meticulously with string; and it matters that each boy (for only boys had their wash done by the University in those hoary days three decades ago) had a laundry number, five digits, printed on clean white cloth, and issued the summer before you enrolled, so that your mother, almost certainly your mother, in those hoary days three decades ago, stitched every scrap and bit of your few articles of clothing with your number. And it matters somehow that this morning, when I open a Paleozoic drawer, and discover a faded cloth ribbon 19 inches long with a procession of my laundry numbers, everything everything everything floods back over me, and I laugh and weep at once: for the shy eager frightened boy I was that summer; for the hours I never knew or cared that my tiny fiery patient mom sewed those numbers to my shirts and jeans and socks and towels and one dark wool suit jacket suitable for Mass *because you will go to Mass every few days, won't you, son*; for the cheerful vulgar gentle roommates who so often hoisted my bundle with theirs on their ways back to our hall, the greatest hall there ever was no others need apply; for the blessed paper and holy string, o the string the string, someone in the laundry carefully binding the bundles, each as big as a pillow, all day long, hundreds per day, each wrapping of the pile of clothes an act of love and reverence in the final analysis, each deft weaving of string a prayer of incalculable proportions, yes, for *we can do no great things, only small things with great love*, said that tiny sinew we call Mother Teresa. And again and again some kind soul bound my battered jeans and tattered shirts with sturdy crinkling butcher paper, snapping the corners in with practiced sleight of hand, and whipped string into a tight crisscross so fast the package had no time to complain, and slid the bundle down the line, eventually to be picked up by a burly humming lad from Kentucky, or the slums of Philadelphia, or a fishing town near Seattle, and carted across campus as if it weighed an ounce, which on those careless young shoulders it did, once upon a time. In your room it would be torn open without thought, a shirt grabbed because *we have exactly 80 seconds to get to Emil, man, let's go!*, the paper later a wadded weightless weapon fired at a razzing roommate, the string used for emergency shoelaces, and not a hint of a thought, not a shard, for the unknown holy being who washed and wrapped the clothes on your back, or she who stitched those numbers to your clothes, or he who bought the clothes, or she who got a second job to pay your tuition, or they who lay awake at night silently wondering if you were safe and healthy and happy, and going to Mass every few days, and wondering if they had given you enough of a launch pad, enough sweet tools to carry you forward into the kind of man you might be. Perhaps somehow you became that man; and perhaps he opens a Mesozoic drawer one morning and finds a faded cloth prayer with a parade of his laundry numbers, and wonders if he ever could say thank you enough, to everyone who ever blessed him in the incalculable ways we are blessed, and he realizes he cannot, but we can try. □

Brian Doyle is the editor of Portland Magazine at the University of Portland and the author most recently of a novel, *Mink River*. He received Notre Dame's Father Robert Griffin, CSC, Award for Writing in 2010.

BY JOHN MONCZUNSKI

RESCUING BRAIN CELLS

About 18 months ago, while watching her 14-year-old son, Alex Mobashery, snowboarding in Harbor Springs, Michigan, Mayland Chang had one of those heart-stopping moments no parent ever wants to experience. While Alex was attempting a stunt, he lost his balance and hit his head on the ground. In that instant, the teenager joined the estimated 300,000 Americans each year who suffer a sports- or recreation-related "mild traumatic brain injury," or concussion, as it is commonly known.

As large as that number is, it does not include other sources of concussion such as falls, auto accidents or assaults. In fact, it may be just the tip of the iceberg, even for sports-related traumatic brain injury. Leading authorities believe that up to half of all sports-related concussions go unreported. Additionally, an estimated 360,000 veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars are believed to have suffered traumatic brain injury, mainly from the shock waves caused by improvised explosive devices.

Concussion symptoms include confusion, amnesia, headache, blurred vision, seeing bright lights, dizziness, lack of motor coordination, balance difficulty, ringing in the ears, nausea and disorientation. The injury may or may not be accompanied by loss of consciousness. However, if it is, the longer a person remains unconscious, the more severe the concussion.

As the Notre Dame chemistry research professor recalls, her son didn't hit very hard, but because he seemed dazed when he got up, she and her husband, Shahriar Mobashery, were concerned. Mobashery, who also is an ND chemistry professor, and Chang took their son to a local hospital where a CAT scan showed no hemorrhage. Back in

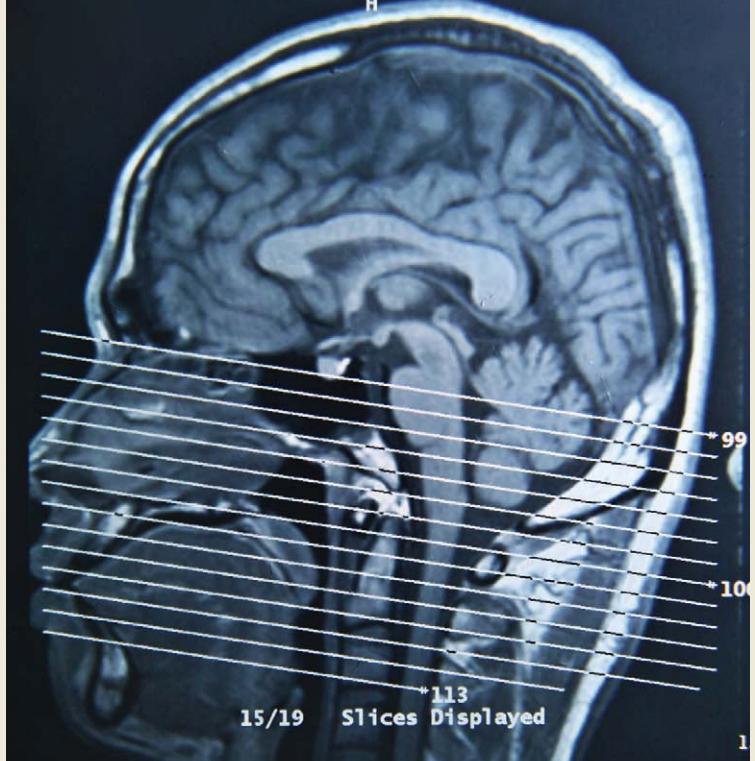
South Bend, the family followed up with a visit to a local sports medicine physician, who confirmed that the boy had indeed suffered a concussion.

It took about three weeks for Chang's son to return to normal. In the intervening time he was prohibited from engaging in any type of physical activity that might aggravate the injury. Rest is the only current treatment for the injury.

There is a very good reason. The brain is suspended in an insulated, liquid shock-absorbing environment encased in a hard shell: It is a delicate, finely tuned instrument that quite literally gets scrambled if it is whacked hard enough. A severe jolt can disrupt the complicated cascade of chemical reactions that regulate the brain's function. Among other things, affected parts of the brain lose the ability to metabolize glucose, and neurons no longer transmit impulses normally. With proper rest, the brain chemistry gradually resets, and most people are back to normal, like Alex, within two to three weeks.

However, multiple concussions have been increasingly implicated in more serious long-term medical problems, such as chronic traumatic encephalopathy, a degenerative disease that affects judgment, memory, mood and impulse control. And there is concern that even multiple sub-concussive blows may lead to the disease. Boston University's Center for the Study of Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy has found evidence of the malady in more than 20 former NFL players, including Notre Dame All-American Dave Duerson '83, who killed himself in February and requested in his suicide note that his family donate his brain to the study.

Chang looks on all of this with personal and professional concern. A scientist who comes from a commercial



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drug discovery/development background, working for Upjohn and later for Pharmacia, she recognized that certain compounds, known as MMP inhibitors, which her husband had worked on, intending them as an anti-cancer therapy, also had potential for concussion treatment.

With her pharmaceutical industry experience, Chang was aware that the necessary FDA clinical trials for a cancer drug would be lengthy and therefore extremely expensive, since cancer metastasis is a slow, oftentimes many-year process. A quicker route to FDA approval for the compound, she knew, would be to explore its potential as treatment for traumatic brain injury, and she decided to explore that avenue. Recently, NFL Charities confirmed Chang's approach by awarding her a research grant to investigate the compound's potential for concussion treatment.

In his earlier work, Mobashery had identified compounds that inhibit selective MMP enzymes known as gelatinases, which are important both in the spread of cancer and in stroke damage. The enzymes are involved in maintaining the integrity of the extracellular matrix that gives structure and rigidity to tissues. Most people have a low level of these particular enzymes, but high levels are produced during remodeling of the extracellular matrix that occurs in a number of pathological conditions.

Chang explains that cancer metastasis and stroke share some common elements. In cancer metastasis, gelatinases are activated

to increase formation of blood vessels that allow a tumor to spread to other parts of the body. In a stroke, under low-oxygen conditions, these same enzymes are activated and can lead to brain cell death, damage to the blood-brain barrier and hemorrhage. By blocking the enzymes, the ND researchers believe the compound could protect the brain from traumatic brain injury, preventing cell death and brain damage.

While effective in animal models of stroke and traumatic brain injury, the original prototype compound, known as SBC3T, is not water soluble. Chang and her colleagues have since found a way to attach water-soluble groups to the compound, which makes intravenous drug delivery possible. That ability is important because many of the patients, whether they are concussion or stroke victims, may be unconscious.

The early results for the compound have been encouraging. In tests in a mouse model for stroke, University of Missouri scientists found that the Notre Dame compound was able to rescue 60 percent of affected brain cells when administered two hours after the injury. The hope is that it might rescue an even greater number of cells if administered early after the injury. Tests in a mouse model of traumatic brain injury are under way.

Chang has established Nupro-med LLC to commercially develop the Notre Dame-patented drug compound. The company is attempting to raise \$4 million to cover the cost of toxicology studies, the first step in the FDA approval process to begin clinical trials in humans.

—With reporting by John Nagy

COOL CO₂

Notre Dame engineering researchers have come up with a new, green take on an old air-conditioning technology that has the potential to save money and benefit the environment. Ironically, the new eco-friendly cooling system employs carbon dioxide, one of the primary greenhouse gases implicated in global warming.

In recent years there has been strong interest in CO₂ as a refrigerant because its global warming potential is 1,000 times less than those currently used. However, a problem exists: Carbon dioxide requires extremely high pressure to work as a coolant, and the equipment needed to withstand those pressures is expensive.

Now a team of researchers led by Notre Dame chemical engineering Professor William Schneider may have a solution. Until now, researchers

could never find an ideal co-fluid to work at lower pressure with CO₂ in a cooling system. However, while working with certain compounds known as ionic liquids on research designed to remove carbon dioxide from power plant emissions, Schneider recognized these organic salts might be ideal for a CO₂ based refrigeration system.

Since ionic liquids remain fluid over a broad temperature range and have an affinity for CO₂, they should be excellent candidates for use in low pressure/low energy vapor-compression systems like those common in household, commercial and transportation cooling.

Using powerful computers, Schneider and his colleagues have designed ionic liquids with just the proper strength chemical bond — strong enough to bind with CO₂ but not so strong as to take too much

energy to break the bond. Such fine-tuning allows them to work efficiently with CO₂ at lower pressure and hence lower cost.

In the refrigeration cycle, a cool, low-pressure stream of CO₂ dissolved in ionic liquid takes in heat, breaking the CO₂-ionic liquid bonds. This warm gas-liquid mixture is then compressed, driving up its pressure and temperature.

The hot mixture ejects heat to the surroundings, allowing the CO₂ to recombine with the ionic liquid. The mixture then flows through an expansion valve, decreasing the temperature further, and the mixture begins the cycle all over.

The ND researchers hope to have an ionic liquid/CO₂ air conditioner up and running by the end of the year.



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A CRUEL DISEASE, A GLIMMER OF HOPE

Niemann-Pick Type C may be the cruellest disease on the planet afflicting children. The National Institutes of Health refers to the disorder as “childhood Alzheimer’s,” and there’s no doubt the title is deserved.

A degenerative disease that can begin in infancy and end with death in adolescence, NPC slowly cripples the body and mind of its victims. Those afflicted gradually lose all muscle tone, even the muscles that control eye movement. Eventually, children suffering from the disease are unable to swallow. In its terminal stage, Niemann-Pick patients are bedridden and suffer severe dementia.

Estimates are that 1 in 150,000 children are afflicted with the disease. Three of former Notre Dame football coach Ara Parseghian’s grandchildren died from the malady (see “Life in the Abyss” at magazine.nd.edu/news/14936). The Ara Parseghian Medical Research Foundation, established by the family, has partnered with Notre Dame’s Center for Rare and Neglected Diseases to search for a cure.

While no cure now exists, two drugs are being tested. Unfortunately, neither looks encouraging. One drug has limited effectiveness, slowing disease progression but not stopping it. The other has serious side effects.

In March, however, scientists from Notre Dame and Cornell reported a significant breakthrough, offering a glimmer of hope. The team of researchers, led by professors Paul Helquist and Olaf Wiest of Notre Dame and Frederick Maxfield of Cornell, had a hunch that a certain drug already approved to treat T-cell lymphoma, a relatively rare form of cancer, also might affect a protein that regulates cholesterol transport within cells.

That fact is significant since it is known that NPC causes an excessive amount of cholesterol to accumulate in cells. Cholesterol is an essential component of the cell’s membrane and a building block for steroid hormones. However, too much leads to very bad things, namely Niemann-Pick Type C.

When the scientists treated a culture of Niemann-Pick cells with

the drug, a histone deacetylase (HDAC) inhibitor, their best hopes were confirmed. Miraculously, the diseased cells reverted to normal.

NPC-damaged cells produce an abnormally small amount of the protein that regulates cholesterol transport, Helquist explains. The HDAC inhibitor drug, however, greatly increases production of that protein, and with a sufficient amount restored, the cell functions normally.

“As encouraging as these results are, this is just a first step,” Wiest cautions. “This compound works in a cell culture. But that is still a long way from an FDA-approved drug treatment. There is a lot of work yet to do, proving the concept in an animal model and other tests before it’s ready for a clinical trial.”

However, since the compound already has been approved as a cancer treatment, much of the preliminary toxicology work, such as assessing side effects, already has been done. Notre Dame researchers are pursuing a strategy of attempting to repurpose FDA-approved drugs to expedite therapies for rare and neglected diseases.

“We understand that many families desperately are seeking help for their children. And, if this compound is effective, we hope that it can be made available as soon as possible,” Wiest says. “But first, we must make sure it is safe and efficacious. We don’t want to make a bad situation worse.”

The Notre Dame chemists have developed and patented efficient processes for producing commercial quantities of the HDAC inhibitor drug and are exploring partnerships with a number of pharmaceutical firms.

Development of drug therapies for NPC is one of several goals of Notre Dame’s Center for Rare and Neglected Diseases. In 2009 Helquist and Wiest began an initiative known as the Drug Discovery Core, through which NPC researchers worldwide may collaborate on the design and synthesis of potential drug treatments. Currently there are collaborations with the medical schools of Cornell, Columbia, Tufts, Washington University and Texas Southwestern, as well as researchers at Purdue and Scripps Research Institute.

My story is in that conversation

How can I tell if love
is still that unsolved mystery

SPIRIT

the space between and beyond
Immortality?

(a meditation in 1000 questions)



How is this a gracious transcendence

Mil Preguntas

What can we know about delus:

life itself comes from Earth Awakening

BY GARY G. GAFFNEY '69M.S.

Does the cosmos
tamper with
your life?
Are you measured most by love, hate or indifference?
Who are you bound to in love?
In hate?
In indifference?
What does a world in balance mean?
How does it feel to be a speck in the cosmos?
What must you peel away before love appears?
What must you peel away before love disappears?
Have you ever met God?
Have you ever met god?
Will God be there when time ends?
What is consciousness?
A web?
A mystery?
A trick of brain chemistry?
Can consciousness grow in consciousness?
Can your consciousness grow in my consciousness?
What objects define you?
What objects control you?
What objects enlighten you?
What is unspeakable?
What is beneath the skin of who you are?
Are you awake yet?
What is your mind capable of?
What is your brain capable of?
Do neurons make you human?
Do neurons imagine a future?
Do neurons have faith?
Do neurons seek redemption?
What chemistry makes evil?
What chemistry constructs the universe?
What chemistry brings self-realization?
Why did God choose DNA?
The orgasm?
The sleek, elegant cheetah?
The incalculably improbable you?
What is the history of every molecule in your body?
Which molecule came from the birth of the sun?
What forms of matter died to allow you to become?
What form of awe changed your life?

Are illusions ever sustaining?

Why is it so easy to diminish our humanity?
Why does God tolerate the destruction of creation?
Does sin have a consequence?
How exactly does sin diminish the soul?
What happens when you acknowledge a soul?
Can you have a soul and not know it?
Can you ignore questions like this?
Is there a dialogue between soul and consciousness?
Do you fear death?
Do you understand it?
Do you wish for it?
Do you run from it?
Do you expect to cheat it?
Does Yahweh really smite?
How does it feel to shake the hand of God?
Where is the graveyard of lofty thoughts?
What is the penance for the sin of convenience?
Why is integrity so uncommon?
And truth contingent?
And love so misunderstood?
And intimacy so illusive?

Is make-believe

And escape so easy?
And violence so engaging?
And connectedness so dangerous?
Do ordinary beings know they are ordinary?
Is being ordinary a failure?
Is being ordinary possible?
Whose story belongs to history?
How different is everyone's first kiss?
Who speaks for the shamed?
Is anything worth believing?
Is believing worth anything?
How irrational is love?
What's the best use of the body?
Is the devil real?
Can we trust the universe?
How many times have you said, "I love you"?
How many times have you meant it?
How many times has crying washed you clean?
What is worth fighting for?
What is worth holding on to?
When are words enough?
When is enough enough?
What confirms that you're alive?
Can you imagine your own soul?
Can you grow your own soul?
Can souls accumulate?
Can souls merge?
Can souls be owned?
What do you hear in the silent gaps?
Is listening an affection?
An obligation?
A selfless act?
The only means of survival?
What is the biological recipe for feeling?
When is love not to be trusted?
When is hate not a poison?
When is hate not a prison?
How do feelings populate the body?
And make it a cage?
What is the cage that locks us away?
The wrapping of skin?

ever faith? Is the answer ever in a myth?

The strange, twisted construction of mind?
The prison of culture?
Impregnable time?
The universe?
The subtle traps set by God?
What is the purpose of angels?
Where does Jesus go on vacation?
Did you miss him?
What's the ratio of good people to evil people?
How many sacraments are there?
Is the dirt under your fingernails honest?

What do your fingertips remember?
Do you love you?
Does justice make any sense to you?
¿De que color es la justicia?
¿De que color es la verdad?
¿De que color es la alma?
Have you got a minute?
Is your minute God's minute?
How many languages are necessary to say it all?
When it's all said, is it all heard?
Do you live to placate God?
Do you live to live forever?
Do you live to live for others?
Do you live unused?
How much wisdom goes unchallenged?
How much wisdom leads to pain?
How much wisdom leads to sainthood?
How much wisdom leads to despair?
How much despair leads to action?
How much action wobbles the earth?
How much trouble the earth?
Can 6 billion people make sense of the universe?
Can 6 billion people be connected?
Can 6 billion people love the same thing?
Can 6 billion people unmask God?
Can God explain justice to 6 billion people?
Can 6 billion people explain justice to God?
Will God eventually tell us the truth?
Will everyone pass God's final exam?
What is the practice test?
Will you have to cheat to pass?

What did God write in the margins?
Who do we expect to save us?
What will be the price?
Who would you give up your life for?
Could you comfort someone you despised?
Could you ask to be loved?
Could you break all the rules?
Could you keep all the rules?
Could you do the unforgivable?
Dream the unimaginable?
Say the unspeakable?
Would a starving child change the way you live?
Would a discarded teenager?

Is delusion ever reality?
Is faith ever myth?

Would a frozen embryo?
Or the sale of body parts?
Are you diminished when you kill a living thing?
Are you diminished when forgiveness is not a possibility?
Are you diminished when you find awe in nothing?
Are you diminished when prayer is not an option?
Are you diminished when you owe nothing to the world?
Is a prisoner as real as your mailman?
Is a dead soldier as real as your next appointment?
Is your next appointment as real as a tailgate party?
Is a tailgate party as real as a trip to the thrift store?
Is your intention as real as your distraction?
When were you last your mother's little angel?
A knight in shining armor?
The student of the month?
The person everyone can count on?
A local hero?
The one who loves unconditionally?
The one who danced the night away?
The prodigal son?
What is knowledge in a stupid world?
What is magic in a bored world?
What are the messages from fossils of stars?
How many stars make the universe believable?
How often has a kiss saved your life?





How often has a sin led to redemption?
 How often has humanity led you to forgive?
 How often has forgiving made you come alive?
 What makes you dream?
 What makes you ask God for the impossible?
 What makes you lie to children?
 What makes you ask for more than you deserve?
 What makes humility so difficult?
 Why is peace so difficult?
 When will we take peace seriously?
 Do you remember how innocence felt?
 Do you remember how comforting night was?
 Do you remember how eyes could speak?
 Do you remember how far away the future was?
 Can silence scream?
 Can spirit ask the wrong questions?
 Why does a heart pump?
 And bleed?
 And empathize?
 And give up?
 And come back to life?
 And help measure our humanity?
 And help us talk to our souls?
 And write our poetry?
 And burn with a crown of thorns?
 And make a ritual?
 And wait to be dissected or repaired?
 Why does blood flow in little rivers?
 And fill the veins of kings and thoroughbreds?
 And spill in buckets for dreams of power?
 And spill in rivers for ancient trespasses?
 And drown the innocent?
 And carry tradition?
 And remember our transgressions?
 And bind us together in love and hate?
 And warn us when love and fear approach?
 Why is an infant so powerful in its helplessness?
 Why is cuteness essential for our survival?
 What is the name for the voice of the cosmos?
 What is the name for the mystery that's everywhere?
 Can art change a life?
 Can a life change art?
 Can art deceive itself?
 Can art die in cultural captivity?
 Can art lay you flat?
 Does God give a damn about art?

Is there any poetry in the language of violence?
 Is mystery necessary in a life well lived?
 How do molecules make the leap to consciousness?
 How does consciousness frame the universe?
 How does your brain identify its own limits?
 How does your brain depend on my brain?
 How does your brain know what it doesn't know?
 Do you trust your brain?
 Is your brain a magician?
 A piece of raw meat?
 A big step to the somewhere of enlightenment?
 What is the evolutionary role of absurdity?
 Does God need a good laugh?
 Does experience in the world change your mind?
 Is there space in you for passion?
 What is the organ of disenchantment?
 What is the organ of apathy?
 What is the organ of brutality?
 What many things have you held in your hand?
 What would entice an angel to land?
 Are you ever quiet enough to hear the wings?
 Who do you expect perfection from?
 What illusions do you live by?
 What was Jesus' first sentence?
 Was Jesus advanced for his age?
 How many stories can a flower tell?
 What is the mathematics told by a daisy?
 What is the language of the cosmos?
 What is the language of a kiss?
 What is the language of a child's first scribbles?
 What can make a life seem real?
 What can make life a sacrament?
 What can make you a chosen one?
 When did education become entertainment?
 When did shopping become entertainment?
 When did sex become entertainment?
 What is the landscape of heaven?
 What is the evidence that good overcomes evil?
 Why is skin color so dangerous?

What questions do the dying ask?
 What questions does the universe ask?
 Which questions should be answered with questions?
 Which questions should be answered with silence?
 Which questions should be answered with action?
 Which questions should be answered from the heart?
 Which questions should never be asked?
 Which questions can never be answered?

Who lives in the big house? Why is beauty in the ugly places? **And ugliness in the beautiful places?** Is greed a disease? Do we care if there's a cure? Who speaks for Christ?

A
summer
NIGHT
can feel like black velvet.

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THE AIR AS CLOSE AND WARM  
AS THE LIVING LAND'S BREATH.

**YOU CAN FEEL IT  
ON YOUR SKIN.**

.....

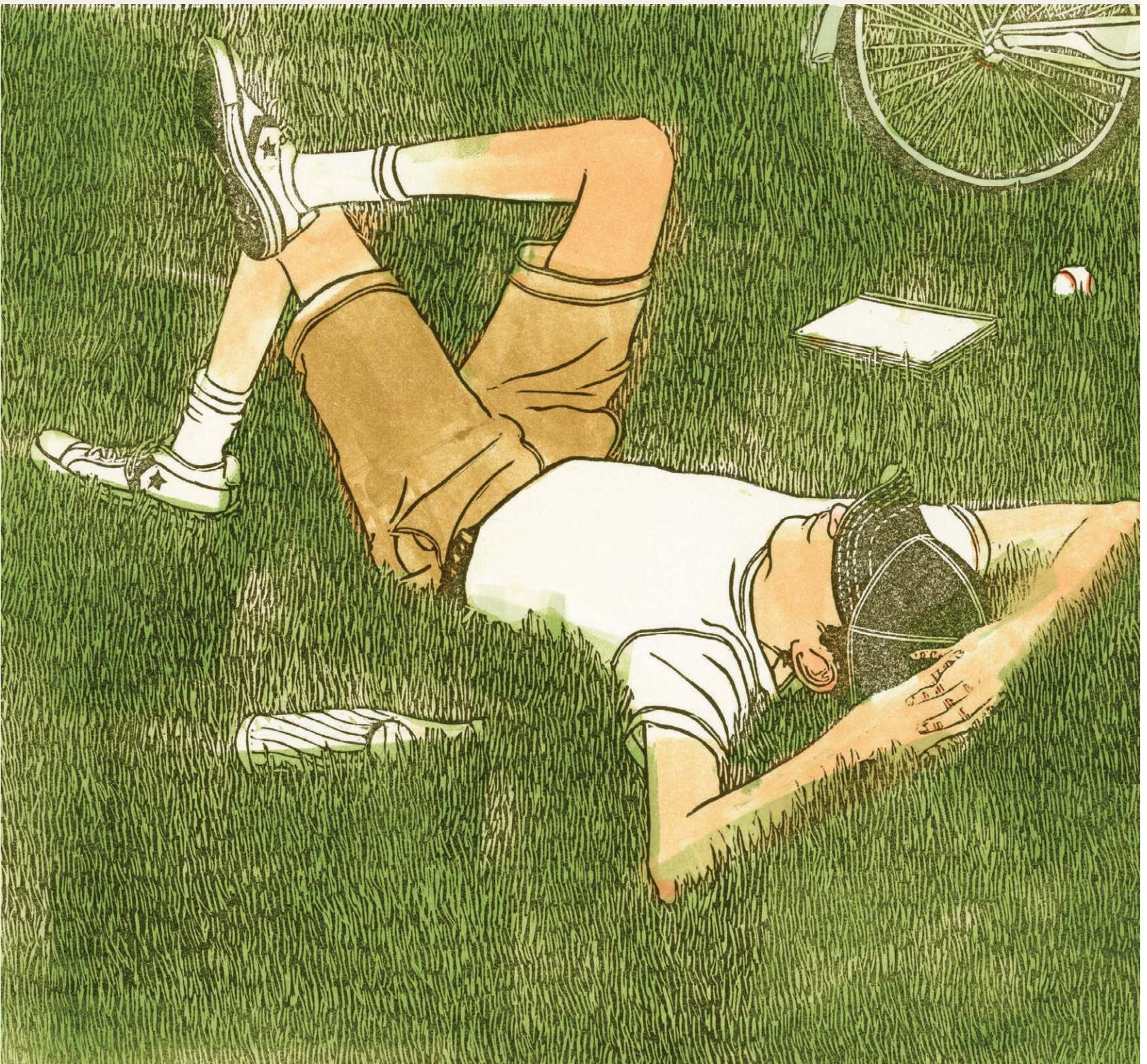
GENTLE WAVES STIR THE TREES,  
FLOAT RUMORS THAT THE PLAYFUL GOD PAN IS AFOOT.

.....

MAGIC DISTILLS IN THE  
**SWEET-SCENTED**  
SUMMER NIGHTS OF MEMORY—  
**FIREFLIES,**  
**HIDE-AND-SEEK,**  
*GHOSTS IN THE GRAVEYARD.*

*Here's another.*

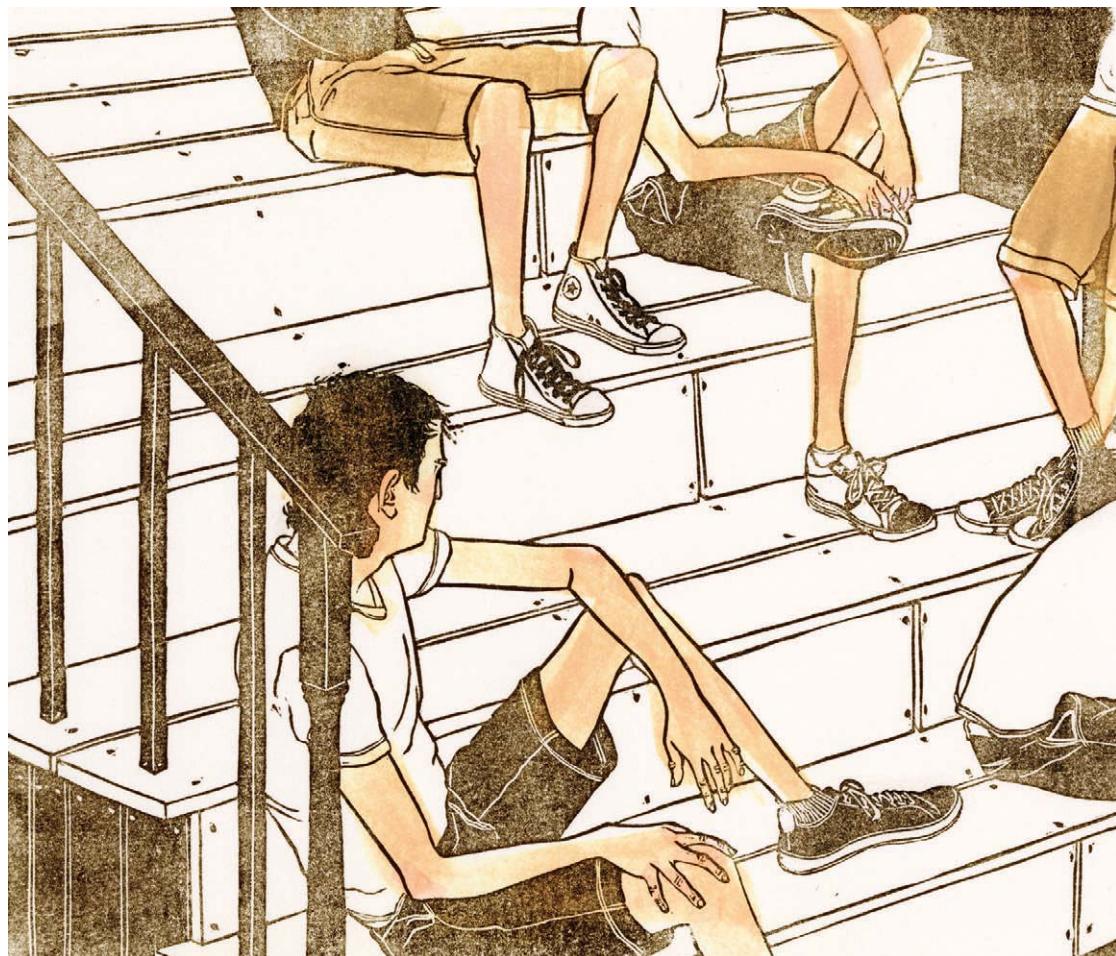
BY KERRY TEMPLE '74



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDREW R. WRIGHT

**I**t is August a year ago. My wife and I have retreated to a little town in southern Indiana — a spry country village given over to gift shops and antique stores, handmade furniture and good things to eat. We've done that all day and have found the third-floor balcony of our B&B, overlooking the back alleys and parking lots a block off Main Street.

We sit in rocking chairs. We look out over rain-puddled rooftops and into windows glowing amber in the dark. The afternoon downpours have traveled into the forested hills along the southern horizon; lightning flashes — mute and distant. There are stars now and a



breeze and the papery scuffling of voices as late diners head to their cars or duck into darkened doorways. We bathe in our reveries, no words between us.

This getaway weekend celebrates our wedding anniversary and my wife's birthday at an age that ends in zero. Our three children

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Kerry Temple is editor of this magazine.

are back home with grandparents. They have just turned 6. They will start all-day kindergarten in a week; the carefree, wonder-full years coming to a close. My two grown sons both married last spring. My parents are recently gone, my 89-year-old mother not inclined to stick around long after my dad died, leaving my sister and me to clean out the family home a few months ago. So it feels right to sit in silence and take it all in.

The rush of life carries us along so, that it's good to step out, sit down, survey the vista from a lookout when you get there. Even though any finish line is temporary — with more demands barking up the road a ways — a deep breath and downtime are good. Idleness is not just the devil's workshop. It can heal the soul, let the psyche rest and reconnoiter, give space to thought and the imagination. We all need summer in our lives. And in every season.

Maybe it's the humidity in the air, or simply being outdoors at night, but the breezes carry my thoughts to growing up in Louisiana. We gathered lightning bugs in jars, played a lot of kick-the-can. We delighted in the game's hiding out, the sneaking up, the spring into action, the scattering into secret gardens in the dark.

And then it came time to settle down, sit on the porch awhile before going in, letting the sweat dry, letting the house cool down from the sun-drenched day . . . little white wood-frame house, air passing in and out of screened windows. It was more stoop than porch. We all sat there together — my parents, sister, aunt and grandmother — watching the black of night come on, first stars twinkling. The grownups talked and told stories, but I remember the peaceful silences, too. It was always such a comfort — the exhale from another day. The ice cream truck, friendly neighbors and fog man — those slow-going trucks that came down our street spewing a dense cloud of DDT to kill mosquitoes. We'd race along behind the truck, running right into the stinky, fuliginous

stream of poison, our parents' only warning was to be careful not to run blindly smack-dab into the truck.

I first learned of the passing of time from summer. The jubilation of bounteous freedom stretched from the final days of May across an infinite expanse of joyous play and doing nothing. A vast horizon of Wiffle ball, alleyways and vacant lots, baseball cards and happy boredom, frolicking in summer rains, pedaling bikes and swimming. As I grew older my universe expanded — solo trips to the corner store, new parks and neighborhoods and, eventually, alien creatures in our

midst: long-haired and summer-skinned and fetchingly disturbing.

Each new summer came with a posted list of chores — tasks my mother assigned to maintain the school-year diligence, instill responsibility, make sure my sister and I didn't waste our time. There'd be a quota of books to read and trips to the library. But the regimen usually dissolved by July. By then my sister had gone away to summer camp in Texas, while I stayed in town so I wouldn't miss any kid-league baseball games. My parents gave me my days till I turned 15, when summer jobs with 40-hour work weeks were required.

Until then, the idyllic summers of my memory were footloose and open-ended — long days running free with a pack of neighborhood kids, in and out of friends' houses, roaming from parks to playgrounds. If left alone, I'd read, spread toy soldiers across imaginary battlefields, concoct dramatic baseball games by throwing a tennis ball against the wall of my room, the side of the house. A new, big pile of dirt in a vacant lot could provide four days of entertainment. A rain-swollen creek would sprout a carnival of worms, toads, crawfish and racing sticks.

As summer flowed into August the weeks became more dear. Three to go, two, then one. Counting down the last days of summer — it was heartache, that impending doom of having something to do, somewhere to be, a system so rigid and so large that I couldn't outlast or out-maneuver it. It was in August just before third grade, the story goes, that I expressed surprise that I had to go back to school again. "I did that already," I said, and was told I would do it again. And again. And again. Through 12 years of schooling, with at least four years of college on top of that. I remember feeling inconsolably crushed, as if I had been sentenced to a lifetime of perpetual torment.

My sense of summer's end was the same as Huck Finn's reaction to the Widow Douglas, who "introduced him into society — no, dragged him into it — and his sufferings were almost more than he could bear. The widow's servants kept him clean and neat, combed and brushed. . . . The bars and shackles of civilization shut him in and bound him hand and foot."

Summer was to live for, finite though it was.

My feelings about summer haven't changed since I was a kid, but the world has. There were no video games then; the neighborhoods were friendly and safe. We made it up as we went along; we weren't driven from one planned activity to another, our time methodically scheduled with organized, supervised activities. The mothers were around, not away at work, not conscripted as designated drivers, providing happy meals en route from class to camp to game. They were there, keeping watch out windows for everyone's kids. And our porch-sit repose at the end of the day had not been supplanted by TV and air-conditioned comfort.

I was lucky to come along when I did. The lush three-month vacation for which I am nostalgic is rooted in America's agrarian past when children were needed to help in the fields during the summer growing season. But the time off school has since been afforded to generations of children with almost no working knowledge of agriculture or animal husbandry. And now many educators and educational systems are thinking it's time to put them back to work.

A *Time* cover story, "The Case Against Summer Vacation," declared: "When American students are competing with children around the world, who are in many cases spending four weeks longer in school each year, larking through summer is a luxury we can't afford." The truth is, our educational system, once the lifeblood of national health and hope for a bright future, is ailing, lagging behind those of other countries and placing our children at a disadvantage in an increasingly competitive global marketplace.

While the causes of our educational woes are numerous and complex, many academics cite the long summer break as a major hindrance

to educational progress. *Time* identified "the summer slide" as "among the most pernicious — if least acknowledged — causes of achievement gaps in America's schools." The most vulnerable victims are not the sons and daughters of those who keep their charges busily engaged with enriching activities but children with far fewer opportunities, whose parents may not have the mindset or the resources to involve their children in classes, programs, camps, museum tours or mind-expanding vacation trips.

Educators, rather, worry about those kids loosely supervised or left alone — often by single parents who must work outside the home — who are bored and at risk, watching TV for hours, captivated by video games, aimlessly falling behind and away. While these underprivileged youngsters make comparable progress during the school year, they regress over the long summer layoff. Failing to keep pace with peers whose summers offer greater intellectual stimulation, they fall further behind with the passing years.

One obvious solution is to shorten the time away from school, to alter the cycles of the traditional academic year. Some schools are choosing this route, with year-round schooling punctuated by shorter vacations between semesters. Other societal forces resist such change, and funding can be an obstacle for economically strapped school systems. But the development is applauded by many.

A related trend has been the growth in summer programming — educational, recreational, cultural — sponsored by community organizations, county parks, privately owned businesses and government agencies. These initiatives serve the underprivileged as well as those on-the-go families in which both parents work outside the home and summer presents child-care issues far more troublesome and costly than during the academic year.

Inarguably, there is value in providing children with developmental opportunities, in helping families give what's best to their kids and strengthening a frayed social fabric by helping to care for the nation's future. And worries about America's standing in the world of tomorrow are indeed well-founded.

But I wonder about our cultural bias that time must be filled, that we have to save children from having time on their hands, that "downtime" is lost or wasted time. Hours need not always be scheduled and accounted for, with any lull between activities plugged by television or video games. There's value in quiet interludes, having time to let the imagination blossom, giving the brain some room to grow. Kids need the leisure to explore their own interior landscapes. I think it's good to let them create their own entertainment, make up their own games, devise their own rules, and learn to get along without adult supervision. There's a lot to be learned when no one is looking. It's good for them to take the initiative.

About the same time that one newsweekly advised rethinking the concept of summer another ran a cover story on creativity in America, recommending ways to instill in our children innovative thinking and techniques "to reignite our imaginations." The article took a hard look at outmoded means of transmitting knowledge, the emphasis on standardized tests and memorization. It prescribed methods for encouraging problem-solving, thinking outside established boundaries and figuring things out by doing them. It would be great if school fostered such independent thinking; generations of children know this comes to them naturally.

One of my concerns is that sometimes I wonder if childhood itself is being lost. I feel bad for children who aren't allowed to be kids. I also realize American children have been affected by historical tides. They have provided labor in previous centuries. They have endured economic hardships in tough times. They have also benefited from the affluence and privilege of prosperous decades. And they have enjoyed elevated status in families geared primarily toward making the next generation's lives better than the preceding one's. Other



cultures are much less child-centered; our offspring are recipients of abundant attention, sacrifice and devotion.

What I mean about the loss of childhood in America today is how soon children are exposed to the forces and complexities that haunt all of us — from the threats of violence to the powerful mysteries of sex, from the availability of drugs and alcohol to the toxic messages from old and new media. Kids just get there sooner than they used to.

And not only is it harder to protect children or prepare them for these realities but we also seem to be increasingly motivated to treat them like aspiring adults. We start them early, manage their lives and usher them onto the fast track. Despite the judgments of Amy Chua, the notorious Chinese Tiger Mom who scolded American parents for being soft on the young, I see plenty of evidence of parents competitively hustling their children toward high-achiever status.

I have been there, too, wanting what's best for my kids, seeing how they compare to others, hoping they get what's best for them, fretting over the little ways they may get left behind. And I've taken family vacations where the scenery and routine changed, but not the pace. But occasionally I get stopped in my tracks, then tarry at one of life's scenic overviews where I can survey the surroundings. And I ask the same things I ask when I see adults in a hurry to get ahead: Where are they racing to? What do they hope to find there? Will it bring peace? Will it bring love? Happiness? Fulfillment? Where do you go to get such things?

In the months before she died, my mother expressed concern about all the things in the house she lived in for 50 years — all that had been accumulated, bought, received as gifts, and treasured. In a reversal from the position she stubbornly took when we argued years ago about America's materialistic ways, she said none of it really mattered anymore — climbing the social ladder, urging my dad up the corporate rungs, the pursuit of things. Things held memories for her, she said, each piece could tell a story, but the stories would be gone with her. "I don't know what it was all for," she said, having reached life's razor's edge, and with a final wisdom that became clearer and stronger as death's door opened to her.

Hearing her question what really mattered in those final days has widened my eyes too, and brought a renewed gratitude. I benefited from our family's real treasures, although I also carried some things from the house — things that tell *me* good stories and remind me what it was all for.

On this summer night, sitting and thinking and recouping from a dizzying convergence of life transitions, there's time for such thoughts to sink in. Life doesn't give many recesses anymore, but I take them when I can. I am grateful when a lunch partner is late, or if an appointment keeps me waiting. I'm happy to have a reason to sit idly by. I don't carry a cell phone; I need to think as I go from one place to another. Thinking isn't something that comes quickly or easily to me; I need time to connect the dots, time for my thoughts to marinate, to reach the surface. And I miss operating on a school-year cycle as I did when I was young — nine months of intellectual exercise followed by three months of physical labor.

Employees, apparently, also do best when allowed to switch gears. Warning organizations about "the acceleration trap" that has become prevalent in the corporate world, a pair of experts say brakes should be applied to our overdrive culture. "The problem is pervasive," they explained in the *Harvard Business Review*, "especially in the current environment of 24/7 accessibility and cost cutting," in which employees get overloaded with too many activities and work continuously under elevated time pressures.

Periodic intensity is tolerable, say Heike Bruch, author of *Fully Charged*, and Jochen Menges, a lecturer at the University of Cambridge's Judge Business School, but prolonged hyperactivity leads to unfocused action and, eventually, burnout. "Companies get into

the habit of constant change, or perpetual loading," they say, which "deprives workers of any hope of retreat for recharging their energy," adding, "When leaders neglect to call a halt to periods of furious activity, employees feel imprisoned by the debilitating frenzy."

Tony Schwartz, also writing in the *Harvard Business Review*, cites a worldwide study of 90,000 workers that showed 40 percent felt disenchanted or disengaged, significantly affecting performance and productivity (not to mention physical and psychological health). Schwartz advises different strategies to counter the resulting energy drain. "The first," he writes, is "to stop expecting people to operate like computers — at high speeds, continuously, running multiple programs at the same time — and to recognize that human beings perform best and are most productive when they alternate between periods of intense focus and intermittent renewal."

After offering case studies and suggesting some Dos (do get away from your desk) and Don'ts (don't do multiple things at the same time), he adds, "A remaining issue was the expectation that team members would reply to email in the evenings and all through the weekends. The result was that they felt perpetually on call. Their inability to let go of work was a source of resentment and an energy drain for many of the leaders."

One of the risks in taking the off-ramp and leaving the high-speed chase behind is that it's countercultural. Some may question your work ethic, your commitment or your desire to succeed. Going your own way may bring its own kinds of stress.

Writing in *Ode* magazine, Tara Sophia Mohr recommends people make sure they carve out more "white space" in their lives, but says it will take some mettle. "In our culture, busyness is celebrated," she says. "Many workplaces celebrate martyrs who sacrifice themselves to busyness, instead of recognizing those who produce great results without long, overwhelming work days. Recognize that these cultural forces are alive in your life. Creating white space requires leaving the herd. You'll need courage to do it."

The excursions of my thoughts are interrupted by the clatter and clang of trash barrels and service doors swinging wide. A white-aproned teenager drags a couple of garbage bins out the back of a restaurant. He hoists them up and heaves the contents into the Dumpster in the alley. I hear a shout and notice a gang of boys — backlit silhouettes only — shuffling up the alley, hands stabbed deep into pockets. They and the busboy seem to be friends. The voices carry, but I can only make out random words — but it's clearly the sound of youth and bravado, exuberance and freedom.

One of the boys hops into the lower branches of a maple tree and disappears into its arms. A car rumbles onto the scene, music throbbing out the windows. The voices grow louder, the jawing more brash, the tree-climber hopping onto the pavement, the busboy returning to work. The car peels away, and the boys saunter six abreast down the middle of the street — shadowy beneath the streetlamp — before disappearing from sight.

I realize I'm smiling at this timeless cameo. I remember it all so well. Feels like just a few summers ago. The guys and a car, the darkness all around, striding right down the middle of the street like we owned the town. Like the whole world was ours for the taking. Summer nights when we were young and loose and full of swagger. Flexing our souls.

And my wife, breaking the long silence, says, "Boys." As if that word said it all, said enough. And I think of them — all the boys I've seen and known and hung with on all my summer nights — me ranging over the years in my head with a sweet, wistful longing . . . and some unspoken advice: Enjoy it now, every minute of it. Because school starts in a week and life is coming fast. And so few grownups still know what you know in the summers of your mind. Enjoy it now, every minute of it. Don't forget. □



# The Way We Were

A LOOK BACK TO A TIME WHEN CAMPUS WAS FOR ROAMING AND A PLACE WHERE NOTRE DAME AND ITS NEIGHBORHOOD MERGED.

BY DONALD ANDERSON '69

**A**mong all Notre Dame alumni I am special. Actually, I am one of three such special alumni. My two older brothers and I are graduates of Notre Dame, but we also grew up in the veritable shadow of the University while it progressed from quiet provincialism to nationally recognized greatness.

From the time I started to crawl (ca. 1948) until my graduation in 1969, I lived in the white, two-story house at 819 East Angela Boulevard. At the time, this was not the closest private residence to the ever-growing University,

but now it is. Without moving, it has become the sentinel house at the corner of the main entrance. Regrettably, the house is now out of our family, but fortunately it is still maintained in a condition that is indistinguishable from its appearance some 60 years ago as a product of the post-World War II baby and building resurgence.

In those early years, Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, CSC, was a young priest just starting to ascend the Holy Cross university ladder and was the recently appointed head of the Religion Department. A generation of returning WW II veterans was living in surplus Army barracks north of the campus while studying under the beneficence of the GI Bill.

Don Anderson retired after 38 years of service in the Bell System. He and his family now reside in Flemington, New Jersey.

Except on football Saturdays, the intersection of Angela and Notre Dame Avenue at that time was a not particularly congested 4-way stop. The people in the house next to us raised and dispatched chickens in their backyard. West of that neighbor was an unkempt weed field, followed by the brick home of Professor Otto Bird, convert to Catholicism and founder of the Program of Liberal Studies, whose eight children were our regular playmates. Notre Dame was then as always a great teaching institution, although its reputation in research and credentials in the domain of secular scholarship circles may at that time have been less than Tier I.

So how does an accident of being born

to a devout Catholic mother from Kansas City and a Lutheran accountant recently hired by South Bend Lathe Works make my attendance at Notre Dame “special”? Quite simply because of the informal, unregistered, tuition-free, high class liberal education, both intellectual and moral, I received from Notre Dame years before being accepted as a freshman in 1965.

Naturally, the first attraction to the great institution immediately adjacent to our backyard was its potential as a great playground. Cedar Grove Cemetery was neither spooky nor restricted, and it provided imaginative settings amid the high tomb monuments as well as history lessons in the French heritage of South Bend and its indigenous Potawatomi Indians. We never were chased out of the cemetery by the groundskeepers, and later I occasionally had official business there as an altar server for Saint Joseph’s parish funeral interments.

The great campus expansion of the 1970s and ’80s was built over land that in my childhood was an unfenced buckhorn grass prairie. There we could not only play football or any invented sport needing unrestricted open space but would also hunt ground sparrows, small reptiles and exotic insects. The mere availability of open land without having any purpose other than being a parking lot for five Saturdays in the autumn was a botany and biology laboratory better than most secondary schools could provide. The open fields also were not subjected to light pollution and consequently provided unobstructed views of constellations, meteor showers and, on rare winter nights, fluttering green aurora curtains.

South Bend blizzards often turned that Notre Dame prairie into a nearly impassable white wilderness, reminiscent of what the itinerant Rev. Stephen Theodore Badin must have experienced when he fortuitously purchased that virgin land from the U.S. government around 1830 as a real estate investment.

In the early ’60s, Notre Dame was as open to investigation by an interloping adolescent as it is now receptive to interloping proponents of secularism. I was able to wander through the engineering labs, examine the geology displays, catch turtles in Saint Mary’s Lake and visit chapels within unlocked residence halls. With due respect for a building and grounds staff making close to minimum wage, security was effectively nonexistent. One would think that a kid from town swimming in Saint Joseph’s Lake should quickly be escorted out by the campus

cops, but when you swam with the Moreau Seminary priests who were at the same time subtly recruiting a potential vocation, you were exempt.

Once a professor of geology spotted me curiously absorbed in the department’s mineral display and struck up a conversation. He not only introduced me to that science but invited me to join their summer field trip when I reached an appropriate age. Again, that walk-on interest in the person constitutes the time-honored essential technique of evangelization. I was now not only informally welcome to their building — then immediately behind Sacred Heart — I was being subtly recruited into the department.

I loved geology then, and I love it now, although I was transformed into majoring in engineering science because I had lately been convinced that breadth of learning was more important than specialized depth. Regrettably, I do not recall the name of that elderly professor of geology, but he is undoubtedly known now in heaven as a scholar of the earth who was also a shepherd of youth.

Notre Dame was heavily involved in community outreach well before that term became fashionable. I was taught Morse code as a Boy Scout by Arthur Quigley, professor of electrical engineering. The industry-savvy Quigley would later teach me as a junior the intricacies of semiconductors, then for registered academic credit. Since he and many other professors lived within walking distance of the University, they were my neighbors and easily accessible during elementary school years for after-school tutoring or Scout activities. Many of my parents’ friends were University administrators and professors, although Mom was a homemaker and Dad a company man, and as such were not professionally or personally oriented toward academic life.

But the professors who were also neighbors, Scout leaders, canoe trip partners and parish members, lived the life of teaching not only for their tuition-paying classroom students but for any pre-collegiate novice learner they encountered. Even a benefactor could take interest in and initiate a conversation with an anonymous juvenile walking home down the then cinder-paved sidewalk of Notre Dame Avenue — as Joseph A. LaFortune, class of 1915, walked with and shared his admiration for the University with me well before I had graduated from high school.

Possibly our most endearing neighbor was three houses to the west on Angela. That was the venerable Joe Casasanta, director of bands. The astute reader will recognize that

name as the composer of “Notre Dame, Our Mother,” the alma mater. Joe was another of these people who joyfully infused the aura of Notre Dame into everyone he encountered. He was not above spraying you with the garden hose as you rode past his house on a bike, however. He knew that far from deterring us, it would only spur us to race with greater speed. I mowed his lawn. To this day I consider being the lawn guy of Joe Casasanta to be in rank equivalent to that of Father Hesburgh’s barber.

I mowed all the neighbors’ lawns and shoveled their snow, but doing that for Joe and for history Professor Marshall Smelser and library director Victor Schaefer was in some way different. They seemed to be more interested in you and what you were up to. They were teachers of the whole man in the tradition of Origen and the classical school of Alexandria. Education was not about learning specialized facts, it was about learning life and forming the person.

In the later classroom environment, it was also clear that the Catholic professors, whether research-oriented or not, were focused on education. Secular experts from specialized disciplines, all well-qualified and voluminously published in their research, admirably trained the student, but were of lesser consequence in developing the man.

That posture by the University at large facilitated it to allow feral Boy Scouts to hold their annual Scout-O-Rama under the very stands of hallowed Notre Dame Stadium. That was the original 1930 brick structure with a cinder-paved promenade beneath the seating. Such medieval accommodations were perfect for displaying Boy Scout handiwork, which would include not only ersatz Indian leatherwork but also displays of indigenous snakes and turtles.

Best of all was the nearby vacant property at the north end of Eddy Street, an essential piece of landscape known colloquially as the Notre Dame Dump. The University permitted us Scouts to manually ax-harvest logs from the woods that screened the Dump so we could build a rope-secured infrastructure of towers and rope monkey bridges at the Scout-O-Rama.

I cannot say for sure whether the University was actually asked for permission, but it is safe to say that were we to make such a request in this age, the required insurance would exceed the combined household budgets of all involved. I thank the scoutmasters and our guardian angels that I grew up in an age of freedom to excel and not the age of permissiveness to be indifferent. I am equally grateful to the powers



of heaven that neither I nor my companions lost life or limb on those projects.

The new library may have been the greatest treasure of my University-grafted youth. After school, I watched in fascination as foundation piles were hammered into the subterranean sandy strata that stretches out from Lake Michigan. When the steel skeleton was erected it formed an invitation for me and my co-conspirators one night to climb up the ironwork stairs to the penthouse. That was one instance where the se-

a level of fine and literary arts that rivaled the offerings of more cosmopolitan cities.

When I became a bona fide registered student, Notre Dame provided a classical liberal education even for deracinated technology geeks. No secular institution could provide the experience of Professor Father Peter Riga, who presented himself as a latter-day avatar of the prophet Amos in teaching Sacred Scripture while railing against the Vietnam War. I had never been so concerned for the fate of my country then — until now.

In my heart there is also the need to maintain the informal openness and welcoming attitude the Notre Dame community offered me as a youth. That formation as a component of education is at least as important and lasting as anything acquired in a classroom. The new classrooms are state-of-the-art techno-wonders with stadium seating and computer networking. But there was also a familial charm to the non-air-conditioned, blackboard-dominated classrooms grafted within the Main Building and the



curity services actually made a catch — albeit without us getting a record.

Once the library was completed, it was, like many of the University facilities, as yet unrestricted to a mannerly kid, who may not have even looked much like a student, to browse the stacks and begin reading the 11 volumes of Will and Ariel Durant's *Story of Civilization*. Perhaps, unbeknown to me, it may have helped that our good neighbor and grocery store ride two doors down was the library director. Perhaps Notre Dame was just that kind of open institution.

South Bend was a blue-collar company town that turned out Studebaker cars and Oliver tractors. Understandably, the fine arts were not easy to find. One took the South Shore to Chicago to avail oneself of culture. But this early teen special alumnus needed to walk only as far as Washington Hall and seamlessly mix with the student body to attend avant-garde films, Daniel Pedtke's Glee Club concerts and lectures by such giants of literature as Norman Mailer — all available without question or cost. My peers may have been oppressed by Midwestern boredom, but I could immerse myself at will into

Admittedly, I and probably the majority of my fellow students at that time did not fully appreciate the pearls being cast to us. But there were seeds then planted that in our more mature years are beginning to sprout stronger tendrils of the faith.

While attending my 40<sup>th</sup> reunion (a year of biblical import marking return from exile to the promised land), I was initially struck by the building-over of my old fields of play, the shrinking of the old campus by contrast, and the intrusive, corporate-like security. Yet there was still the intimacy of hall chapel Mass and the grandeur of Mass for thousands in the Joyce Center. The Hammes Bookstore is as always an indispensable visit — a treasure of authors such as George Weigel and the late Ralph McInerny not found in more wisdom-challenged secular stores. There was still the ability to chat amiably with anonymous alumni and talk personally with the venerable rector of the Basilica of Sacred Heart, where my wife, Lyn, and I were married in November of 1968. Father Ted spoke in his sermon then about the need to raise a university to Our Lady that fit the heavenly ambitions she had mystically conveyed to Father Sorin.

old engineering building. The hieroglyphics carved into those wooden desks spoke of student cultures past that the present student could either relate to or be amused by, but not be unmindful of their tradition.

The question coming out of my reunion experience is “*Quo vadis, Notre Dame?*” Yes, there must be growth. There must be research to rival the prestigious secular institutions. There must be internationally renowned members of the faculty and, in an unmannerly society, the campus must be secure from intrusion. Yet the measure of success for the institution’s primary mission will always be the way by which students and the neighboring community are formed into faith-filled maturity.

From my earliest years, Notre Dame poured out formative knowledge. It was a kenosis of intellectual Catholic culture overflowing into the ethnic South Bend parishes and parochial schools that revered it. I pray that others who follow me will have an opportunity to share that evangelical, free-flowing river of wisdom and grace into the future indefinite. □

# THUMB DRIVE

Morrisome amount of time interacting with its environment through the latest mode of digital communication. But the *kids* may be navigating the virtual maze just fine.

Some experts are concerned that the youngest generation of homo sapiens spends a worrisome amount of time interacting with its environment through the latest mode of digital communication. But the *kids* may be navigating the virtual maze just fine.

BY ANDREW SANTELLA

## I NEVER WORRIED MUCH ABOUT THE HAZARDS OF THE INFORMATION AGE UNTIL MY 9-YEAR-OLD SON STARTED BEATING ME AT VIDEO GAMES.

One of his current favorites is an online game called *Pillage the Village*. It's a pretty typical game, in that trying to explain its premise will make me sound unhinged. You win this game by invading a luckless medieval hamlet and tossing animated peasants to their deaths from high in the air, then looting their bodies for loose change.

What bothered me about *Pillage the Village* wasn't the subtext of cartoon cruelty and greed and violence. What bothered me was that my son was so much better at it than me.

He grasped the peculiar logic of the game, learned quickly what he needed to do to advance to the next level and patiently — maybe a little patronizingly — tried to explain it all to me. ("Um, you can't move trees, Dad.")

I shouldn't have been surprised. He's a digital native, if you'll excuse the buzzword, part of a generation growing up immersed in information technology. He's never known a world without texting and tweeting and streaming video. Around laptops and game systems, he is possessed of a sauntering confidence that is remarkable to see. He can solve problems I can't even articulate.

All of which, to my antique way of thinking, inverts the natural order of things. I grew up hoping that someday I might be able to beat my father in a game of checkers or a footrace. But the digital world is different. Screens — laptops and iPhones and the Xbox 360 — are my son's turf. I don't stand a chance there. It might be a few years before he is able to take me in driveway one-on-one, but he seems to have emerged from the womb with an invincible talent for digital navigation.

I don't think I'm the only parent who is ambivalent about his child's affinity for the world of screens. It's hard, if you're of a certain age and predisposed to a certain level of parental apprehension, not to be a little alarmed at the prospect of letting your kid loose in the digital landscape. The timing of the recent explosion of digital technologies is part of the problem. It coincides almost exactly with our national obsession about the safety of our children. As the novelist Michael Chabon put it, "Our children have become cult objects to us, too precious to be risked."

And the digital world is no refuge. Just when you think it's safe to send them out in their bike helmets and elbow pads for a quick pedal around the block, it turns out that what they really want to do is play *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare* for 14 hours a day.

One of the primary themes running through popular media at the moment is anxiety over the attraction — or should I say quasi-religious devotion? — kids show for screens. I've seen the scary-bizarre

headlines ("Forty-two Percent of Teens Say They Can Text While Blindfolded") and read the alarming studies about gaming addictions and sexting and online bullying. I know that right now entire industries are working around the clock to develop new ways to waste my son's time.

"If young people are awake, they are connected," Eric Schmidt, the CEO of Google, told the *Atlantic*'s James Fallows this year. "When they're walking, when they're in a car, if they wake up at night, when they're in class. This is probably doing something to their brains, but we don't know what."

When the guy who makes his living keeping my kid in front of a screen sounds that alarmed about the consequences, I have to pay attention.

But my son and I have some basic philosophical disagreements about screens. I want them to be turned off every so often. He wants to live in a perpetual, plugged-in fast-forward.

I'm convinced that, as an adult, I have a superior sense of what constitutes a worthwhile and healthy use of his time. He rejects the premise that every activity should be worthwhile and healthy.

I have an adult's sense of the clock ticking, of time wasting, of potential going untapped. He's a kid. He has an abiding faith in the limitlessness of his own life.

This conflict is not new to the history of parent-child relations. The man who invented adolescence noticed it and he could get almost giddy when he wrote about teenagers. "There is color in their souls, brilliant, livid, loud," wrote the pioneering psychologist G. Stanley Hall. In 1904, Hall published a two-volume work called *Adolescence* that was one of the first books of child psychology. We haven't lacked for books that claim to explain kids since.

Hall was influenced by the German romantic intellectual tradition; he believed adolescence was a time of "storm and stress" marked by moodiness, rule-breaking, conflicts with parents and risk-taking. Maybe today this all seems self-evident. But Hall was developing his ideas during a time of technological and social change to rival our own. Industrialization was changing traditional family roles. New pastimes popular with young people alarmed the adults. Hall worried, for example, that newfangled popular detective novels would encourage all kinds of dangerous behavior.

It all sounds familiar. But Hall meant to position adolescence as an evolutionary stage on the path to adulthood. Today we're more likely to see childhood and adulthood in clear opposition to each other. If adolescents are brilliantly colorful, then adults must be, well, beige. You're either growing up or growing old. And given that choice, it's no surprise that so many of us want to romanticize childhood and make a walled refuge of it.

In his *Children at Play: An American History*, historian Howard P. Chudacoff wrote about the ways American parents have tried to control and influence their kids' playtime. Anxious for their safety, we herd them into playgrounds. Determined to get them into the best colleges, we replace their free time with professional lessons. It's as if adults and children are natural antagonists. Now that we've brought them indoors to keep them safe from the predators of the street, they find new kinds of risks online and on screens.

Can you blame them? You're not really playing if you're doing exactly what your parents have told you to do. I want my son to listen to me, but I like it when he stakes out his own turf, too. That's why it matters that he knows his way around the Xbox controller and I don't. One of the attractions of gaming must be that his parents don't really get it. There can be no greater endorsement for any childhood activity than the whiff of parental disapproval.

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Andrew Santella ([andrewsantella.com/](http://andrewsantella.com/)) has written for The New York Times Book Review, Slate, GQ and other publications.

I want to subscribe to the idea that kids have a genius for living and are best left to find their own fun. But I also know that given the option, there's a good chance my son would spend a ridiculous portion of his childhood in front of a screen. Sometimes I take matters into my own hands and shoo him outside. I tell him to go explore the neighborhood, find one of his buddies, build a fort in the woods behind the house. Out he'll go, and sometimes he'll be back inside after 10 minutes of desultory wandering.

Are screens robbing my kid of his ability to create some small adventure for himself? Maybe. But then I grew up during the Late Analog Era, when our pastimes included mumblety-peg, a game that involved throwing pocket knives at your friend's feet. So I have a



**My son and his friends are true connoisseurs of distraction. They assemble at our house, each bearing some electronic handheld device to help them survive the interstices when the other kids are taking their turn at the *MLB 2K11* Xbox game that is the focus of the gathering.**

limited fund of nostalgia for the charming childhood games of yesteryear. And when I do order my son outside to play, he invariably makes the same discovery: All his friends are inside playing *Madden NFL 11*.

I'm embarrassed to admit it now, but when email became generally available back in the early 1990s, I entered into a pact with one of my oldest friends: We would never stoop to communicate with each other through this indelicate new medium. We were both young writers then, which is to say that our lives were largely governed by pretense and ambition. We had been carrying on a cross-country correspondence by the U.S. mail (remember?), and we worried that the temptations of electronic immediacy would make us stop writing each other letters. This, we were sure, would be a pity for us and for the future biographers who would be deprived of our collected correspondence on paper.

The pact lasted a few months. The two of us now exchange three, four, maybe a dozen emails each day. Every once in a great while, for old time's sake, one of us will send the other an actual letter in an actual stamped envelope. It's almost kitschy.

I don't offer this story as a lesson in the need to adapt to change. I understand that my friend and I have marked ourselves as a couple of fogeys by continuing to rely on email instead of, say, texts or Facebook. My point is that every great technological advance brings with it, at least for some of us, a sense of loss.

Henry David Thoreau liked to scoff at the telegraph that was beginning to span the country. "We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas," he wrote, "but Maine and Texas, it may be, have nothing important to communicate." Thoreau was after a philosophical inwardness and simplicity and depth, in which case being connected is not always a virtue.

He was an extreme case, though. He worried about post office addicts. "In proportion as our inward life fails, we go more constantly to the post-office," Thoreau wrote. "You may depend on it, that the fellow who walks away with the greatest number of letters, proud of his extensive correspondence has not heard from himself this long while." You can hear critics deploy pretty much the same argument today against habitual texters or tweeters or people with 3,000 Facebook friends.

I don't think it makes me a technophobe if I suspect that the current-day version of relentless connection, whatever its benefits, is robbing me of . . . something. My attention span? My depth of

thought and feeling? My ability to sit, calm and undistracted, and watch a baseball game on TV without wanting to simultaneously pay my bills, follow celebrity twitter feeds and comment on a friend's Facebook update?

Like most parents of my generation, I have made a specialty of translating my anxieties about my own life into anxieties about my kid's life. So I worry that the world of screens is depriving my son of something, too. We want it both ways, we parents. We want our kids' 21<sup>st</sup> century classrooms to be loaded with the fanciest possible computers (even though we know that technology doesn't matter as much as teachers) and want to rely on the iPhone and the DS as all-purpose pacifiers and parenting tools to help us and the kids get through those long car rides or endless waits at the doctor's office. But we also reserve the right to be nervous about all the time our kids are online. (Have I mentioned online bullying and sexting and Internet addiction?)

This puts us in an awkward position. My wife and I spend most of our days at home tapping away at laptops — always connected, always meeting a deadline, always trying to cajole an extension out of an editor. But every once in a while we look up from our screens to tell our son to turn off his screen. Do we talk out of both sides of our mouths? Very well then. We talk out of both sides of our mouths. We are parents. It's what we do.

The even deeper irony is that the only reason I am at home and able to monitor my son's use of digital technology is because of, yes, my use of digital technology. I do the kind of work that can be done at home, on a laptop, then sent to people who pay me, but who I have never actually met. This arrangement, this digital connection, allows me to be literally present to witness the wonder of my boy growing up in front of me. That's a good thing. But then again, this digital connection — and all the distractions and irritability that come with it — also prevents me from being *really* present. I know it's wonderful to watch my son growing up in front of me, but I keep forgetting to pay attention.

My son and his friends are true connoisseurs of distraction. They assemble at our house, each bearing some electronic handheld device to help them survive the interstices when the other kids are taking their turn at the *MLB 2K11* Xbox game that is the focus of the gathering. It can be hard to understand the half a dozen things that are happening at once down there in our family room. To eavesdrop on their overlapping conversations and arguments and exhortations at the animated figures running around on their various screens is to feel like an anthropologist watching the complex rites of a newly discovered jungle tribe.

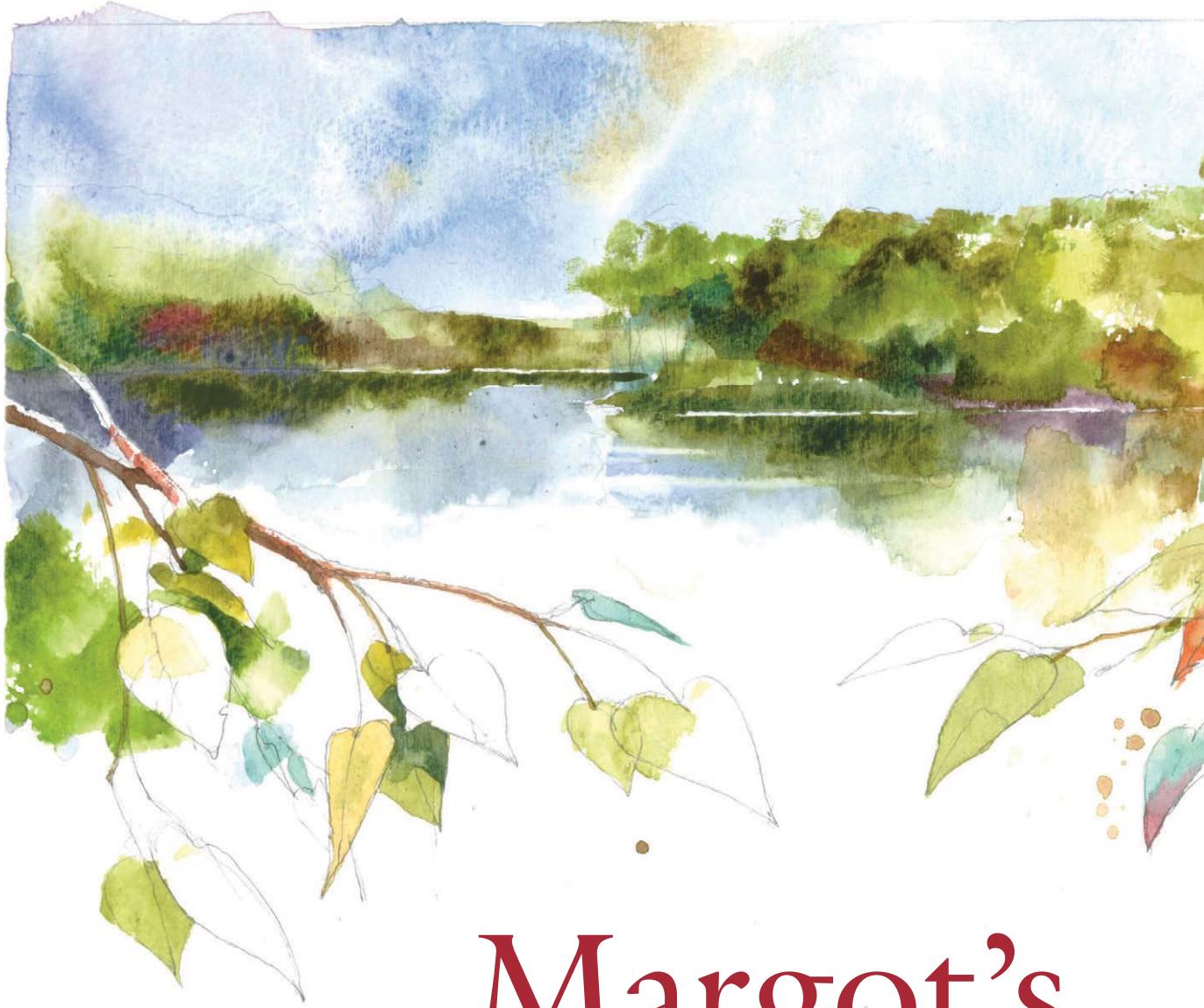
When I watch a scene like this I think of one of the first enthusiasms my son and I shared. We liked to look at clouds. You know the drill. We'd lie on our backs on the lawn and pick out the shapes as they passed overhead. A turtle. A duck. Illinois.

Maybe that sounds boring. It can be boring. But here in the flood of messages and entertainments coming at us from my screens and my wife's screens and my son's screens, boredom starts to seem like a kind of relief. Boredom starts to seem like a kind of stimulation. Boredom is the place where imagination kicks in.

I like to imagine a video game that would simulate some of the most boring afternoons of my childhood. The afternoons when none of my friends were around and there seemed to be nothing to do except ride my bike in circles or dig up a corner of the back yard or lie on my back and stare at the sky. I like to imagine a cloud-watching game that my son and I could play on his Xbox 360.

I know he'd beat me every time. □

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STAN FELLOWS



# Margot's Story

Maybe it doesn't have an ending after all.

BY PATRICK MURPHY '91

ON MAY 24, 2009, the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend, my wife, Debbie, and I took our five children on a float trip down the Meramec River with a group of friends and family. Just over an hour after our flotilla set off down the river that afternoon, our life with Margaret Olivia Murphy — our 4½ year old daughter — had come to an end.

This is Margot's story.

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Patrick Murphy is the owner of Murphy Analytics, a St. Louis-based research firm providing coverage of smallcap stocks. James Lang '91 assisted in the writing of this article. The longer version of the attempt to tell the rest of Margot's story is available in paperback and as an e-book via the links provided at [shemustbe.net](http://shemustbe.net).



**AS A REWARD** for successfully addressing whatever near-term personal or professional challenges we faced, or perhaps as a temporary escape from those challenges, we frequently contemplated an outing to the river on property owned by Debbie's family in Bourbon, Missouri. However, given our family's relentless schedule of practices, games, school and other activities, it was always far easier to talk about such a trip than to make it happen.

Finally a plan did come together on Memorial Day weekend in 2009. After getting the word out to the many family and friends continuously looking for an opportunity to enjoy an excursion on the river, some two dozen of us agreed to meet that Sunday for a late afternoon float.

Rather than rely upon one of the area vendors to manage the river float, Debbie's family keeps an ample supply of boats, canoes, trailers and lifejackets on the property so family members can enjoy the river whenever the spirit so moves them. This meant that the first hours of our visit to Bourbon were heavy with logistics. While the kids and dogs ran wild around the property, jumping in and out of the river under the supervision

of the mothers, the guys were moving trailers downriver or upriver, gathering paddles, determining how many and what type of vessels were needed and then getting them to the riverbank.

After what seemed like an eternity, the requisite mix of vessels was assembled, and it was time to start the float — time to sit on the river and worry about nothing. Absolutely nothing.

Located some 50 miles southwest of St. Louis County, the stretch of the Meramec River we were floating is slow and lazy, only a few feet high in many stretches and so shallow in others that the boats and canoes need to be carried. Debbie's family has been floating this stretch of river frequently for decades without incident, and there was nothing ominous about the weather or the river on that mostly sunny, warm and pleasant day.

Not long after we launched our boats into the river it began to drizzle, so the flotilla moved from the middle of the river to the shores, where the overhanging trees provided some shelter. The oversized boat carrying an adult friend of ours as well as Margot, who was buckled securely in a lifejacket, and a few of her siblings and relatives had come to rest against a nest of logs and trees and branches toward the side of the river where the current had helped to guide them.

Alone in a large kayak, I paddled over to say hello to Margot, who was crying. For the last couple years of her 1,972 days on earth, Margot had been exceptionally bothered by what she called "moisture problems."

Although Margot would swim in a pool for hours at a time, if a shirt sleeve was dampened when she washed her hands, the shirt had to go. It made no difference if we were at the zoo or a movie theater or in the car — if her clothing became wet for any reason, she would demand a change. Similarly, it was the definition of futile to attempt to clothe Margot prematurely after a bath. Her pajamas were not going on her body until Margot was satisfied that her hair was sufficiently dry.

On that day, however, I could do little about the moisture problem — we were floating on a river and it was raining. But as I pulled away from Margot to resume the trip, I flipped over in my kayak. For a split second, I thought I was in danger. The current was exceptionally fast through this logjam, and I had trouble getting the kayak off of me. When I finally struggled out from under the kayak, I hung on to the backside of the logjam, catching my breath. As I began to swim again, the current pushed me quite a bit downriver before I made it to the riverbank.

Around the time I reached the shore, I heard shouts upriver, and I think I heard Debbie yell that she didn't know where the kids were. I ran back up the riverside to see what was going on.

For me, what happened next will always be unclear, but the details of the accident

make no real difference to me. What I realized days later was that the boat Margot was in had flipped over sometime after mine had. While the rest of the crew made it out safely, it soon became apparent that everyone was accounted for except Margot.

As I stood on the shore, my mind was so blank I didn't know what to do. Finally a friend standing nearby suggested we return upriver to the logjam where I had dumped into the water.

I ran up the bank, then waded in so I could float down to the logjam. Once there, I was able to stand on the river bottom and some large branches. I reached into the river and started feeling around under the water. After coming up with and discarding a seat cushion and a paddle, I reached again. To my eternal horror, I grabbed what I believe was Margot's left ankle. To my further horror, she was not moving.

I remember little of my thoughts at the time, but in retrospect I seem to have concluded that because I was unable to pull her free, the only possible way to save Margot without hurting her was to hang on a nearby log and push her under the water through the logjam. This was stupid. If there was any remaining chance to save her, I was wasting it.

Thankfully, family and friends began making their way over. Eventually a friend hanging from a different part of the logjam was able to reach Margot, and we pulled her out together.

After we freed Margot, a stranger perched within the logjam began administering CPR. But despite the efforts of people to whom we are forever grateful, I don't think there was any chance of saving Margot once we got her out of the river. It had taken too long.

An hour or two after we pulled Margot's body from the water, the float trip ended in an emergency room. I looked on in indescribable bewilderment at the sight of my dear wife curled up in a hospital bed, holding our dead daughter. I wish it were not possible for any human being to see a vision so haunting.

The day was not yet over, however. We still had one unthinkable act before us: getting in the car and driving off without Margot.

Days later, some time after the seeing his sister in a casket at the funeral home, Margot's younger brother asked us why she was not in heaven. Surprised and shattered by the question, we assured him that Margot was indeed in heaven.

If that was true, he wanted to know, then who was it in that box?

**I DON'T BLAME MYSELF**, the river, anything or anyone else for Margot's death. The adults in charge were sober, and many had made this same trip dozens of times. It was a tragic accident. There are an infinite number of ways it could have been avoided, but the cold, brutal reality is that accidents happen. I also don't believe Margot's death happened for a reason; that would require intent, and I don't believe that God or the universe drowns 4½ year old girls to serve some greater purpose. Accidents happen because accidents happen. That's life on earth.

But it's also the cold, brutal reality that I could have changed that day's events, and I failed to do so. When I consider what is required of me as the father of a young child, I am reminded of a statement by Tanzanian marathoner John Akhwari, who limped to the finish line long after the rest of the field after he was injured in a fall at the 1968 Olympics: "My country did not send me 5,000 miles to start the race," Akhwari said. "They sent me 5,000 miles to finish the race."

Margot was not entrusted to me with the understanding that I should do my best to protect her. My responsibility was actually to

**NOW, SOME TWO YEARS LATER**, each time I go to the cemetery, I find that Margot is still dead. It's almost impossible sometimes to put the brakes on the litany of horrible thoughts that float through my mind: My 4½-year-old daughter is dead. We have a child buried in the ground. I'm never going to see her again on this earth. Her mother is not going to see her anymore. Her siblings will never play with her again. Margot will never again run around our home. She will never again play in the backyard. My baby girl is in the ground.

For most problems in this world, it seems a solution exists somehow: you just have to look hard enough. For this problem — this loss, this lack, this absence, this tragedy — no solution exists. Margot is gone. It cannot be undone.

**EVERY HUMAN LIFE** is a uniquely valuable gift, and Margot was no exception. She had curled fire-red hair, beautiful blue eyes, a contagious smile, unbridled joyfulness, and an outsized strut and confidence. She turned heads wherever she went, and Margot's loving nature was a gift beyond description to those blessed to know her well.

At every stage of her development, Margot had a unique energy and presence. She was electric. I don't know what it was — but

Accidents happen because accidents happen. That's life on earth.

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protect her. I failed. I don't feel guilt over this failure — but I do feel anger and sickness at my inability to do the job assigned to me. I have no right, ability or willingness to judge any parent who has lost a child. But as for my judgment of myself, while I may recognize that Margot's death was a tragic accident, my failure to protect something so valuable fills me with disgust.

Other than God himself, what in all of existence could be more valuable than human life? What are the other candidates — carbon, time, gravity? If the universe existed without life here or somewhere, who would care? Surely God would not create the universe for his own entertainment. Life can't be an accident. It seems to me that life must be the purpose, and a life entrusted to me was lost.

it was something. Maybe you could see the music in her, and it was contagious.

She said and did things that I'll laugh about forever. At dinner one night after our dog had recently been skunked in the back yard, we asked 3-year-old Margot what she might do if encountering a skunk. Without any apparent intent to amuse us, she outlined her straightforward strategy: "I kick him in the balls."

**MARGOT'S OCCASIONALLY** colorful vocabulary once led to an old-school mouth soaping that nevertheless left Margot undaunted.

"Thank you, Mommy," she said afterward. "Now my mouth is so clean."

Margot was also a talented musical



composer, with unforgettable ballads and rock songs about popsicles and other current events. However prolific Margot may have been as a songwriter, and although she was an equally enthusiastic dancer and singer, no amount of nostalgic reminiscing will make us forget that Margot's singing voice was, in fact, terrible. But of course the pitch and tone were far less important than the energy, attitude and enthusiasm that made her performances so unforgettable.

**SOME FIVE MONTHS OR SO** after Margot's death, I finally became impatient enough with myself to begin to believe that I had a responsibility to quit sulking and do something to attempt to remember and honor Margot.

Out for a run one Saturday morning, I came up with the idea to tell a story about Margot and how her life and spirit may con-

"Sooner or later, it all gets real. Walk on."

When I asked about it later, my friend said he had heard the song on that day, thought of me and sent it along out of the blue.

A few weeks later, I was walking along our upstairs hallway and stopped dead in my tracks. For the first time since Margot's death, I thought about the nightly daddy-horse rides I had provided to Margot and her sister on the way to bed. This daddy-horse had been trained to respond to commands they had learned at a friend's stable. There were only two: "Ho" and "Walk on." I thought about how hard Margot had laughed during those rides and could clearly remember her directing me to "Walk on."

Is it possible that Margot could have inspired an old friend — one of her earth-bound angels perhaps — to help her deliver a vital imperative to her father? I don't know.

I decided to listen to some of my favorite songs by Natalie Merchant and 10,000 Maniacs, wondering if I might hear something from Margot in there. Before I could even get a song onto my player, I remembered the lyrics from "These Are Days," and hung my head and cried as I wondered what to make of it, if anything: "When May is rushing over you . . . See the signs and know their meaning. It's true. . . . Hear the signs and know they're speaking, to you, to you."

The last potential greeting I'll mention is the photograph of a cloud that an old friend sent to me at Christmastime. He'd been away on a cruise during Margot's funeral, and we had not spoken since her death. During the brutally sad daily routine of opening Christmas cards, I saw that my friend had sent a photograph of a cloud which looked a great deal like angel's wings. My friend noted that he'd taken the shot at dusk on May 24, 2009

Why should all of the work of this existence be left to us — the least competent? Why should the departed sit around in paradise doing nothing? Why can't they help a little?



tinue to be present in our lives. Lacking the creativity to write exclusively about things of interest to a 4½ year old, I decided to create a story about Margot's life that follows some mostly fictional characters whose lives were influenced by Margot in some small way and whose stories continue even after Margot's death. I also decided I'd entitle each chapter with a song lyric that I found to be meaningful or reflective of Margot's character.

One of the first lyrics that came to mind when I began typing possible chapter titles was part of the chorus from Neil Young's "Walk On," which seemed likely to fit somewhere within Margot's story: "Sooner or later, it all gets real. Walk on."

I love that song and that line, and it seemed somehow appropriate. Later that Saturday night, I was sitting alone watching football highlights after everyone had gone to sleep. I saw the red light flashing on my phone, indicating a text message. I opened the note from a friend whom I had not seen or spoken to since Margot's funeral. The note read only this:

The easiest explanation is that this was coincidence and nothing more.

I'm not sure that the easiest answer is the best one.

As I progressed with the attempt to tell Margot's story, I continued to notice possible greetings from her — a cardinal that kept tapping at my window, often at times when I was nearly paralyzed with sadness. One afternoon, in the midst of writing about seeing signs in everyday activity, I was disrupted by a loud crash. I discovered that our robotic vacuum, named Roxy by the kids, had knocked over a stand holding a large picture of our family's 2008 Christmas card, which features a picture of all five our children. Dressed in their Christmas finery, they are holding up a one-word sign:

BELIEVE.

On a day when I struggled mightily through the writing of a brief section that opens with lyrics from Carly Simon's "Anticipation" — "And stay right here, 'cause these are the good old days" — a woman named Natalie sent me several business emails. So

— right around the time that Margot died — and my friend had concluded it was an angel escorting Margot to heaven.

Clouds, like songs and books, inherently lend themselves to malleable interpretation. So I asked myself, with a deliberate sense of skepticism, whether any of these signs may have pointed to anything beyond this world. I never observed a potential sign without honestly questioning whether a more rational explanation for its presence might not make more sense, or whether I was observing nothing but mere coincidence.

**WHETHER THERE WAS** a deeper meaning or not, I did observe many signs or potential greetings during the writing of my attempted story about Margot. Curiously, they mostly seemed to stop after I was finished. This lends itself to a perfectly rational explanation as well: a desperate imagination, stimulated by the writing, saw signs everywhere; when the writing was finished, my imagination relaxed and the signs disappeared. It seems equally possible, however,

that, given how drained I was after completing the attempted story, my mind and awareness simply shut down and took a break.

Still, if I believe that those gone before us still exist, which I do, then it seems plausible that they might have ways to interact with those of us who remain here. This need not represent an intrusion upon our free will — communication or interaction between here and there need not imply that we're simply toys acting solely as designed or instructed. But I think it's possible that Margot — and other departed souls or angels — could invite us to see or remember or learn from them in a story, song, piece of art, or in the everyday things we're able to observe and comprehend. Why should all of the work of this existence be left to us — the least competent? Why should the departed sit around in paradise doing nothing? Why can't they help a little?

As I examined each of the instances in which it seemed conceivable that Margot may have been attempting to communicate with me, I tried my best to avoid interpreting them with the agility of an astrologer utilizing part fact and part imagination to create a story from nothing.

Could I have been fooling myself?  
Certainly.

Did these signs take away the pain?  
Impossible.

But I can't deny that they lifted my spirits at some difficult moments. If that is all I will ever know for certain about them in this life, that's good enough.

**I DID FINISH THE ATTEMPT** to tell Margot's story, and I called it *she must be*, as that seems to fit, for many reasons. I know it won't ever be possible for me to get Margot's story completely right. I also know that I could never come up with anything as interesting or as beautiful as the story we'll never get to see. Still, it provides comfort for me to hope that Margot's story keeps going — that her death was not a destruction of beauty and value but a transformation.

As Margot may have said, "And the beat goes on." Actually, it's more likely she would have sung that, and probably off-key. After all, it may be that her story continues not as a book but as a song. If I could hear her singing to me now, I believe she would demand that I walk on — she would remind me that I have a responsibility to her, to my family and to myself, to respect and make the most of the gift that has been taken from her. □

# The Hurt

BY JOHN HAUGH '87

## CHRONIC PAIN CAN WARP LIVES.

I graduated from Notre Dame as a four-year letterman in fencing, having the great good fortune to work with such coaches as Yves Auriol and Mike DeCicco, and winning a national championship in 1986. But months after I graduated, a high-school kid rear-ended my car. As a result, persistent back pain filled my life. I was unable to walk down stairs. I became withdrawn and a right bastard on bad days. After five years, a medicine called Dolobid helped me recover.

A clinical measurement of my back pain might have averaged a four on the scale of one to 10. One of my sisters now suffers chronic migraines diagnosed at 10 out of 10 on the clinical scale. Some push back against chronic pain. My sister is meeting this incredible challenge with strength of character and faith that I admire but cannot yet understand.

### Thanksgiving at My Sister's House

Twelve of us stand, hands encircling  
your granite kitchen island. Eleven offer  
prayers of Thanksgiving while you weep.

Medicine's cornucopia failed you. Now it's  
pain and acupuncture or brain stem injections,  
or brutal addictive narcotics.

Later, I take our four sons of two families  
romping through leaves from winter-bare oaks  
to build driftwood forts beside the Flatrock River.

I fail to remember, in our shared  
decades as siblings, any prior moment  
when you wept openly.

Our four boys imagine riverside wars, and negotiate  
treaties near a small pool of Rosyface Shiner minnows,  
separate from the Flatrock's main body.

You're thinning from triathlete toward  
gaunt, and tried to warn me by phone  
about your crying, but I had no concept.

The Flatrock chuckles, November empty.  
Minnows flash over rotting leaves in just one pool,  
cut from Mother River by a fallen chestnut tree.

I admire courage, with an Irish respect  
of all things addictive, but please  
be mindful of the cost of pain.

One hard freeze or hungry bird could  
kill all those lovely minnows. Perhaps  
we could dig a channel from pool to river.

I check my watch and shout. Our  
boys settle final treaties while I wish  
minnows had the life they deserve,  
but it is time to go.



## WHEN LIFE HANGS IN THE BALANCE

A boy is struck by a car, falling into an unconscious netherworld that raises doubts about guilt and God, the meaning of prayer and the cost of love.

MY SKY-BLUE HIGHLANDER JUMPS WHEN I GOOSE THE GAS, and we race up State Road 240 past the middle school and Baptist church and monstrous Walmart distribution center that keeps gobbling up farmland every few years. It's September 30 — a hot day in the heartland, corn stalks shriveling in the fields. Windows down, I can smell the harvest that's still weeks away — but can't smell the tragedy that'll be hatching in just 10 minutes.

My son, Lincoln, clock-clock-clocks his soccer cleats together in the back seat. At 6 years old, Lincoln is blue-eyed and curious and has curly blonde hair the color of corn silk. His mom and I love to lace our fingers through his hair when he sidles up next to us at the kitchen counter or lays his head in our laps at the end of a long day.

We love him too much, perhaps. What if something ever happened to him? Sometimes, late at night, I whisper, "Please, God, protect him," even though I doubt God exists. It rankles me to be irrational. I'm a college professor for cripes' sake. But late at night in bed, when I'm worrying in the dark about Lincoln or his sister, I touch the wood of my end table and invoke the G-word.

We zip into the access road at Big Walnut Sports Park and find a parking space. 5:59. Grab my whistle, bag of soccer balls, sunglasses. With Lincoln at my side, I hurry onto the grass, eyes trained on the practice fields, dancing with players. Where to park my team?

We cut past Figgy Hardwick and his father-in-law, sitting on their retractable soccer chairs. Good people. They greet me with big, hearty Midwestern smiles. Lincoln slips off to join Figgy's son, Eli, and other boys horsing around on the edge of the grass. I think to call them all over — they're too near the parking lot — but I keep slanting toward the far field.

I chat for a minute with the departing coach, chat another minute with a father to iron out Saturday's treat schedule. Then I hear it. A raspy cry from behind me that rises to a scream. I turn. A man's waving his arms wildly and running toward me. What?

Sonny's dad. Sonny — the kid from Cloverdale who'd rather watch clouds flirt across the sky than chase a soccer ball. His dad's gaining on me fast. Former smoker probably, for he has a hole in his throat the size of a quarter and covers it with his hand when he speaks. Now he's screaming across the field, both hands cupping his throat like he's strangling himself to be heard.

"Hit by a car!"

"Who? Lincoln?" I shout, panic gripping my own throat.

"No, Eli!" he says.

And I think, "Thank God."



BY PETER GRAHAM '84

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JODY HEWGILL

Curious words for an agnostic. Maybe instinct. Maybe the last remnants of my boyhood Catholicism bubbling up in the face of tragedy. If God existed, would he allow boys to be struck down in parking lots? The nonbeliever's ace in the hole: Senseless loss. Inexplicable evil. And yet, without God, how can people deal with such catastrophe?

I hurry to the parking lot, not quite praying yet. Just thinking, "Jesus, I hope Eli's OK."

But he's not. He's crumpled on the asphalt like a pile of bleeding laundry. His dad, Figgy, and two women kneel over him. Blood's drooling out of the boy's mouth and nose and head. I bite the inside of my cheek and look away.

I'VE ALWAYS RESISTED calling myself an atheist. It smacks of something so final — and hopeless. Even though I can accept atheism intellectually, I can't quite accept it emotionally. Instead of going the full monty, I prefer the in-between position of agnostic — making no claims about the existence of God or not. My cartoonist friend Kuper isn't so wishy-washy. He makes no bones about his atheism. He calls organized religion "hocus-pocus." He's lean and 50ish and one of the kindest men I know, donating his time and resources to countless worthy causes. He's a talented, smiling, positive-energy machine, yet he still worries. About his daughter, Emily, most of all. Gorgeous girl of 11 years. His only child. He frets about what some day might happen to her.

"The only thing my atheism can't accommodate is personal tragedy."

Same thing might be said by a theist. As long as things are going swell, belief — or nonbelief — isn't really tested. Only when tragedy strikes do beliefs crystallize. Believers often claim that atheists can't weather emotional storms — "There are no atheists in foxholes!" — but tragedy can make atheists out of believers, too. Countless sufferers have turned away from God when tragedy blasted away loved ones. How can God deal out such colossal pain?

WHERE'S THE DAMN AMBULANCE? My ears strain for the slightest hint of a siren. Eli's unconscious body twitches. I notice his curly brown hair, his large soft legs. He's a big, handsome boy, built to be the goal scorer that he is. In the first two games of the season, he scored five goals that propelled

s to two wins. Now this. Anger rises up in me like the engine of the SUV still ticking over Eli's body.

"Where's the driver?"

Someone points to a wraith of a woman, standing at a distance, looking to disappear. Pretty lady. Thirty-ish. Long brown hair curling down over her shoulders. She's flanked by two other ladies whom she squeezes between for protection. I march over, taking in her stylish zebra blouse and

short black pants that show off her ankles. Below these she's tip-toeing in a pair of extremely high stilettos. Maybe 3-inch heels. Quite possibly 4.

"What happened?"

"I don't know." She's trembling, in shock, her voice a whisper.

"Did you run him over or just hit him?"

"I don't know."

"What can you tell me?"

Not much. She never saw him. He just darted out. And then . . . She cups a palm to her mouth.

I turn away, thinking, *Why are you driving in those goddamn heels?* But suddenly there's Figgy Hardwick to contend with. He's up on his feet, cell phone to his ear, pacing between cars with a perfect storm of anguish racking his face.

"Pick up, Laurie!" he screams, but his wife doesn't pick up, and after he leaves the bad news on her phone, he looks at me and cries, "Goddamnit! I've always hated f---ing soccer!"

I embrace him. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm so goddamn sorry," I say, and Figgy starts to weep.

THE AMBULANCE ARRIVES. Finally the sounds of people *doing something*. Paramedics shouting orders: to take a pulse, to locate the tongue, to be delicate with the boy's head and neck and spine. Then Eli's strapped to a stretcher, hoisted in the ambulance, and driven to the far end of the parking lot to await the helicopter that will fly him to Riley Hospital in Indianapolis.

That's when Laurie arrives. Laurie, who doesn't yet know how dire Eli's situation is, walks briskly and tries to put on a positive face, shouting hellos to me and the city's emergency personnel. Laurie is the town counsel and knows all those guys. She expresses her worry with heartiness. Now we wait to see how she'll express her grief.

She doesn't shriek or scream. Drama isn't the way of the heartland. Not a peep comes from inside the ambulance. So outside, in the hush of the parking lot, I scream silently at myself. As Eli's coach, I bear the blame. For not getting to practice sooner, for not rustling the boys to a safer place in the park, for not having hammered into my players' heads to never, *ever* chase balls into the parking lot.

Mostly I blame myself for rejoicing that it wasn't Lincoln who'd been hit. For thanking God, if there really was a God, that my boy — and I — had been spared all that excruciating pain. It isn't rational, my guilt — guilt often isn't — but now that I've stopped casting dark glances at the woman in stilettos, I have to fix my anger on something else. And there I was.

WHERE DOES GUILT COME FROM? Why this peculiar human tendency to accept blame for misfortune and suffering — even for events beyond our power?

Freud attributed guilt to civilization and our insect-like tendency to advance the group at the expense of the individual. What kept primitive man from behaving badly, said Freud, was fear of punishment — from the father, from the alpha male, from some terrifying external source. People internalized this fear over time so that today, when there is no danger of getting caught for some bout of ill will or aggression, we punish ourselves quietly with guilt.

Social biologists have a different take. They say guilt is an innate

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Peter Graham is an associate professor at DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana, where he teaches creative writing and film studies. He also writes the Reluctant Blogger column for the Notre Dame Magazine website.

feeling. They say that by curbing the ego and reducing the harm we might do to others, guilt increases our survival prospects within the tribe. Scientists say guilt also increases the tribe's prospects for survival, for groups with a high percentage of altruists often outlast groups with a lower percentage.

Of course the most popular explanation for guilt is the religious one — that guilt is a product of sin. That it originates from people having violated universal principles of right and wrong. We suffer guilt, in other words, because we deserve it. My friend Kuper calls this bunk. He says people feel guilty even when they haven't done anything wrong. They often suffer for nothing, and Kuper can't stand this. He blames religions for inventing guilt to manipulate their flocks. An old-fashioned con job, he says. Guilt as social control.

Well, maybe. There's evidence, however, that people outside religious communities also blame themselves for events beyond their power. In *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent*, Elaine Pagels writes, "The human tendency to accept blame for misfortunes is as observable among today's agnostics as among the Hopi or the ancient Jews and Christians, independent of — even prior to — religious belief."

OK. But why? Why do we often *choose* to feel guilty for events not of our own making? Because, Pagels says, guilt allows us to find reasons for our pain and suffering. Given the choice between feeling helpless or feeling guilty, most of us opt for the latter, even at the price of guilt, for we need to imagine ourselves in control.

Sometimes, Pagels reminds us, guilt can have positive outcomes: "Asserting one's own guilt for suffering may also encourage one to make specific, perhaps long overdue, changes. Guilt invites the sufferer to review past choices, to amend behavior, redress negligence, and perhaps by such means improve his or her life."

Pagels is no stranger to suffering. In 1987, her 6-year-old son died of a respiratory illness, and a year later, while on mountaineering trip in Colorado, her husband plunged 2,000 feet to his death. These back-to-back tragedies devastated Pagels. Who was responsible for them? Were they her fault? Somebody else's? Her husband, who had been a kind-hearted man, would've said nobody was to blame, but Pagels, a Christian, couldn't accept this, couldn't believe that humans suffered and died randomly.

Her religion, of course, provided a reason. Humans had been cursed since Adam and Eve and that fruit thing they did in the Garden of Eden. Pain and suffering was our inheritance. Original sin — a preposterous idea that became one of the most accepted ideas of all time, still popular 1,600 years after Augustine first wrote it down. Pagels explains the appeal of original sin to the sufferer. "You *personally* are not to blame for what has come upon you; the blame goes back to our father, Adam, and our mother, Eve." In effect, original sin satisfies two deeply human needs: it provides a reason for suffering, including guilt, and also provides a way for people to be free from individual blame.

THE HELICOPTER ROARS into the parking lot, blowing out bursts of hot air and hope. Two more EMTs scurry from under the blades and disappear into the ambulance where Eli lies in a coma and his parents hold vigil. Time slogs on, every minute a grim reminder that Eli could die here, right in the middle of this hot sea of asphalt. I begin to pray. What do I have to lose? John Cheever once wrote in his journals, "I think that faced with the mystery and passion of life we are forced into a position of humility that is best expressed in the attitudes of prayer." Seems right to me.

"Please, God," I say. "If you're actually out there and if you're as

all-good and all-powerful as they say you are, now's the time to show your stuff."

Nothing happens. Finally, 40 minutes and a light year later, Figgy and Laurie and the EMTs pile out of the ambulance with Eli buckled to a stretcher. He's stabilized but still bloodied and unconscious. Figgy and I exchange cell phone numbers. He's in a hurry. No room in the helicopter for either him or Laurie, so they have to drive fast to Riley's in Indy.



"What can [REDACTED] do?" I ask.

"Could you let out our dogs and feed them?" he says. "They haven't been out since morning."

"Absolutely," I say. I'll feed their poor, hungry dogs tonight and forever if they need me to. Figgy and Laurie lost the lottery, and I have to pay them for my winning.

The EMTs wobble the stretcher across the grass to the chopper, Figgy and Laurie flanking either side. They kiss Eli by the glass bubble of the cockpit, uncertain they'll ever see him alive again. Then the stretcher and their boy get swallowed into the helicopter and the engines roar to a lift off and Laurie's brown hair flies about Medusa-like beneath the grinding blades.

SIX MONTHS BEFORE Eli's accident, I joined a reading group at my college to discuss the works of Notre Dame professor Alvin Plantinga. More than anybody, said a colleague of mine, Plantinga had led a renaissance in Christian philosophy — which had long been considered a joke in the academy. Not anymore. Plantinga took on atheists and Darwinists and other skeptics and gave as good as he got. Sounded like a guy whose work I should check out.

But when I started reading Plantinga, I found his arguments left me cold. Still, I enjoyed one of the readings — a short bit of memoir. It told the story of a young man absorbed in religion but deeply disturbed by the existence of evil. Not an original tale, yet one that connected me to the writer. Plantinga resolved the problem of evil by pointing to free will. He said God did a great good by creating the world with free people in it, but humans often abused their freedom by doing bad things. Plantinga concluded that the atheist's argument of evil being incompatible with the existence of a perfect God was unsuccessful. Even some atheists agreed.

Thanks to Plantinga, said a philosopher friend, an atheist won't say that evil proves the nonexistence of God, but that evil shows it is "highly probable" that there is no God.



Does the universe have a storage bank of good ideas?

TWO DAYS AFTER THE ACCIDENT, Eli remains unconscious and I arrive at the hospital bearing gifts. Homemade cards from Lincoln and his sister, homemade quiche from my wife, a huge Batman Bat Cave I'd bought for Eli if he ever wakes up. The hospital room is dark and quiet and curtained off from the hallway. Computers beep. Lines crawl across monitors.

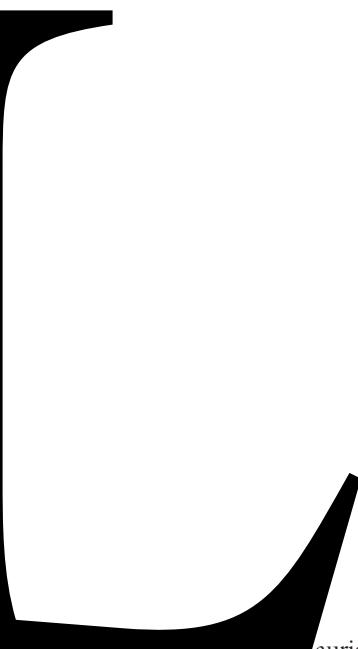
Slipping in the room, I glimpse a lump on a bed with tubes shooting out from it — it's Eli. Figgy and Laurie, nestled beside him on chairs, get up when they see me. They talk fast, thanking me, rushing to explain the various numbers on the computer screens. Huge saucers of anxiety gouge under their eyes, yet they still try to smile. Suddenly, though, tears burst from Laurie's eyes.

"I'm sorry!" she cries. "We try to be brave, but when friends arrive and they see Eli here with all his cuts and bruises and tubes sticking out of him, we can't help it."

"It's OK," I say, hugging her. "Don't worry," but after another glance at Eli and his inert and bandaged flesh, I worry plenty: Coma.

Laurie says, "Doctors say it's normal, Eli's sleeping. But they really want him to wake up soon. So do we."

I nod and wander over to the bed. Whisper a hello in the boy's ear.



Laurie says, "They discovered tread

marks on Eli's legs."

So he'd been run over as well as hit. A pang of anger shoots through me. That damn woman in the stilettos. I still blame her — even as I was still blaming myself — but Laurie and Figgy don't want to go down that road. In fact, they've started a hospital blog to update friends and family on Eli's condition. When I get home that afternoon, I read their first post, which includes the lines: "To the lady who hit Eli, it's not your fault. It was an accident."

I STARTED TO REREAD PLANTINGA. Though he'd pigeonholed arguments by atheists on the nonexistence of God, Plantinga provided scant evidence for God's existence. He cited the example of a beautiful night on a mountaintop when you looked up at the stars and simply "felt" the existence of God. *Sensus divinitatis*, he called it, an innate faculty that granted humans, from time to time, knowledge of God's existence. Not great proof by any means, but maybe I needed to take more hikes in the hill country?

Maybe it wouldn't matter. Plantinga says sin interferes with our

*sensus divinitatis*, blinds us to the reality of God. Maybe he'd say that sin had tarred my soul. Befuddled my powers of reason. Maybe he'd say — citing my agnosticism — that I still had hope.

I'd hoped that the reading group on Plantinga might serve up some cosmological answers. At age 48, I'd felt an urgency to crystallize my beliefs once and for all. Maybe I'd even make the jump to theism? I could believe in God the Great Detonator who triggered the Big Bang. And I could believe in God the Performance Artist who cooked up life on earth in a weird and quirky and artful way. But God the All Good was a greater chasm for me to cross. Same with God the Good Cop and God the Bad Cop, dispensing nice folks to heaven in the afterlife and evil guys to hell. Those Gods didn't pass muster with my intellect.

Finally, at our last meeting, I shouted out in frustration, "If God didn't create the world, then how did it all begin?"

Silence. I felt like a pimple-studded freshman speaking up at a frat party. Several of my colleagues lowered their eyes, embarrassed for me.

"I mean, if there were all these explosive gases swirling about in the primordial chaos, who created the gases?"

A kindly atheist said, "Nobody did. The universe just is. Always has been. No beginning. No end. Just is."

I could accept this intellectually. Infinity and the absence of a first mover. Fine. And yet emotionally I had a problem. I couldn't accept life as random. Humans are meaning-making animals, and I craved a reason. Voltaire famously said: If God did not exist, man would have to invent him. A snarky comment, probably spoken in irony, yet it underlines a profound human truth: emotion trumps intellect. Fear and guilt and other nitric emotions almost always get the better of reason. Advertisers know this — and tyrants. So do great religions. Not simply, as Kuper might argue, to dupe their followers, but also to minister to them, to comfort and assuage. We humans are a fragile, needy lot.

FOR THE NEXT THREE DAYS bad news pours out of the hospital. Eli hasn't awakened. He develops pneumonia. A CAT scan found he's lost 1 percent of his brain tissue — which doesn't sound like much but could spell the difference between a chatterbox and a mute, a star athlete and a paraplegic. Even if all goes well and Eli wakes up, doctors warn, he might never be the same. Figgy and Laurie refuse to be pessimistic. All they have is hope — hope and the army of friends who rally to them at the hospital and post hundreds of upbeat messages on their blog. At the end of each day, Figgy and Laurie thank everybody for their posts and sign off with the words:

"Keep the love coming!"

And it comes.

Carloads of people show up at the hospital, some of whom Figgy and Laurie hardly know. They bring casseroles and pies, gifts and Hallmark cards, soccer balls and entire Walmart aisles of toys that pile up in the hospital room like Christmas, waiting for Eli to wake up and play.

Money pours in, too. Thousands of dollars collected from McDonald's and the Elks and the Putnam County soccer league and Deer Meadow grade school and maybe every one of the town's 28 Christian congregations.

"Lots of our visitors," Laurie confides in me, "are pretty churchy folk, but Figgy and I never were very churchy."

Neither am I. In fact, I've gone out of the way to avoid churchy folk in the heartland. Fundamentalist Christians dominate the spiritual discourse here. The Bible Belt cinches up into southern Indiana in a small narrow loop and preachers erect billboards on the highway

that scream, “ONLY ONE WAY TO HEAVEN!”

I hate the fear tactics. Even on Eli’s blog, I can’t bring myself to send prayers like the scores and scores of other visitors. Instead I post religiously neutral messages like, “We’re sending our most positive vibes!” Once, though, I even send prayers, which doesn’t make me feel bad at all. Kuper wouldn’t blame me. “Placebos work,” he would’ve said.

ON ELI’S FIFTH DAY in the hospital, Laurie sees the eyelashes of her son stir. She’s been speaking to him constantly since the accident, trying to coax Eli out of his coma with her voice so he could open his eyes and look at her.

“I know he can hear me,” Laurie says. “I know he can recognize my voice.” But we all have doubts. We all suspect — with infinite understanding — that Laurie is engaging in heavy duty wish-fulfillment.

But Eli’s eyes flutter and open, and Laurie cries out, “Figgy!”

Eli turns his head toward Laurie and attempts to reach over and hug her, but the tubes get in the way. Still his eyes water over and the look on his face cries out to her. “Mom.”

Laurie writes in the blog: “Keep the Love Coming!”

A FEW DAYS LATER, Eli is moved out of intensive care. To celebrate, my wife bakes a peach pie and we pack Lincoln and his sister in the Highlander and head 50 miles to the hospital to deliver pie and love. Although color has returned to Eli’s cheeks and his breathing is deep and regular, he still doesn’t look great. All through the visit, he sleeps.

“Resting,” Laurie assures us. “He’s been really tired.”

The doctors still urge caution. They warn that Eli might never walk again. They say he might never talk again either. Nor read. They say the lobes of his brain have incurred severe damage, and they flash Figgy and Laurie pictures of other tragic boys who never recovered from brain trauma.

But then the tubes are removed from his throat and Eli begins to speak. And then Eli starts to read. A week after that, Eli walks across the floor like Lazarus. Soon he’s sneaking down the hall to play video games with friends who come to visit him. Still, the doctors voice caution. They predict another half-year stay in the hospital — months of speech and occupational and physical therapy. But then, in late October, a month to the day that he got hit in the parking lot, Eli comes home. He trick-or-treats on our street. A week later, Laurie drives him to Deer Meadow for his first day back at school.

“NOTHING’S SO DEMOCRATIC as a traffic jam,” I used to quip when I was living in New York City. All those Wall Street cats cruising through Manhattan in black stretch limousines as long as city blocks — even the money men got trapped at rush hour on the West Side Highway. My friends and I laughed at their discomfort. Humans are moral animals, and we like a good equalizer.

Guilt’s another equalizer. It hits across all social classes and can’t be bought off. After the great news of Eli’s recovery, I started to have bad dreams, as if being reminded that no good miracle goes unpunished.

In one dream, I was driving Eli and Lincoln to the park. We got stopped at the bottom of a steep hill — a traffic jam — and I got out of the car and wandered up the road, leaving Eli and Lincoln inside. I remembered them at the top of the hill and ran down in slow motion. When I got to the car, the boys had disappeared. I sprinted back up the hill. Still no sign of them. Panic sizzled through my body. A colleague driving by offered me a lift, but instead of speeding down

the mountain, she turned her car around and inched down in reverse. Another traffic jam stopped us again. I shot out of the car and began to weep, which provoked a man on the road to smile at me. He knew I was to blame for the lost boys. He knew it was all my fault. The dream ended with me sprinting down the hill, shouting out Eli’s and Lincoln’s names.

WHERE DID ALL THIS LEAVE ME on my journey for answers? Not like Paul, knocked off his horse and blinded by the light. Nothing so dramatic. I wasn’t any less skeptical, but I found myself more open to belief. William James wrote about his “will to believe,” which he meant, perhaps, that believers often got more out of faith than skeptics got out of doubt. That despite our intellects — and despite any scientific evidence for a personal God — we believe because our emotions compel us to. Belief makes millions of people a little more confident, a little less scared, a bit more invested in the promise of now and the hope of a less anguished future.

MY BAD DREAMS ended in early December, and a week before Christmas, we got a holiday card from Laurie and Figgy Hardwick. The card featured a photo of Eli sporting a brown bomber jacket and a delightful smile. Snow fell softly in the background, settling on the boughs of cedars and pines. Snow also dusted Eli’s hair and lashes. His alert brown eyes looked straight at the viewer, radiating strength and joy.

“Merry Christmas” it said at the top of the card, and beneath the photo it said



I couldn’t stop looking at the picture of Eli and his lovely smile, his beautiful eyes. It took me a few moments before I saw the quote by Maya Angelou at the bottom of the card: “I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” □

ILLUSTRATION BY MARK MATCHO



**GREAT NEW JOB, BEAUTIFUL NEW HOME, HAPPY HORIZONS  
IN ONE OF AMERICA'S MOST SCENIC LANDSCAPES. THEN A  
CRASH, AND A QUANDARY. AN AMERICAN MORALITY TALE.**

BY ED COHEN

# **I REMEMBER A SCHOOL ASSEMBLY WHEN I WAS A KID. A MAN WAS BROUGHT IN WHO'D HAD A TRACHEOTOMY. HE HAD A HOLE CUT IN THE FRONT OF HIS THROAT. WHEN HE TALKED IT CAME OUT AS AN UNPLEASANT CROAKING SOUND, WHICH HE MADE, HE EXPLAINED, THROUGH SOME SORT OF BURPING ACTION THAT APPROXIMATED SPEECH.**

The point of the assembly was plain enough: This man had been a smoker. If you want to end up like him, smoke. I never did.

The image of the Croaking Smoker returned to me a few months ago when I sat in on Notre Dame Professor Tonia Hap Murphy's business law class. I was curious about a topic they were covering that day. Professor Murphy was talking about remedies for breach of contract and the difference between legal and moral obligations.

This brought us to what the PowerPoint slide on screen labeled as the "Current issue": people choosing to walk away from their mortgages.

Since the recession that began in late 2007, we've all heard about homes being foreclosed upon. A homeowner loses their job and can't pay the mortgage. The lender seizes the property. The residents are evicted.

"Walking away" is different. It's when homeowners voluntarily abandon their property, leaving the house to the lender and skipping out on the remaining debt.

Under normal circumstances the bank may do fine. It can sell the house, and the combination of the sale proceeds, the buyer's forfeited down payment, and all the interest and principal the homeowner has paid over months or years may more than recoup the original loan amount.

But when housing values drop sharply, as they have the past four years, a homeowner can end up owning a house that is worth less than even the remaining balance on the loan. This is known as being "underwater." Millions of Americans today are in this situation.

I was one of them, I admitted to this room full of 18- to 22-year-olds — and wondered if they were looking at me as I had looked at the Croaking Smoker. *Don't end up like him.*

Except I hadn't come to class to plead "Don't do what I did." I tried to do the right thing. You can decide if I did.

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*Ed Cohen is a writer in the Mendoza College of Business.*

## **A NEW HOME**

It all started in early 2006 when I resigned my position of 10 years as associate editor of *Notre Dame Magazine* to become director of university communications and publications at the University of Nevada in Reno. The newly created position offered more money and more responsibility, along with the opportunity to live in one of the most beautiful places in the country.

Reno is situated along the Sierra Nevada mountain range in northern Nevada, less than an hour from Lake Tahoe. Incidentally, it's nowhere near Las Vegas, about 450 miles to the south.

One of the drawbacks of moving to Reno was the cost of housing, about triple that of dirt-cheap South Bend. But prices were considerably less than in the San Francisco Bay area, about a three-and-a-half-hour drive to the west. That comparatively low cost of living and the fact that Nevada has no state income tax had led many Californians to buy homes in Reno. Some bought for future retirement, some bought on speculation.

We were lucky, a real estate agent told us when we arrived in early 2006. Six months before, she said, it would have been hard to find *anything* to buy. Houses were being sold a few hours after listing. In dozens of new subdivisions with names like Granite Ridge and Mountaincrest, people were queuing up at dawn for the *right* to pay the asking price in the next "release" of homes.

I'd never witnessed anything like this. But it was easy to see why people were flocking here: the breathtaking mountain scenery, sunshine 300+ days a year, fresh new homes and shopping areas going up everywhere, no potholes, humidity, mosquitoes or traffic.

We ended up buying a relatively compact house in a tiny upscale subdivision called Talon Pointe. It was in the heart of a valley-size planned community called Somersett with an elegant fitness center and championship golf course.

I almost couldn't believe our luck. I'd looked at model homes in Talon Pointe several

weeks earlier and had fallen in love with one of them. But the prices were well beyond our means.

When my wife, Sue, an elementary school teacher, joined me from South Bend some weeks after my relocation, I took her by the models at Talon Pointe just for fun. As it turned out, the sale of one nearly completed home of the model I loved had fallen through. It was now being offered for tens of thousands of dollars less. The builder also was offering cut-rate financing and would pay all closing costs.

The price was still at the outer limits of our preapproved range, but I figured I was bound to get some kind of raise in a year. Sue, too. To keep pace with the state's population explosion, Nevada schools were paying modest "signing bonuses" to teachers relocating from out of state.

We also figured that if we felt squeezed financially we could always sell the house in a couple of years at a profit — possibly a large one, considering the bargain we were getting.

As I weighed the decision I kept hearing the words of a local resident I'd met at a charity dinner some weeks earlier: "You should always buy a new house because you're never going to be able to buy that house at that price again."

It was true, I thought, I'd never heard of a new house going down in value.

You can guess the rest of the story.

## **THE DEFATING BUBBLE**

When the housing bubble detonated, Nevada was ground zero. Foreclosures and the massive inventory of new houses sent prices into free fall. Real estate experts in Reno estimate that whenever the bottom comes, it will take 18 years for prices to recover to their 2005 peak, assuming price appreciation returns to its pre-bubble rate.

My anticipated salary raise never materialized. Worse, 18 months after I started at the university, a new administration eliminated my job and the division in which I worked. I was invited to stay on in a different department, but at a much lower salary. I accepted the extension while I continued to look for something permanent.

We took the precaution of putting our house up for sale at a break-even price, but that didn't draw any offers. Eventually we lowered the price until we would be losing money — still nothing. The Reno real-estate bubble was leaking value at an accelerating rate.

I could have stayed longer in my temporary position, but I opted to “invest in myself” and apply for admission into a new master’s degree program on management of online communities at the University of Southern California’s famous Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism. I was accepted and enrolled at the beginning of 2008. Sue stayed in Reno teaching while I rented a room near campus in Los Angeles for the duration of the one-year program.

I graduated on schedule at the end of 2008 — right into the worst job market since the Great Depression. I couldn’t find anything, so I returned to Reno. I visited the second department for which I’d worked, and the director asked me to come back. I gratefully accepted while continuing to apply for positions related to my graduate study in online communities.

A year went by. I still couldn’t find anything in Reno or elsewhere. After a second contract extension I learned that my temporary position would end June 30, 2010. For the first time in my life I was facing indefinite unemployment.

Throughout all this we dutifully kept paying our \$2,000+-per-month mortgage payment. But we knew there was no way we could survive long on just my wife’s modest teacher’s salary and my temporary state unemployment benefits. Plus, now I had student loans to repay.

We looked into the Obama administration’s homeowner-assistance program. But

discounted interest rate, which was locked in for five years. We had just completed year four.

### TOUGH ADVICE

Everyone we talked to — Realtors, investment advisers, a lawyer friend specializing in bankruptcy — told us the same thing: Stop paying on your mortgage. As long as money was coming in, the bank was not going to consider modifying any terms, they said. Why would it? Everyone turned out to be correct.

About this same time, early 2010, an influential column appeared in *The New York Times Magazine* by Roger Lowenstein, an investment expert. Lowenstein said people should walk away from their underwater homes even if they could still afford the payments. They shouldn’t even feel guilty about doing so, he said, because businesses do it all the time.

He cited the investment bank Morgan Stanley, which had decided to stop making payments on five San Francisco office buildings. The company had purchased them at the height of the boom, and their value had plunged.

Another argument I heard went like this:

You’re the victim here. The price you paid for your house wouldn’t have been nearly so high if not for the irresponsible, easy-credit lending practices of the banks. They handed out so much money to so many unqualified buyers that it inflated prices. Your home shouldn’t have cost what it did. Why go

the nation. Counting “discouraged workers,” those who have given up looking, the rate was 22.3 percent in the third quarter of 2010, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

We couldn’t rent our house for anything close to our mortgage payment. And if we moved out we’d have to find a short-term rental because, in all likelihood, we were going to be leaving town.

So our choices were these: 1. Stay in the house without paying our mortgage until the bank foreclosed and evicted us. This might not happen for a year or more, we were told, because lenders prefer to have a property occupied and being maintained; or 2. Seek a short sale.

A short sale means the lender agrees to the sale of your house at the current market price, even when that price is less than what you owe on it. You, the homeowner, lose everything — your down payment (in our case it was essentially our life savings, about \$70,000) and everything you’ve put into the house. That includes all the accumulated interest and principal you’ve paid so far (for us, about \$100,000). The lender gets all of that plus the proceeds from the sale of the house. In return the lender forgives any remaining balance on the loan.

A short sale, we were told, is a bit less damaging to one’s credit than simply walking away and going through foreclosure. You also don’t have to worry about the lender obtaining a default judgment, which is a court order to repay the rest of the debt over time. As Professor Murphy noted in class, default judgments are not available to lenders in 10 states. In those states if a homeowner walks away from a mortgage, all the lender gets is the house. Nevada is not among those walk-away states. California, less than 10 miles from our house, is.

A short sale gave us one other good excuse to stop paying our mortgage. Here’s why:

We were told that lenders typically require a homeowner to contribute thousands of dollars more out of pocket to make a short sale go. The lender wants to see you contributing all you can. Knowing that, the agent with whom we listed our house suggested we stop paying on our mortgage immediately so we could begin saving up those thousands to hand over at closing.

### THE CHOICE

I couldn’t do it. In my mind it would be unethical to live in a house without paying for it. So Sue and I agreed that we would pay on



The Cohens enjoyed the West’s natural beauty from their home at 8712 Lynrock Circle in Reno, Nevada.

real estate values had fallen so far so fast in Reno that our property was too deep under water to qualify.

We contacted the lender to whom our mortgage had been sold, EverHome. The Florida-based bank wouldn’t consider any reduction in principal or lowering our already

on paying money to these companies responsible for that distortion?

We had a lot to think about.

First, it appeared almost certain that Sue and I would have to leave Reno. I couldn’t find any jobs in my field. Nevada’s unemployment rate was, and still is, the highest in

our mortgage, the full monthly amount, for as long as my job lasted. But no longer. This is what we explained in our “hardship letter” to the lender, and that’s what we did.

Our agent and our lawyer friend both said they admired my integrity, but they thought I should put my family’s welfare ahead of my sense of obligation to the lender. We’d mentioned to both of them that our daughter was getting married in a few months. Wouldn’t we rather give her some or all of our monthly mortgage payment than give it to the bank?

are settled and have a job you’ll want to buy a house?

The class had about 40 students. Four hands went up.

*Never smoke*, implores the Croaking Smoker. *And don’t buy a house either!*

Of course I hadn’t come to class to scare people off of homeownership. I was more interested in the ethical dimensions of the mortgage crisis. Such as the argument that we had been the victims of industrywide irresponsible lending practices. Cases are well documented.

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## **WE HAD EXPLAINED IT ALL IN PREVIOUS CALLS TO THEM AND IN OUR HARDSHIP LETTER. BUT WE WERE NOW DEALING WITH A DIFFERENT DEPARTMENT, THE ONE CONCERNED WITH DEADBEATS.**

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When we stopped paying, our formerly disinterested lender began calling, asking what the problem was. We had explained it all in previous calls to them and in our hardship letter. But we were now dealing with a different department, the one concerned with deadbeats.

After a couple of months and several price cuts we finally received an offer on the house — for \$249,000, exactly half of what we’d paid for it new four years earlier. The price didn’t matter to us. Unless someone had offered more than \$428,000 — the approximate amount we owed — we wouldn’t see a penny of it. So it was the lender’s call on accepting the offer.

As we’d been warned, EverHome demanded we kick in additional money: \$10,000 in cash and for us to sign a \$25,000 promissory note.

We counter-offered \$2,000 cash.

The bank settled for \$3,000.

There were more complications and demands and more sacrifices on our part. The sale wouldn’t close for several more months, by which time I’d returned to Notre Dame as a writer with the Mendoza College of Business. As I write this, we are renting a house near campus.

I gave Professor Murphy’s class a condensed version of our housing story and then asked for a show of hands from students. How many of you think that after you graduate and

Maybe the bank shouldn’t have approved us for so large a loan.

But I asked myself, did I know for certain that *our* particular lender had engaged in those practices? Would it be ethical of me to hold it against this company without knowing for sure? Would it be ethical to play judge and jury?

The broader issue, and the subject of Murphy’s lecture, was promise-keeping. As business analysts like Lowenstein advise, it sometimes makes perfect business sense to cut one’s losses, break a promise, and simply pay the penalty for breach of contract. But what if everyone viewed promises as strategically breakable?

What if you knew that anyone making a promise to you would be perpetually tallying the pluses and minuses of keeping that promise? Whenever the scales tipped so that the foreseeable profits or pleasures outweighed the penalty for renegeing, the other party would feel free to break that contract, promise or vow.

Murphy was asking essentially the same question now — what if promises were temporary things? No student raised a hand, so I volunteered.

“If you can no longer rely on promises,” I said, “then the whole system of trust would collapse.”

The U.S. housing industry collapsed under the weight of greed and irresponsible behavior. The decisions my wife and I made as we tried to resolve our mortgage difficulties had no restorative effect on the financial system, I am sure. But a society’s values are constructed of millions of individual actions and decisions. They collectively shape what we consider decent, responsible, respectable, normal. These standards are always in



Sue and Ed back in Indiana.

MATT CASHORE '94

flux. Like the hour hand on a clock, we don’t see them moving, but we see that they have changed over time. Maybe we pushed that trend line a quarter-tick in a positive direction.

We could have made out better *financially* by taking people’s advice and walking away. I feel like we made out better *ethically* going our chosen route. I’m not going to fish for a halo by asking which is worth more. It’s a false dichotomy anyway. Most of the time it’s easy to make a business or investment decision while keeping one’s ethics intact. Sometimes it’s not. Don’t be surprised if some day you find yourself on the ethical equivalent of a log in the water, stepping forward and back, searching for that elusive balance over something as mundane as real estate. □

# Internet fashion police skewer fantastically ugly styles

BY LIZ WARREN

**I**t's difficult to envision the soft-spoken Heather Cocks '99 as her generation's standard-bearer of the Dorothy Parker zinger-hurling legacy. With a cascade of auburn curls accenting gentle blue eyes, her cherubic appearance gives no hint to her celebrated talent for making pithy (if sometimes cruel) online observations about celebrities and their wretched fashion choices.



Heather Cocks: 'We were fortunate to have had a good idea at the right time.'

In a career spanning little more than a decade, Cocks, who turns 34 next month, has, among other things, appeared on television, co-authored three books, written for the online magazine *Television Without Pity*,

worked as a producer on two popular reality TV series — *Tough Enough* and *America's Next Top Model* — and been a regular Fashion Week contributor to *New York* magazine.

But it was *GoFugYourself.com*, a wickedly funny blog chronicling celebrity fashion gaffes and more, that made Cocks and writing partner Jessica Morgan a definite must-read to some 3.5 million cyber-fashionistas

a month.

"Fug" is defined by the pair as "a contraction of fantastically ugly." Celebrities are the targets; civilians are spared, says Cocks. The reasoning behind this philosophy is that not everyone has the means to dress well. But those who *do* — such as millionaires and rock-stars — owe it to the rest of us to set a good example.

Critiquing, or "fugging" as they call it, the duo's Go Fug Yourself website skewers everything from hideous awards-show fashions and unfortunate haircuts to botched plastic surgery and the

Church of Scientology. Cocks' and Morgan's irreverent style reads like a marriage of the late Mr. Blackwell (of worst dressed list fame) and *Saturday Night Live's* "Weekend Update."

Commenting on a dress she mostly liked, Cocks wrote, "I wish I could snip off the train . . . it looks like she had an unfortunate static cling moment with a tablecloth."

Another celeb's look received this catcall: "This is not so much Hot Hollywood Style as it is President of the Lanyard-Braiding and Butter-Churning Club."

Wry, satirical and replete with Hollywood insider allusions, GFY quickly built a cult following. To maintain anonymity, and also for fun, Cocks and Morgan crafted tongue-in-cheek online personas for themselves, complete with photos that bear no small resemblance to Shannen Doherty (in her *90210* days) and Joan Collins (circa *Dynasty*).

As is often the case with cult phenomena, GFY has had its share of detractors. In the site's infancy, a few nasty-grams directed at "The Fug Girls" suggested their anonymity was designed to mask the pair's obvious lack of attractiveness, among other things. Rather than ignore the barbs (or worse yet, engage) Cocks and Morgan created "Intern George Clooney," an imaginary Fug employee who mixes cocktails, answers readers' questions and "responds to our hate mail."

Reader interaction has been a big part of the growing popularity of the site in recent years. "Unfug it up" encourages readers to play fantasy stylists with a celebrity photo by suggesting improvements they would make to unflattering ensembles. Sometimes, the Fug Girls can't decide if an outfit is good or bad, so they'll put it to a reader vote in the column "Fug or Fab?"

GFY's annual "March Madness" tournament, pitting 64 badly dressed celebrities against each other in a progressive elimination event paralleling NCAA action, has drawn a huge following. But it's not all bad. In the regular feature "Well Played," the Fug Girls actually give kudos to celebrities.

Magazines, newspapers and television networks worldwide, ranging from *Time* magazine and *The Wall Street Journal* to *Entertainment Weekly* and Bravo TV have sung GFY's praises. Joan and Melissa Rivers have repeatedly included The Fug Girls in post-awards-show

fashion wrap-ups, with Melissa commenting dryly during one telecast, "They're meaner than we are!"

With the Internet having earned legitimacy as a source for news, the blog as a vehicle for commentary has claimed its rightful place alongside conventional print editorials and feature stories. "We were fortunate to have had a good idea at the right time and before anyone else had it," Cocks says modestly.

When Cocks moved to Los Angeles in 2003, she contacted the L.A.-based Morgan, with whom she'd become acquainted when both wrote for what is now *Television Without Pity*. The two quickly became good friends. The Go Fug Yourself site, says Cocks, began one Sunday in late June 2004. "We didn't set out to start a successful blog. It was born at the mall. We saw some movie posters, and everyone looked awful. We started riffing as a joke, to amuse ourselves and our friends. It started getting hits and attention. It wasn't that we chose fashion as much as fashion chose us."

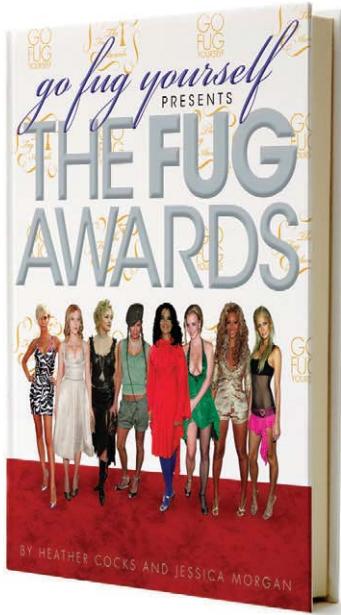
The site officially debuted on July 1, 2004. "I think we got lucky," echoes Jessica Morgan, Cocks' equally humble partner. "We were sort of first on the scene in terms of fashion police on the Internet."

As word spread, more and more fans logged on to commiserate with the now infamous "Fug Girls" as they aimed their rapier-style pen at calamitous couture wherever they found it.

Within two years, the enormous popularity of *GoFugYourself.com* helped Cocks and Morgan sell a proposal for *The Fug Awards*, a book spotlighting the best of the worst in celebrity fashion snafus and other egregious errors — such as tanning to excess and mangling for fashion certain body parts better left resting comfortably in a well-fitting bodice.

In the summer of 2006, the duo was at last flush enough, says Cocks, to "quit our day jobs and do this full time."

That was the same year Cocks and her former co-worker, Kevin Mock, were married. The two met in early 2003 on the set of the reality series *WWE Tough Enough*. Several months later both were working on *America's Next Top Model*, and they began dating. In June of 2009 the couple welcomed twin boys Dylan and Liam. "Now," Cocks says with a laugh, "I am *very* busy, as opposed to



just busy."

*The Fug Awards* was published in 2008. The success of that book paved the way for Cocks and Morgan to enter the young adult genre with their first novel, *Spoiled*, which has just been released. The hits just keep on coming. A second YA novel, *Messy*, is due out next year.

Most recently, *GoFugYourself.com* has polished its

appearance and expanded its reach into the social media milieu with a presence on both Twitter and Facebook. The proliferation of social media has had a dramatic impact, Cocks says. "It's easier than ever to have a link go viral. Retweets, Facebook postings . . . people can pass that stuff along in a more public way, beyond just emailing a funny link to all their friends."

The Fug Girls' live fashion tweets were a not-to-be-missed accent to last year's Olympic Games as well as the April wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton. (Those hats must have been asking for it.)

The old saw about luck being "when opportunity meets preparedness" couldn't be more apropos than when applied to Heather Cocks' career, as Cocks is nothing if not prepared for every project, according to those who know her. Agent Scott Hoffman describes her as possessing an "encyclopedic knowledge of pop culture," enabling her to "work references into the blog with ease." Ditto her writing partner, Morgan, who jokes that the two share "a mind meld" by way of explaining the seamlessness of the writing on GFY.

Karina Kogan, chief marketing officer of BUZZMEDIA, who shepherded the retooling of GFY last November, explains Cocks' success from a business standpoint. "When anyone can be a content creator," Kogan says "we take for granted how truly hard it is to write well and thus build a real editorial brand that people love and are loyal to. Heather is . . . funny, she's consistent and her voice is one that millions of women relate to and love."

For both Cocks and Morgan, that branding translates into a steady income stream from a host of Fortune 500 advertisers, a fact

about which Cocks remains incredulous. "We still pinch ourselves and say, 'What has happened in our lives that we're in this place?'"

Time, Cocks observes, has been their friend. "In 2004, blogs were just coming into their own as a source of information and opinion. People at that time still wanted bloggers to hew to the clichéd image of a slovenly pajama-clad loser writing bitter, ill-informed screeds." Now, she says, "People take blogs more seriously as an entity."

She also notes that credibility builds upon itself. "When we launched in 2004, image providers wouldn't license us their images — they seemed to think blogs were nothing but crazy fan sites. We always joke that we felt like Julia Roberts in *Pretty Woman*, when she showed up at the boutique with money to spend and they still wouldn't give her the time of day."

That all changed, she says, in the fall of 2005, when GFY was profiled on the front page of *The Wall Street Journal*. "Concurrently," Cocks adds, "blogs took on a life of their own, and we got an image license with a major provider about a month later." The license, with Getty Images, enables GFY, for a fee, to tap into a library of high quality, professional photos licensed for reproduction, and use them on the site.

"So much of my life has been a happy accident," says Cocks, although she credits much of her success to her family and upbringing. The youngest of three daughters, she grew up in Texas and England. Her mother, Kathleen Reed Cocks, a 1966 Saint Mary's graduate and vice-president of the auxiliary board at Sarasota Memorial Hospital was "a busy stay-at-home mom while she was raising us," Cocks says. Her sister Julie is a Georgetown grad. Her other sister, Alison Cocks Hamilton, is a 1991 ND alum. Coincidentally, both Alison and Heather were *Observer* editors-in-chief during their time at Notre Dame.

But Cocks credits her late father, Alan Cocks, a geophysicist for Texaco, with having the greatest influence on her professional life. "The opportunities he gave our family, and his quick-witted, arch sense of humor, really shaped who I am so profoundly," she says.

Sadly, her father died unexpectedly in April. While he won't be here to witness her future successes, he lived to see his grandsons and to read his daughter's first novel.

"I'm really grateful he got to see *Spoiled*," she says wistfully, "because I'm proud of it and I'm proud of him and in a lot of ways those two things are connected." □

## SHORT TAKE

# Conducting a music festival

BY CAROL SCHAAL '91 M.A.

**I**n September, baby Bella Rose Thompson will experience one of life's classic lessons: Music festivals can be awesome.

If the 8-month-old wails her dislike, she'll have plenty of years to change that opinion. Because a music festival is certain to be on her family's annual go-to list for the foreseeable future. And she can thank her father, uncle and great-uncle for that.

Bella's proud father Ryan Thompson '00, his older brother Eric, and their uncle, Scott, musicians all, make up RYET Productions. The company's sole business is the organization of the Head Jamz Music Festival, a Labor Day weekend fest on the banks of the Red River in Adams, Tennessee.

The genesis of RYET, and the festival it spawned, goes back to another life experience. Ryan and Eric, who grew up outside of Indianapolis, frequently attended nearby musical festivals.

"We got to experience live music all the time," says Ryan. "That kind of started my brother's and my passion for live music."

At some point post-college — perhaps for Ryan it was when his medical sales work at Merck became a "day-to-day grind" — the Thompsons began to toss around the idea of starting their own music festival.

Part of that talk, says Ryan, came about because of their disenchantment with how music festivals were changing. "The trend is toward more and more people," he says. "Festivals lost the intimacy that to me a music festival is all about."

In 2008, says Ryan, the trio's talk turned serious. "We began to ask, 'What do we need to do to make it happen?'"

With Ryan in Tennessee, Eric in Indiana and Scott in Texas, each playing in a band and with 55 years of music experience among them, and each feeling they had learned from their own festival-going experiences, they reached an agreement. "Let's go ahead and do it."

The following year, 2009, the Head Jamz Music Festival premiered.

From the start of RYET Productions, what Ryan calls "a virtual business" since most of its work is done via phone, the family organization pursued one vision: "We wanted those who come to the festival to have the ultimate experience."

To assure that, the Thompsons first focused on festival size and location. Rather than shoot for hundreds of thousands of people, they concentrated on keeping the festival small, wanting a community feel.

The choice of location was a response to festivals held in fields where, Ryan says, "there wasn't much else to do." Their chosen spot offers camping, an 18-hole disc golf course, and swimming and canoeing on the Red River. The planners also added such special events as morning yoga, light shows and glass-blowing demonstrations.

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Carol Schaal is managing editor of this magazine.



Ryan Thompson: 'I get to see stuff that is awesome.'

And, of course, music.

As the name implies, Head Jamz is a jam-based festival with an improvisational feel. Although he's too young to have been there, the 33-year-old Ryan hopes the festival hearkens back to the San Francisco scene of the late 1960s, with a Grateful Dead, Quicksilver Messenger Service, Led Zeppelin vibe.

Bands featured in the previous two years of the festival included the Emmitt-Nershi Band, with a country-bluegrass feel; New Mastersounds, a British funk group; and the Southern rock rumble of The Captain Midnight Band.

Ryan says choosing bands for the festival is one of the company owners' favorite tasks. "I get to see stuff that is awesome."

Awesome also might describe the amount of work required to put together a three-day event. The logistical checklist overseen by the Thompsons and a core group of 10 to 15 volunteers includes artist relations, booking, marketing, operations, web design, audio/video production, vending, sound/light production, security and hundreds of other details that can make the difference between a successful festival and disaster.

Disaster almost was on the agenda last year, when spring flooding put the festival location under about 50 feet of water. The campground owners, says Ryan, managed to repair all the buildings needed for the festival, so everything was in shape when 1,000 music-lovers arrived for the September jam.

Ryan says the "tons of work" paid off. "The response of the audience and crowd has been fantastic."

Reviewers have concurred. "Between the stellar performances, great people and vendors, location on the river, and surprisingly affordable price, you really can't go wrong," wrote Bryan Flanagan in the *Roving Festival Writer* webzine.

Future Head Jamz plans do not include a lot of audience growth. The goal is to top out in the 2,500 to 5,000 range, says Ryan. The RYET team does hope, however, to eventually earn enough to attract some acts they can't currently afford.

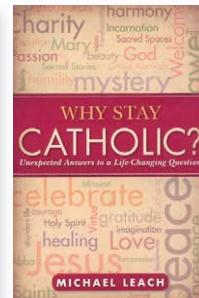
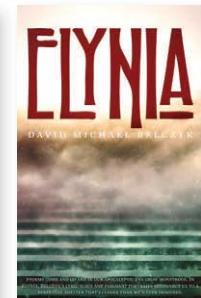
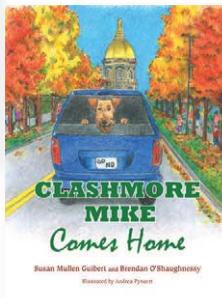
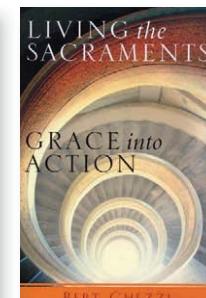
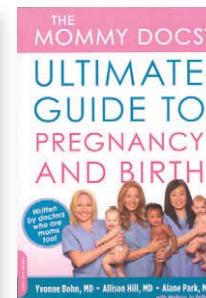
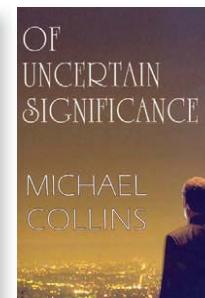
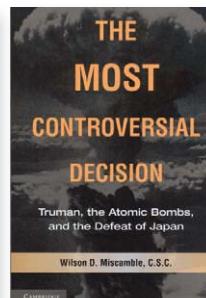
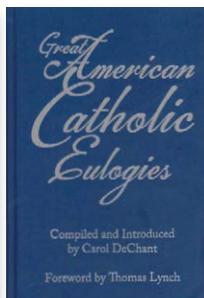
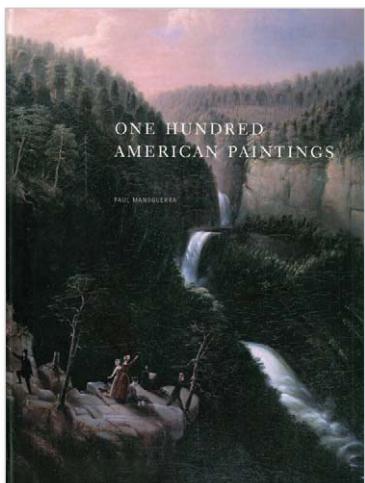
A continuation of the community vibe remains at the top of Ryan's wants. He and his wife, Gia, after all, always want Bella to feel at home. □

## Head Jamz Music Festival

Cornmeal, Donna and the Buffalo, Papadosio, The Ragbirds and The Twin Cats are among the groups slated for the 2011 Head Jamz Music Festival.

The third annual festival takes place Sept 2, 3 and 4 at the Red River Campground in Adams, Tennessee, about 30 miles north of Nashville. The campground offers RV and primitive camping spots, as well as canoeing trips and disc golf. Food, beverages, ice and firewood will be sold on-site during the festival.

See [headjamzfestival.com/](http://headjamzfestival.com/) for directions, ticket information and other festival details.



## CAFÉ CHOICE

**Living the Sacraments: Grace into Action**, *Bert Ghezzi '69Ph.D.* (Servant Books). Using scripture, writings of the saints and personal stories, the author offers ideas on how to “approach the sacraments with a renewed expectation that their graces will strengthen your life.” He presents the seven sacraments as sacred passages, “openings that lead us into God’s presence and unite our life to his.” Chapters end with questions for reflection and group discussion.

**Elynia**, *David Michael Belczek '03* (Dark Coast Press). The struggle for redemption, love and peace is played out in this novel-length poetic mosaic. The connected stories of characters over several generations, from the cobbler who sees his son wrongly arrested by a man whose shoes he shines to a waitress who secretly loves a man who atones for his past troubles by refurbishing a house, are brought together across time and place, uniting them in their common humanity.

**Why Stay Catholic? Unexpected Answers to a Life-Changing Question**, *Michael Leach* (Loyola Press). Ex-Catholics make up “the fastest growing religion in America,” says the author. While acknowledging the anger and frustration of those who have left the Church, he presents reasons to celebrate the Catholic faith, with its richness of ideas, people and places. Those profiled

here include ND alums Therese Borchard '94M.A., Father John Smyth '57 and Marybeth Christie Redmond '85.

**Of Uncertain Significance**, *Michael Collins '87, '91M.A.* (Corby Books). The internationally acclaimed author chose the name of the book after the medical term a surgeon had used when referring to a tumor discovered in his daughter's brain. Collins explores questions of the human condition in this novel written during his daughter's recovery. It offers, he says, “an uncertain journey toward meaning in a seemingly godless world.”

**Great American Catholic Eulogies**, *compiled and introduced by Carol DeChant* (ACTA Publications). The 50 eulogies presented here cover every era of American Catholic history, from colonial times to today. Generally based on written tributes, the collection includes two eulogies previously printed in this magazine: Father Robert F. Griffin, CSC, '49, '58M.A. by Luis R. Gamez '79 and Mother Katherine Drexel by Anthony Walton '82. Tributes also include Liz Christman by Melinda Henneberger '80 and Danny Thomas by Phil Donahue '57.

**The Mommy Docs' Ultimate Guide to Pregnancy and Birth**, *Yvonne Bohn, M.D., Allison Hill '91, M.D., Alana Park, M.D.*,

with *Melissa Jo Peltier* (Da Capo Lifelong Books). Between them the three obstetricians have delivered more than 10,000 babies. They have first-hand experience of pregnancy and birth. “We’d like this book to be a safe place for any mother-to-be to step out of the fear-mongering world and get solid information,” they write. Taking readers from before conception to after delivery, the docs offer medical advice, practical tips and personal stories.

**The Most Controversial Decision: Truman, the Atomic Bombs, and the Defeat of Japan**, *Wilson D. Miscamble, CSC, '77M.A., '80Ph.D., '87M.Div.* (Cambridge University Press). In a book that “accepts the complexity, the uncertainty, the sheer messiness of policy making,” the Notre Dame professor of history here tackles the debate about “the necessity of using these terrible weapons to force Japan’s defeat.” He then goes beyond historical analysis to discuss the morality of the decision to bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

**Girl's World: Twenty-one Sewing Projects to Make for Little Girls**, *Jennifer Paganelli '81* (Chronicle Books). The craft projects in this colorful book range from aprons, dresses and stuffed animals to bed canopies, pillows and headbands. From the simple to the complex, the projects include patterns, step-by-step

instructions, sizing charts and color photos. The author is the creator of the Sis Boom fabric line.

**Clashmore Mike Comes Home**, *Susan Mullen Guibert '87, '93M.A., and Brendan O'Shaughnessy '93, illustrated by Andrea Pynart* (Corby Books). Before the leprechaun, the Notre Dame mascot was an Irish terrier, originally given as a gift to Knute Rockne. This adventure story follows Mikey, a modern-day Irish terrier who comes to campus for a tailgate party with his human family. When he gets separated from them, Mikey explores Notre Dame and discovers the true story of Clashmore Mike. Designed for ages 4 to 10. For more information see [ndclashmoremike.com/](http://ndclashmoremike.com/).

**One Hundred American Paintings**, *Paul Manoguerra '92* (Georgia Museum of Art). A catalogue of the Georgia Museum of Art's permanent collection, this survey of American art offers both full-color plates of each painting as well as essays about the artists and their work. Eras covered include Hudson River school landscapes, American impressionism and Southern folk art. Manoguerra is chief curator and curator of American art at the museum.

Compiled by Carol Schaal '91M.A.  
Visit [magazine.nd.edu](http://magazine.nd.edu) for Choices in Brief.

# A very unlikely story

BY JEREMY D. BONFIGLIO

**I**t takes the sound of a spoon bouncing off the restaurant table top before Gus Zuehlke realizes he has been pounding his fist into the laminate.

"Well," he says, a bit embarrassed, "I guess you can tell I'm pretty passionate about this."

This is Uganda, the central African country Zuehlke '80 knew little about until he met Father Robert Binta, the chaplain for the Catholic members of Uganda's Parliament, who was studying at Notre Dame in 2002 as part of an exchange program. Binta spent much of his off-campus time at Saint Bavo Catholic Church in Mishawaka, Indiana, where Zuehlke has served as a catechist for more than 20 years.

"I remember walking into my office one day, and he was just sitting in front of my computer, weeping," Zuehlke says. "He had found a story on the Internet about a woman and her baby who had been caught by rebels outside of a displacement camp. They were hacked to death with machetes."

It was there that Binta told Zuehlke about the two-decades-old war between the Lord's Resistance Army, the rebel militia that kidnapped young children to become forced soldiers or sex slaves, and the Ugandan government, which attempted to protect its citizens by moving more than 2 million people off their land and into IDPs, or Internally Displaced Persons camps.

"We wiped tears from our eyes, and we sat and prayed that day," Zuehlke says, "but . . . I certainly had no idea where this would lead me."

When Father Binta returned to Zuehlke's office a year later he came with a proposition. He wanted Zuehlke to lead the Catholic members of the Ugandan Parliament in an



MATT CASHORE '94

Zuehlke: 'Everyone kept asking me what I was doing there, and in some ways I didn't even know.'

Advent retreat.

"I didn't think it was very practical," says Zuehlke, who nonetheless felt compelled to go. And once he made up his mind, and received enough donations for the plane ticket, he knew he had to learn more about the suffering of Uganda's war-torn north.

"My experience of suffering was quite limited," Zuehlke says, adding, "So I insisted we go to Gulu, and the first site I saw was the camp. I had seen poverty before, but not the effects of poverty and war working together."

Zuehlke was struck by the unsanitary conditions, the isolation, and the stories of loss and survival. He also was awe-struck at the people of faith there. He met and befriended Gulu's archbishop, John Baptist Odama, who would become a critical figure in negotiating a truce in July 2006, and he visited the scores of commuter children who left their villages each night to sleep in the city shelter so they wouldn't be abducted or killed by the rebels.

"Everyone kept asking me what I was doing there, and in some ways I didn't even know," Zuehlke says of his 2003 visit, adding, "but I had to see this before I gave my retreat."

When Zuehlke did speak to parliament, he gave the retreat he had intended before visiting Gulu. What the members of parliament noticed, however, was that he was willing to visit Gulu at all.

Zuehlke next saw Archbishop Odama on the Notre Dame campus at a 2004 meeting for Catholic Relief Services at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. The archbishop, says Zuehlke, told him that, as a result of the retreat he gave to parliament, "The government paid a lot more attention to us in Gulu, and things are getting better."

Zuehlke says he soon began thinking about a way to connect the camps, which he visited again and again. No land-line phones existed in that part of Uganda, and cell phone capability was spotty at best.

He enlisted Ted Pethick, the head of Navigator Computer Systems of Indiana, and Jerry

Vickers, the information technology manager for the Dowagiac, Michigan-based Wolverine Mutual Insurance Co., to help devise a system that required little power, could be linked by satellite, and would use portable computers with digital camcorders and Internet phones.

And so the technology-based nonprofit BOSCO — Battery Operated Systems of Community Outreach — was born.

BOSCO teamed with Mark Summer, co-founder of Inveneo, who developed the solar-powered system that would become essential to the project's 2007 launch, since no power grid exists in northern Uganda. Over the past four years, BOSCO has installed solar panels for power, and satellite antennas for high-speed wireless Internet to create a rural computer network that connects Catholic churches, clinics and schools in northern Uganda with each other and the rest of the world. The network, which is used for everything from teacher training to communicating with potential donors, started with six displacement camps and has since expanded to 22 locations and counting.

In addition to a volunteer board in South Bend, the company now has a staff on the ground in Uganda. Notre Dame funds an internship program where a student works with BOSCO-Uganda over a period of 10 weeks.

The project serves more than 100,000 people, has been embraced by the Ugandan government and credited by the international community for improving education, economics, human rights documentation, health care and rural development in the communities it serves. Last year it was awarded the Breaking Borders prize sponsored by Google and Global Voices, which honors "outstanding web projects initiated by individuals or groups that demonstrate courage, energy and resourcefulness in using the Internet to promote freedom of expression."

"People have asked me, 'Why computers? Why not food or clean water instead?'" Zuehlke says. "That can change one thing, but this, this can change everything." □

Jeremy D. Bonfiglio is a South Bend-based writer and a frequent contributor to this magazine.

Hollywood actor **William Mapother '87**, who is best known for his role as Ethan Rom in the popular ABC series *Lost*, stars in the independent film *Another Earth*, slated for release in July. He also co-stars in the soon-to-be-released *A Warrior's Heart* and in *FDR: American Badass*. In addition to his acting career, Mapother is a founding partner of Slated.com, a film industry technology firm that developed a scheduling and ticketing program for festivals. . . . **Nicole Farmer Hurd '92**, the founder and executive director of the National College Advising Corps, was recently featured on NBC *Nightly News with Brian Williams* in the broadcast's "Making a Difference" segment. The story profiled a number of high school students from Charlotte, North Carolina, and a National College Advising Corps adviser at the school. The goal of the program is to raise college enrollment and completion rates among low-income, first-generation college students. . . . Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel has named **Evelyn Diaz '92** as commissioner of the city's Department of Family and Support Services. Formerly, Diaz served as deputy chief of staff for former mayor Richard M. Daley. Most recently Diaz has been CEO of the Chicago Workforce Investment Council, which works to improve workforce development programs. . . . Fox News personality Glenn Beck nominated **Andrew Napolitano '75J.D.**, a Fox News judicial analyst and former New Jersey superior court judge, as the man he'd like to see succeed him. Napolitano hosts the Fox Business talk show *Freedom Watch*. . . . **Jimmy Brogan '70**, former chief writer on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, played the role of "the minister" in the hit comedy film *Bridesmaids*. . . . **Emerson Spartz '09**, founder of the popular Harry Potter fan website mugglenet.com, has been sued by a 17-year-old business partner over ownership rights to the celebrity gossip and trivia twitter account @OMGFACTS. According to the suit, Spartz agreed to develop the account, "taking it to the next level," but in the process the plaintiff alleges Spartz deceived him into turning over rights to the account, which has more than 300,000 followers. The Notre Dame grad says his company, Spartz, Inc., has constructed a popular OMGFACTS website and YouTube channel as well as writing nearly every tweet since February 2010. . . . Indiana Congressman **Joe Donnelly '77, '81J.D.** announced his candidacy for the U.S. Senate seat currently held by Richard Lugar. The Indiana Democrat decided to seek the Senate seat after the boundaries of his congressional district were redrawn, putting him, he believes, at a disadvantage. . . . Former Bengal Bouts champion **Mike Lee '10**, who was featured in *ESPN The Magazine* in March, appeared on ESPN2's "Friday Night Fights" in a bout from the Mandalay Bay Resort in Las Vegas, which he won. . . . Another pro boxer, the NFL's Baltimore Ravens safety and former Notre Dame All-American **Tom Zbikowski '07**, was briefly suspended by the Chickasaw Nation Boxing Commission when he initially had a false-positive test for marijuana use after a bout at the tribe's WinStar Casino in Oklahoma. A more comprehensive test cleared Zbikowski's reputation, and he was quickly reinstated. The pro football player, who has a 4-0 pro fight record, had won a first-round knockout decision at the casino. . . . **Tim Thayer '10**, another former Bengal Bouts champion, won the New York

Golden Gloves 152 lb. weight class sub-novice title this year. In the process, Thayer raised money "walkathon-style," seeking sponsors for Partners in Health, a nongovernmental organization that provides health care for the poor, primarily in Haiti. . . .

**Patrick Creadon '89** directed an episode of the NBC murder mystery series *Law and Order: SVU*. The episode, entitled "Bombshell," aired on March 23. . . . **John M. Baumer '90**, a partner with the equity firm Leonard Green & Partners, has joined the board of directors of Rite Aid Corporation. . . . **Keith Manville '66**, the former superintendent of schools in Saugus, Massachusetts, was recently named chairman of the board of the Custom House Maritime Museum in Newburyport, Massachusetts. . . . **Lieutenant Commander Daniel W. Cook '96** was awarded the Society of American Military Engineers' 2010 Morell Medal, recognizing the naval officer's leadership in Afghanistan, constructing more than 375 projects, including two large airfields, 28 deep aquifer water wells, several bridges and helicopter landing zones. . . . At the University of Mississippi's commencement this year **Beth Ann Fennelly '93**, who directs the Ole Miss creative writing program, was presented the university's Outstanding Teacher in the College of Liberal Arts award. . . . **Terry Horan '05MBA** was recently named president and CEO of Robert Bosch Tool Corporation. . . . **Scott Rodgers '10**, who was an All-American goalie on Notre Dame's lacrosse team and now plays pro lacrosse with the outdoor MLL Toronto Nationals and the indoor NLL Minnesota Swarm, recently signed an endorsement deal with lacrosse equipment company Brine. . . . **Daniel Deziel '75** has been named chairperson of the Rush Medical College Department of General Surgery. . . . **Bill Corrigan '81** has been named to the board of directors of Old Newsboys Day, a St. Louis, Missouri, organization that raises funds for 250 area children's charities. . . . **Kenneth Meyer '66**, retired chairman and CEO of Lincoln Capital Management Co., donated \$10 million to the University to fund fellowships for the MBA program. . . . **Hubert "Hub" Schlafly '41**, the co-inventor of the teleprompter speech aid, died in April at the age of 91. Schlafly also developed the first "pay per view" system for cable TV. . . . Notre Dame football great **Jim Seymour '69**, who was a favorite target of quarterback **Terry Hanratty '69** on the 1966 national championship team, died in March in suburban Chicago. . . . Domers go the extra mile for one another, quite literally. Just before Christmas break last year, **Michael Hogan '11** was involved in a car accident on I-75, south of Toledo. Fortunately, no one was seriously injured, but when he arrived home in North Carolina Hogan realized a laptop in his care with research data belonging to one of his professors apparently had been ejected through a shattered window. In an act of desperation, Hogan contacted the Notre Dame Club of Toledo and asked if any ND alums living near the accident scene could check the crash site. **Laurae Rettig '04** and a friend took on the challenge and amazingly found the missing laptop intact at the bottom of a 20-foot ditch near mile marker 186.



## Summer's book

BY JOHN NAGY

TWO SUMMERS AGO, with pitiless premeditation, I threw open the windows of the bedroom across the hall and tortured my children, leading them by their trusting hands toward Death, their screams rising heavenward in an oblation of terror.

I was reading to them. The instrument of my cruelty was Ray Bradbury's *Dandelion Wine*.

Summer, 1928. Lavinia Nebbs, young and headstrong, returning home from the Charlie Chaplin picture show at Green Town's Elite Theater, drops off her friends, defies their warnings that the Lonely One is afoot and heads in ink-dark night to the teeth of the town ravine. Across the deep divide, down 113 steps, over a bridge and up the other side lies home, safety.

John Nagy is an associate editor of this magazine.

Bradbury, her Virgil, who saw his first film — Lon Chaney's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* — at age 3 in the real-life Elite at 125 N. Genesee Street, Waukegan, Illinois, crouched as if in nearby elmshadow to capture Lavinia's fright with the filmmaker's eye and ear.

The crickets were *listening*. The night was listening to *her*. For a change, all of the far summer-night meadows and close summer-night trees . . . were listening to Lavinia Nebbs' heart. And perhaps a thousand miles away across locomotive-lonely country, in an empty way station, a single traveler reading a dim newspaper under a solitary naked bulb, might raise up his head, listen, and think, What's that? and decide, Only a woodchuck, surely, beating

on a hollow log. But it was Lavinia Nebbs. It was most surely the heart of Lavinia Nebbs.

And it was the pounding hearts of my three oldest children, too, when Lavinia, her senses surrendered to the surreal, locks and bolts her front door and behind her in the living room someone clears his throat.

Snap! I shut the book. Time for bed. Cue screams of terror . . . and irritation and disbelief. Another 24 hours before story time with Ray Bradbury would continue.

My smile couldn't have been any bigger, to borrow again from Bradbury, than "the smile of the Reaper taking his fee."

Of course, we didn't stop there. My wife wouldn't stand for it. Though she wasn't present at its creation, she had become part of the ritual: The summertime

reading of *Dandelion Wine*. My own ritual that began when I was 12, the same age as Douglas Spaulding, the boy-antihero of Bradbury's autobiographical fantasy.

Douglas, toeing the outer edges of childhood, marks his life with ritual. Summer doesn't start with solstice and end with equinox, but begins with the last howling June explosion of children out the schoolhouse door. He spends the night in his grandparent's cupola bedroom and wakes, "a whole summer ahead to cross off the calendar, day by day." Standing at the open window moments before dawn, he scans treetops, breathes out street lights and, with magic in his fingers, orders Green Town awake and alive.

Later that morning another ritual, and a discovery. Picking fox grapes with Dad and Tom, his younger brother, in a forest outside town, Douglas discovers life in Tom's knuckles and the taste of his own warm blood. In the afternoon, a harvest of dandelions and a dime for every sack the boys deliver to his grandfather's press.

Dandelion wine. "The words were summer on the tongue," Bradbury writes.

The wine was summer caught and stoppered. And now that Douglas knew, he really knew he was alive, and moved turning through the world to touch and see it all, it was only right and proper that . . . some of this special vintage day would be sealed away for opening on a January day with snow falling fast and the sun unseen for weeks or months and perhaps some of the miracle by then forgotten and in need of renewal.

Douglas was my kind of kid: Curious and sincere, alert to a world suffused with invisible magic, open to everything but the best at nothing, and a heart like a wine cellar.

I almost missed out on his friendship. Reading the book was my mother's idea, and I, too, was toeing boyhood's outer edges. Suburban Elysium was losing its charm. Every chance to buckle up and see something new outside a car window, I took. We had TV, a big yard, kids around when they weren't at camp, a neighborhood swimming pool, unused league-soccer fields, bike paths and a manmade lake. But no trolley. No Main Street five-and-dime, no cupola bedrooms, no haunted house on the edge of town, no mystery, no adventure, no ravine. No ravine.

My schoolteacher mom was an endless supply of reading suggestions. But I

was older now than the kids she taught and therein lay my skepticism. Dad's endorsement helped. He was a wire-service writer who disappeared on a bus every morning with a book peeking out of his tote. But it was my mother, convinced of some need she found in my face, who wouldn't relent. *One chapter, just one chapter*, and she threatened to read it to me out loud!

Douglas, walking home after a late movie, sets his heart on a pair of Royal Crown Cream-Sponge Para Litefoot Tennis Shoes: "LIKE MENTHOL ON YOUR FEET!" The ad copy sang to Douglas, and to me.

"Find friends, ditch enemies! . . . Does the world run too fast? Want to catch up? Want to be alert, stay alert? Litefoot, then! Litefoot!"

I had to slip my subdivision life, and I needed the right pair of shoes to take me.

**M**ost covers I've seen for Bradbury's novel paean to summer feature a dandelion, and too often some idiot designer who clearly hasn't read a word of it chooses the white, cottony, see-you-next-year kind. But the deep golden-yellow paperback I found at a bookstore — *Bantam Books revised edition, 11<sup>th</sup> printing, 1982* — got it right. A blue-shirted lad in suspended knickers and newsboy cap stands in epiphany on a dandelion-carpeted corridor walled in by heat and the sun-baked tallgrass of high summer. Over one shoulder the branches of a thirsty willow fade into the thin outline of a grand, old, empty house.

I still have that copy and may ask to be buried with it. The back cover's missing; the front is a traveling companion. Page 91 has likewise declared independence from the cheap, mass-market binding but somehow stuck around for duty, tattered on its right edge.

Summer vacation began with a reading, often on a trip. Age 14, Cape Cod. Age 15, St. Maarten. Now I was getting somewhere. I read it every summer well into high school then put it away, thinking maybe the time had come to move on.

**A**s a boy, Bradbury had discovered magic as much inside the ancient tomes of literary incantations he found on the subterranean shelves of Waukegan's Carnegie Library as in the scent of crumbling endpapers and the dust on leathery covers. When he turned 12 — Douglas' age — a favorite uncle died at summer's end around the same time a carnival magician named Mr. Electroco touched his sword to Bradbury's tingling

head and shouted, "Live forever!" Days later he began writing and, he says, never stopped.

That was 1932. Bradbury was born in 1920 when Waukegan was a thriving Lake Michigan town flooding with immigrant labor from Italy and Eastern Europe. Ever the magic realist, he has long claimed to remember his own birth. But there's no doubt he was alert to the births and deaths around him: the first local radio broadcast, the final ride of Waukegan's last horse-drawn cab. Johns-Manville opened an asbestos plant, then a symbol of the city's vitality. But when the Depression hit, 1,000 Waukeganites lost their jobs in the first year. The city snuffed street lights to save money. In 1934, Bradbury's father, in search of stable employment, moved his family from Waukegan to Los Angeles, where Lon Chaney, the subject of the author's earliest boyhood fascination, had died just a few years before.

In Douglas Spaulding, Bradbury aligns his own awakening with the last year of Waukegan's prosperity. As Douglas marvels at life, he finds everyone trying to preserve it: His grandfather's wine; his brother's pencil-and-tablet tallies of summer joys and rituals; the neighbor who builds a happiness machine. The book itself is a bottle full of a place that no longer existed except in the memory of "the world's greatest living science fiction writer" as Green Town, Illinois.

Readers had visited Green Town before. In *The Martian Chronicles* (1950), desperate Martians use telepathy, hypnosis and nostalgia for hometowns like "Green Bluff, Illinois" to lure Captain John Black and his crew into believing they'd touched down in the happiest summers of their childhoods. Then they kill them. Later, in a pair of October novels, *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (1962) and *The Halloween Tree* (1972), Green Town boys conquer Death with sacrificial courage and laughter.

But in *Dandelion Wine* (1957), Douglas confronts death, unstoppable, in life's high season. The elderly leave the young with final gifts and depart. Lavinia Nebbs meets the Lonely One. Douglas' best friend moves away. And Douglas himself, consumed by deadly fever, must concede that summer cannot last forever, lest it simply finish him off.

**N**one of that explains why I picked up summer's book and revived the ritual with my children. Maybe it's that my oldest, a boy then on the cusp of 9, was already reading ahead of his father's nightly curriculum and I sensed somewhere a cupola window slowly shutting. Maybe it was the way

Bradbury could write even horror and death with genuine lyrical joy. Or maybe it's that I felt myself too far from a friend and needed to share him with others as someone who had become a part of me.

All I know is, it was a hell of a lot of fun. You can't read Bradbury without feeling and flair. *Dandelion Wine* is no children's book, but the kids were right there with Doug and John Huff and Charlie Woodman, sitting at Colonel Freeleigh's feet on the Street where all the Old People live, waiting for the story.

Some write the book off as less interesting to serious readers than Bradbury's science fiction, unworthy of *Fahrenheit 451*'s place on the occasional American literature syllabus. Bradbury, who turns 91 in August, insists he is no science-fiction writer. He lost that battle with fans, librarians and publishing-house catalogers long ago. But perhaps it's fair to say that he built the bridge into the genre from the canons of American literature. He

reveres Walt Whitman. Reading Bradbury, it's as if the old man's eye and fire were reincarnated inside the plain house on Waukegan's St. James Street.

Whitman had sung young America's poetic present, through construction and expansion, war and rebirth. Bradbury, born a century after his literary tutor into a world of Civil War cemeteries, courthouse clocks, streetcars and circus sideshows, composed unanticipated prose melodies about its past and its future that converge in Green Town, Illinois, in summer, 1928.

In anticipation of the ritual, my family and I paid a visit to Waukegan in April, a most un-Bradbury month. Under brindled stratus, a photocopy of an old walking tour passing from hand to hand, we stood outside the Carnegie Library's abandoned husk, and trudged up and down Genesee Street. We ate at the Green Town Tavern, which apart

from its name made surprisingly little use of Bradbury's legacy on its walls and menu. At the "new" public library, Elizabeth Stearns told us about interviewing her favorite son of Waukegan. "He's childlike in his enthusiasm for life and people, and that makes him utterly charming," she said. And yet: "He likes to run his hand down death."

Then we stood at the edge of the ravine. Or, rather, I stood. My children sailed past me down the path of what is now Ray Bradbury Park, toward the footbridge at its bottom while I, feeling something like the Lonely One, counted the uneven stone steps on the steeper side and imagined Lavinia Nebbs half-way down, suffocating in cold panic.

Racing loud and wild along the sodden, greening flats, mud on their sneakers, the children made their breathless way from one end of the ravine to the other. I cleared my throat. The ritual was no longer my own. □

## Magical metamorphosis

BY CHRISTINA PESOLI '91 J.D.

THE STARTING GUN FIRED 25 YEARS AGO, beginning my personal marathon that is otherwise known as parenting. From the moment my son, Aaron, was born, I was faced with a dizzying array of decisions. Cloth or disposable? Crib or co-sleep? Comfort or cry it out? Just when I handled those issues, the game changed and I was confronted with a new set issues. How much TV is OK? What about spanking? Did I really have to wear Mom jeans now? I blinked again, and I was wrangling with issues like cars, curfews and colleges.

In the beginning I shot from the hip, but it didn't take long to figure out that making these decisions would be easier if I had a clear idea of my overarching parenting principles. Of course I loved my kid like crazy, but beyond that what was important to me? I settled on two things: connection and authority. Being connected to Aaron meant I was genuinely interested in really knowing who he was as a person. Having parental authority meant I didn't let him forget that I was the mom and he was the kid. Perhaps more important, I tried not to lose sight of that fact myself.

Christina Pesoli is a writer who lives in Austin, Texas. Her son, Aaron Terwey, just completed his second year at Notre Dame Law School.

When kids are little, it is easy to establish a connection. They count on you for so much, and your abilities compared to theirs are nothing short of magical. You can read! You can tie two unwieldy shoe laces into a bow! You can turn powdery flakes into delicious oatmeal! Anyone who has kids knows that the list of tasks parents have to do for a small child is endless. I found doing it with a light heart and a good spirit helped to transform the mundane chores of everyday life into something magical.

Some of my best memories with my kids are when we concocted silly routines to accompany the drudgery of daily life. Why just pack a lunch when you can see how many tangerines you can juggle before putting them in the lunch boxes? Why just drive to school when you can have a good game of slug bug, complete with elaborate and ever-changing rules, along the way?

As kids get older, they realize by degrees that you don't actually have magic powers. But by then your connection should be so firmly established that no one really notices or cares when this happens. Meanwhile, your parental authority will undergo a transformation as well. Your role as an authority figure gradually disappears, and by the time your kids reach adulthood their respect for your authority simply becomes respect for *you*.



At least that's what happened to me. Aaron and I were always lucky to have a strong connection. We have similar senses of humor and personalities that mix well. And once he reached the point where he realized I didn't have any actual magic powers, I had another trick up my sleeve that kept him impressed enough to shore up my position of authority in his view: I am a lawyer.

While it's true that lawyers are a dime a dozen, it nevertheless meant something to my son. It took extra years of school! It required really hard tests! You had to have a license! My status as a lawyer became the last little bit of magic I had in my son's eyes. About that same time I began to notice that Aaron had magic powers of his own. He could put all my CDs on my iPod! He could sync my Blackberry to my computer! He could mail-merge my Christmas card address list!

Because he was pretty much grown, I didn't really have a role of authority in his life anymore, and I was OK with that. But he still viewed me with a fair amount of respect — respect that had at least something to do with my profession. I was OK with that, too.

Then, a couple of years after graduating from college, Aaron decided to go to law school. Excellent, I thought to myself. He respects what I do so much he wants to follow in my footsteps.

I was accustomed to the notion of children's lives revolving in loosely overlapping circles over the lives of their parents, much like a Spirograph in slow motion. My dad was a literature professor at Saint Edward's University, which is where I ended up attending college — and I majored in literature, too, even taking classes from him. Years later, the Spirograph circled around again, and I found myself teaching a writing course as an adjunct professor at that same college. My dad had gone to Notre Dame. Decades after he had graduated, that's where I attended law school. My mom founded a Montessori school that my brothers and sisters attended. A generation later, my children and their cousins went there, too. In short, Aaron's decision to go to law school felt both flattering and familiar.

As he studied for the LSAT, he turned to me frequently with questions. After he got his score, he asked for my opinion on different law schools. He bounced topics off me for the personal essay he needed to write to include with his applications. He seemed to have more respect for me than ever.

I couldn't wait for him to start law school. I was sure that with all of the trials and tribulations a first-year law student faced, he would seek my counsel and respect my input more than ever. And at first I was right. At the beginning of the semester, we talked about his different classes, his professors and his strategies for managing his work load.

But a few weeks into the semester something changed. He was working harder than ever, going to the library early in the morning and staying until late at night. I had never seen him take to something like this before. Every so often when he would get a couple of seconds, he would call to check in. But he was so totally immersed in his classes that he would want to talk about the cases he was studying or different legal theories.

"Hey, Mom. Do you remember the *Sanyo v. Arista* case from Civil Procedure?" he asked one time.

"Um, no, I don't think so. What was it about?" I responded.

"Oh, wait. Never mind. It was decided in 2003 — that was way after you graduated."

Apparently, a lot of cases had been reported in the two decades since I had started law school. To make matters worse, when one of his professors did reach back into yesteryear and dust off an ancient relic of case law that was around when I attended Ye Olde Law School, I didn't recognize the case names, much less remember the issues or holdings.

This was getting embarrassing. I came to dread these calls and started "accidentally" not making it to the phone in time to catch his calls before they rolled to voice mail. It wasn't that I didn't want to talk to Aaron. I just wasn't thrilled at being stripped of the last vestige of respect my son had for me. I thought his studying law would give us a lot in common, but instead it was highlighting some big differences. Differences like age, memory capacity and . . . what was the third one I was going to mention?

Law school consumed his every thought. Instead of music, his iPod was loaded with course review materials — and he actually listened to them. My accidentally knocking over his sister's glass of orange juice wasn't just a spill to clean up, there were facts to analyze, law to apply and liability to determine. "There are no accidents. Someone is always negligent," he was now fond of saying.

His class notes were meticulously organized and cross-tabulated with his textbooks. My boyfriend Clint, also a lawyer, and I tried to be patient with him, but he was driving us both crazy. Clint decided Aaron was suffering from a unique form of obsessive compulsive disorder that was far more extreme than simply having a Type A personality. Thus, Clint coined his condition Type AT (after Aaron's first and last initials). Whatever you called it, the truth was undeniable. My previously laid-back son had become a law nerd.

Then it hit me. Aaron was a much better law student than I had ever been — and he was going to be a better lawyer, too. Sure, I liked law school and made good grades — but Aaron loved law school in a way I never did. That epiphany brought another realization: I had a tremendous amount of respect for the adult my son had become.

Somehow, we had come full circle. When Aaron was little, he thought I had magic powers and he had a lot of respect for me and my authority. Now, I was pretty sure it was Aaron who had the magic powers and I had tremendous respect for him as a person and for the authority he was developing in his area of study. While I can't say I planned it this way, it sure feels like this is a good place to accidentally end up. But as Aaron would say, there are no accidents. □





## The ancient mariner over by the punch bowl

BY PAUL R. HUNDT '60

IN MY EXTENDED FAMILY of cousins, in-laws, nieces and nephews, I have cultivated a reputation as a literary man, perhaps even as a bit of an eccentric. The football fanatics who comprise most of my male relations, and who fondly remember Senator Joe McCarthy, probably view me as an effete liberal snob. Among their wives and daughters, however, especially the New York City school teachers for whom linguist and political activist Noam Chomsky may be a wee bit conservative, I am viewed as slightly to the right of Louis XIV.

Maintaining this pose of a political and literary Janus has been a challenge over the years, but props help. Years ago, weary of the conformity in dress required of senior corporate executives, I rebelled in a modest way by adopting a slight flair: the bowtie. In our buttoned-down environment, a bowtie was about as “in your face” as I could safely get without being sent off to the corporate shrink.

Since I once had heard, “You’re not a gentleman if you can’t tie your own bowtie,” mine were not the 50 cent clip-ons favored

*Paul Hundt retired as vice president and general counsel for a then-Fortune 500 company in 1996. His essays previously have appeared in Palo Alto Review, ducts.org and this magazine.*

by my schoolteacher father throughout his career. And the clip-on suspenders that they implied would have been just too tacky. We were a Fortune 500 company, not a pawn shop.

I began to wear my self-tied bowties on family occasions as well, and adopted tweed jackets to complete the ensemble. As a result, I was excused from spending afternoons at family parties watching the Giants or, even worse, the Jets. I also avoided most invitations to engage in that very male ritual of standing in the freezing stadiums and parking lots of the New Jersey Meadowlands, trying to have a decent conversation while surrounded by thousands of howling drunks.

Now long retired, I continue to wear my professorial gear on every family occasion not requiring a bathing suit. It reconfirms

My imposture as a literary man has disadvantages as well. Come significant birthdays and other gift-giving events, I receive thousands of pages of challenging tomes. I am expected not only to send out thank-you notes but also to read these texts promptly and be prepared, bowtie and all, to comment learnedly at the next family gathering.

Thank God for book reviews! They are my CliffsNotes. I can be reasonably confident that my generous benefactors have never read the books themselves. In all likelihood, they have better spent their time perusing the *New York Post's* excellent sports page, from which I am happily emancipated. If I sense a quiz coming up, I Google a quick summary. Good preparation, as they said in law school, can usually carry the day, and those brief bumbling examinations can

I expect that Dante has a special quadrant in one of his circles in hell for lazy readers like me. I am yet to read books given to me 15 years ago with respectful requests for my opinion.

the impression I have so carefully nurtured and enables me to linger by the punch bowl in my own bubble amid heated discussions of Obama's place of birth and the latest New York City teachers' contract.

My interest in bowties has not been as isolating as the foregoing might suggest; I have on occasion been able to save a marriage that I am sure would have otherwise foundered before it even got started. Young grooms and their numerous groomsmen have dressed in office-casual for so long that even a regular necktie is now a challenge. They usually discover about two hours before the wedding that the formal monkey suits which bridezilla and her mother have selected do not come with clip-on bowties. When these young plebeians panic, a desperate call goes out for good ol' Uncle Paul to report to the male dressing area in the hotel. Pronto!

I can knot my own tie only when facing a mirror, and thus, as the groom and his fellows bounce up and down in their anxiety to get to the church on time, I must calmly stand behind each, reach around and do my thing. To look over their huge shoulders, see what I am doing in a mirror and not strangle the poor lugs in the process (I am often tempted), I usually need a step stool or a chair. The gratitude lasts for years — or at least until the divorce.

be finessed with little real danger of exposure.

Gift books are the bane of my reading life. Most people have no idea what really interests me, and as far as I am concerned *The Life and Political Philosophy of Gen. George McClellan*, *Sigmund Freud's Bathing Habits* and *The Complete Minor Poems of Aristotle*, at 700 to 900 pages each, are suitable only for holding down loose papers on a windowsill. But having been a good Catholic in my youth, there is always a subliminal fear that, if I do not read them cover to cover, Sister Consuela will be standing over me with her ruler ready to strike.

I expect that Dante has a special quadrant in one of his circles in hell for lazy readers like me. I am yet to read books given to me 15 years ago with respectful requests for my opinion. I think particularly of *The Power Broker* by Robert Caro, a well-regarded biography of Robert Moses, that man of many titles and much political power in the State of New York in the mid-20th century. Robert Moses may have been a significant figure in urban development but he is not *the* Moses, so why almost 1,000 pages?

In this case I must admit my problem is maternal; my mother, God rest her soul, couldn't stand Robert Moses — for what reason I was never able to ascertain. Family feuds have that Lamarckian quality of being

passed on to the next generation, and the thought of attempting more than 900 pages, no matter how well written, on someone my mother absolutely hated and who will ultimately be a minor figure in the history of the world is beyond me. Two hundred pages OK, but almost a thousand?

It's not that I have anything better to do, but why pick up such a word log and lug it around for a few weeks when I would much rather read, in the same amount of time, a P.D. James mystery about Adam Dalgleish, a Patrick O'Brian Aubrey/Maturin sea story, anything by Virginia Woolf or some George Eliot novel other than *Silas Marner*? They aren't as heavy, and they're more fun. There is just so much time in life and even less for well-intended reading assignments.

Since I can never throw a book away, I occasionally resort to regifting these screeds to free up space. The problem is that I have to be careful that there isn't an embarrassing inscription to me tucked away somewhere inside or that I am dumping the unread shovelful on its original giver. As a result, my shelves and my load of guilt grow ever more overloaded.

Sometimes I, too, give a book. I don't like to lose arguments and, when some young whippersnapper at a family event has smugly carried the day because I couldn't pull out an impressive citation for my position, I will in short order dispatch a few pounds of authoritative text, belatedly proving my point.

I also take real joy in the perverse pleasure of giving doorstops to those who have been so generous to me. When I am in a truly vengeful mood, I include an endorsement on the inside cover which glowingly recommends the snoozer and implies that I expect to discuss it in-depth when next we meet. Ah the satisfaction, if, having taken the precaution of reading one of those reviews in advance, I can engage in some extended and knowledgeable discussion with the poor soul about my generous and thoughtful gift.

Like the ancient mariner, I lurk by that punch bowl, getting on ever more intimate terms with its contents, peer around in my bowtie and tweed jacket as the party goes on about me, and look for my victim, who is desperately trying to avoid eye contact.

Fortunately, at the end of the evening, my wife is always in shape to drive home. □



# And so then I say

BY MARY ELLEN MCGINTY COLLINS

I GREW UP IN THE HOUSE AND THE TOWN in which my dad grew up, which meant that my family hosted dozens of visits from his six siblings through the years. Whether aunts and uncles came for an afternoon, a weekend or a week, they always made a trip to the cemetery to visit the family graves.

I often tagged along and watched them kneel down, bless themselves and pray quietly. Although I faked my way through the ritual, I never understood why we were praying to people we had known. Prayers were meant for God, Jesus, Mary, the Holy Ghost and the saints. My prayer arsenal consisted of the rote recitations we used for specific occasions — the Our Father, Hail Mary, Apostles' Creed, Act of Contrition, pre-meal blessing and the Guardian Angel prayer. It made no sense to direct any of these to a real person, especially a dead one.

I understood the concept of praying for someone who was sick, but if heaven were the perfect place we believed it to be, why did our relatives need prayers? I never asked the question, and no one thought to explain it to me.

By the time I was an adult, cemeteries no longer figured into my life. When friends and colleagues passed away, we remembered them in services that took place in churches, auditoriums and function rooms. These celebrations consisted more of warm recollections and funny stories than ritualistic prayers. And on the handful of occasions that a service included a trip to the gravesite, I skipped it.

Decades later when my father died, we did what most Catholic families do — held two days of visiting hours at a funeral home and a funeral Mass at the church, followed by a short service at the

cemetery chapel. When I learned that Mom had decided we wouldn't participate in the actual burial, relief temporarily replaced the sadness. I wanted no part of trying to pray while wrestling with the conflicting visions of a happy heavenly afterlife and the reality of a casket going into the ground.

I knew that prayers and cemetery visits wouldn't figure into my grieving process, but I didn't fully grasp how I had reconciled the loss until my husband and I were on our first trip to Africa. We stood in an open Land Rover, excited by the fact that we were speeding across a savannah that stretched to infinity in all directions, and I said silently, "Can you believe this, Dad? It looks exactly like *Wild Kingdom*." I wasn't thinking or saying, "Dad would love this." I was talking directly to him, as if he were a few yards above me and slightly behind my right shoulder. After all those years we spent watching Marlin Perkins' adventures on Sunday afternoons, I knew that, at that moment, Dad was seeing the real deal unfold in front of him, just as I was.

I don't talk to my father constantly, nor do I think he's glued to the minutiae of my life. I think he's watching over the shoulder of whichever one of us is experiencing something he would appreciate. He sees graduations and job successes, holiday dinners and family vacations. He watches with interest as my brother tries to train a spirited new dog, and he is certainly present whenever the Pittsburgh Steelers cause the family fans to yelp in anguish or delight.

The last time he was with me, my husband and I were attending a cabaret performance of a show about Mahalia Jackson. My father had always liked gospel music, and as the singer who played Mahalia blew the roof off the small venue, I said quietly, "Isn't she something, Dad?"

I saw and heard his response — that little laugh, the shake of the head and a "Boy, what a voice." I was nowhere near a cemetery, and I didn't utter a prayer. But it was a perfect holy moment for my dad and me. □

Mary Ellen Collins lives in St. Petersburg, Florida. She is a humor columnist for the consumer organization Angie's List, and her essays have appeared in *The Christian Science Monitor* and the *St. Petersburg Times*.

TWO BILLION  
WAYS TO SAY  
*thank you.*



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