Vassar Quarterly
SPRING 1990

Endangered Eden
Also:
Campus Rock Bands
Shakespearean Treasures
Trans-Atlantic Sail
"He who lends me (money)
I can repay; but for him
who teaches me there...is no pay."

Henry Noble MacCracken
Inaugural address, October 13, 1915

Patricia Johnson
Professor of Biology

"Got the earth right out our
front window." These words were
spoken by Buzz Aldrin, a medium-
sized male primate, doing some-
thing never done before in human
history. He was flying in outer
space in a vehicle representing
the latest achievement in human
technological creativity; he was
looking down upon a medium-
sized planet orbiting a middle-
aged star residing on the edge of a
medium-sized galaxy in an infinite
universe. He was there because he and his fellow humans
are beset with curiosity about every aspect of this infinite
universe.

At Vassar this compelling curiosity is alive in the faculty
as they add to the knowledge that humankind has amassed.
It is vibrantly alive in our students as they engage their
minds in the arts, the languages and the natural and social
sciences. But it often finds its most satisfying expression for
both faculty and students as they engage each other in
productive intellectual exchange. Shared intellectual en-
gagement between faculty and student is the essence of ex-
cellence that defines the Vassar liberal arts educational ex-
perience.

Your unrestricted gift to the Annual Fund
will enable Vassar to continue its enduring
tradition of excellence in teaching.
Anyway, after college I can always get a job washing dishes at a soda fountain.
What have you been doing since graduation?

Write to your class correspondent with your news.
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Photo by Timothy Watkins '90
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$7.5 Million for Art Center

Frances Lehman Loeb '28, a Vassar trustee and well-known civic and political figure in New York City, has given the college $7.5 million toward the construction of a new art center and the renovation of existing art facilities to be known as the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center.

Interviewed about her gift in January, Mrs. Loeb told the New York Times, "We needed an art center at Vassar, and also an endowment campaign. It seemed to me we had to start with a bang."

In announcing the gift, President Ferguson said: "It is particularly fitting that Frances Lehman Loeb's generosity to her alma mater should make possible a new center for art. All her life she has loved art, been inspired by it, and made it accessible to others. We at Vassar deeply appreciate this splendid gift, a center of architectural distinction that will proudly honor the name of one of our most devoted alumnae. The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center will appropriately honor a woman whose life of philanthropy and public service embodies the ideals of liberal learning and bestows luster on her college."

Designed by the architect Cesar Pelli, plans for the $13.6 million new art center, including the renovation of existing art facilities, are in the final stages. Construction is scheduled to begin in the spring of 1991. Mr. Pelli, whose major works include the expansion and renovation of New York's Museum of Modern Art and the World Financial Center and Winter Garden, has targeted the fall of 1993 for completion of the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center.

Mrs. Loeb, who was New York City Commissioner for the United Nations and the Consular Corps from 1966 to 1978, currently heads the board of the East Side International Community Center, an organization she founded in 1972 to benefit the diplomatic and local communities. She is on the executive committee of the Population Crisis Committee, and is a board member of New York Landmarks Conservancy, Inc., Children of Bellevue, Inc., and the United Nations Development Corp; she is also trustee-at-large, Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York.

Mrs. Loeb's gift is the largest ever bestowed on the college by a living individual.

Transferring Success

Colton Johnson, dean of studies and professor of English, has been awarded the 1989 Charles A. Dana Award for Pioneering Achievement in Higher Education along with Janet Rubensohn Lieberman '43, special assistant to the president at LaGuardia Community College in Queens.

The award, accompanied by a prize of $50,000, was for their work in developing the "Exploring Transfer" program, designed to introduce community college students to the academic and social environments of a four-year liberal arts school and to encourage them to continue their educations toward bachelor's degrees.

Since the first "Exploring Transfer" program in 1985, some 70 percent of participating students have transferred to four-year institutions or are planning to do so; nationally, fewer than 20 percent of community college students go on to earn bachelor's degrees. Among those students who transferred to Vassar itself, three of the five who graduated in 1989 were elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

The program's success has attracted almost a half-million dollars in corporate and foundation grants to support further development of the Vassar program and to extend it to six other carefully selected colleges around the country.

W.S.G.

Current Events and a Lecture on Communism

When Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Harrison Salisbury predicted in an October address at Vassar that the communist world of Eastern Europe would be gone in a year or two, many thought he was being extreme. The fall of the Communist party in Poland seemed revolution enough for one year. Yet in less time than it takes to publish
Students at Career Fair '89 on campus. A fair that focuses on careers in the not-for-profit world will be held in New York City, March 30, and will be open to both students and alums. More information below.

Making Connections

At Career Fair '89 (pictured above), some 400 students met with representatives (many of them alumnae/i) of companies and organizations in fields ranging from architecture to medicine to advertising and public relations.

The fair is one of a series of events planned by the Office of Career Development that brings students together with professionals in a variety of fields.

Planned for February was a program on careers in writing, and, on March 30, at Columbia University in New York City, a program on careers in the not-for-profit world is scheduled. At the latter, representatives from 40 to 50 employers will be on hand to talk with students and alumnae/i from nine colleges, including Vassar. For information, contact the Vassar Office of Career Development, 914/437-5285.

Students Close Main to Protest Moynihan

A 36-hour, student takeover of Main ended on February 15 after Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan resigned from Vassar's honorary Eleanor Roosevelt Chair and protest leaders, faced with slackening student support for their tactics, agreed to discuss their other demands with senior administrators.

Racist remarks allegedly made by the senator following his speech on campus January 29 were the catalyst for the takeover and protest rally, which at one point swelled to some 250 students in front of Main.

The protest leaders demanded a wide range of administrative actions, including the revocation of the Roosevelt Chair from Senator Moynihan, an apology from the administration for awarding him the chair, a “breakdown” of the expenditure of tuition

an issue of this magazine, the Berlin Wall was breached and effectively torn down; East Germany’s politburo and central committee resigned in disgrace and its chancellor, Erich Honecker, was under house arrest; Rumania’s hated ruler Ceausescu was overthrown and executed; a leading Czech dissident became his country’s president; in Hungary, the Communists essentially voted themselves out of existence.

Mr. Salisbury, whose address to a capacity town/gown crowd in the chapel was sponsored jointly by the local Unitarian Fellowship and several Vassar departments, noted that during his career he reported from Moscow at the end of Stalin’s rule, from Hanoi during the Vietnam War, and from Beijing during Mao’s long personal and political decay.

No one, he told his audience, thought that the dissolution of the communist world would come from within. That is why, he said, the continuing changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are so startling. “It is a recognition by the people of the communist world that their system simply does not work.”

While the path of change in Eastern Europe is, of course, unpredictable, Mr. Salisbury said, one thing is certain. “We all know that in the end, [Germany] is heading for reunification. Like it or not, Germany is going to be one again. It’s the end of the whole postwar European status quo. I think we are confronted with one of those moments in history in which a whole realignment and reorientation of foreign policy will ensue.”

In his speech, Mr. Salisbury contrasted the relatively peaceful process of reform in the Soviet bloc with the bloody repression meted out by the Chinese government. (That was before the conflicts in Rumania and Azerbaijan.)

Mr. Salisbury was in Beijing last June—with Tiananmen Square visible from his hotel room balcony—when Chinese troops massacred thousands of peacefully demonstrating students. In those few hours, Mr. Salisbury said, “the government blasted away its future, shooting down... all of the best and most advanced and most progressive elements in its society in an act of self-destruction such as we will not see again, I think, in our lifetime.”

The massacre, he said, resulted from “sheer power struggling to maintain itself, even though that power was clutched in the hands of men who were 85 or more years old.” Certain elements in the government wanted not only to crush the students, he said, but also to “derail Deng’s remarkable program, which had made so much progress in the last 10 years.”

Ultimately, he said, the repression will end. “China will resume her path after Deng’s death, and it will be a new path. It will not be the old, tawdry, routine, Stalinist economics. China will regain its momentum.”

Whether we look at the Soviet bloc or China, said Mr. Salisbury, “the communist world, which we’ve seen as a great enemy all these years, is almost gone—probably will be gone, can be gone, within a year or two. It was not military power alone which began to dissolve the communist world. It was our own basic philosophy, the ideas generated by Washington and Adams and Jefferson and Madison and Monroe, those brilliant men who founded this country. Those are the things that crept under the Iron Curtain, those are things which inspired those Chinese students.”

Less than four weeks after his talk, the New York Times reported that Czech opposition leaders—soon to become government officials—were rallying their supporters by quoting Jefferson on the virtues of liberty and democracy.

W.S.G.

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CAMPUS NOTEBOOK

dollars, an intercultural center, a full-time rabbi and provision for kosher dining facilities, complete campus accessibility for the disabled, a boycott of products sold in South Africa, the creation of a task force on racism, a college funded recycling program, student input on tenure decisions, child care for returning students, housing over breaks for international students, and the integration into the curriculum of issues of race, gender, and sexuality.

The student occupation began around 5:30 A.M. on February 14 when an unknown number of students blocked all entrances to Main's administrative offices (Main dormitory residents were allowed access to their rooms). The protestors left Main around 4:15 P.M. the next day. Discussions between administrators and students on unresolved issues were continuing as this edition went to press. W.S.G.

The Ups and Downs of a X-Country Runner

Tracy Nichols '91 ran her first cross-country race when a senior in high school. Two years later, a sophomore at Vassar, she finished in the top third at the 1988 NCAA Division III Nationals, placing 42nd among 133 runners.

Ms. Nichols qualified for that competition with her best time ever, 18:07. Last fall's regional qualifying race, however, was a personal disappointment, and she did not make it into national competition in 1989. Her performance, she says, was "a really bad one. You can always have a lot of 'what ifs.' I think that happens to every athlete. It was hard because I kind of expected to go this year."

But for Ms. Nichols, running is more than a competitive sport. It is, she says, "a way of expressing myself, a way of feeling strong, a kind of freedom. It's a nice feeling to know you can go out and run seven miles. It's really amazing." Outside of competition, she says, the rhythmical motion of running becomes almost meditative, helping her to examine problems, whatever they may be, from a more rational perspective.

Competition, she says, provides another satisfaction. "There's a different type of enjoyment in running with competition," she says, "The enjoyment is just in pushing myself to the absolute." For Ms. Nichols, that intense physical exertion carries a certain element of risk—a rare nerve disorder limits the amount of body heat she can dissipate through perspiration, she says. As a precaution against heatstroke, she drinks large quantities of water and races, even in cold weather, with wet hair and a water-soaked headband. At some races, she says, her teammates have offered their own preventative by putting ice cubes down her shirt.

Added to the physical demands of cross-country, Ms. Nichols says, is the mental challenge. "You have to do a lot of thinking. Running isn't a team sport, and a lot [of the strategy] is dependent on the situation."

Though a cross-country course is 3.1 miles long, the start, she says, is of crucial importance. "You have to be strategically smart so you don't get yourself blocked in, so that you don't go out too fast, so that you keep the leaders in sight and know where they are. I used to hang back a lot, especially when I first came as a freshman. But now that I have a better idea of the competition, who the good runners are, I know that I can go up and run with them."

And what about next year's nationals? "I really look forward to going back," she says.

W.S.G.

Rundown on Sports

Vassar defensive standout Nicole Pasternak '92 (light jersey) takes control of the ball in a match against Wesleyan. Vassar lost that contest 2-1 and was 3-12 on the season. Other season records for fall sports: Soccer: Men 5-5-3, Women 8-7-1; Tennis: Men 5-4, Women 7-2-1; Women's Volleyball 20-18. More detailed results were not available at press time.

Tracy Nichols '90, second runner from left, at the start of a race.
Turning Hardware into Software

Assistant professor of chemistry Stuart Belli (l) and physics major Deepak Kaul '92 created a computer simulation of a sophisticated instrument used by chemists.

Until recently, Vassar had only one polarograph—an expensive, sophisticated instrument of chemical analysis that is about the size of a typewriter. Now, thanks to assistant professor of chemistry Stuart Belli and physics major Deepak Kaul '92, additional polarographs at Vassar will cost just a few dollars each and will fit in a back pocket.

That is because Mr. Belli and Mr. Kaul have developed a computer simulation of polarography, a method of identifying and measuring electroactive substances in solution.

A polarograph, Mr. Belli explains, measures the amount of current produced when different voltages are applied to electrodes in solution. Because specific chemical compounds produce an electric current at specific known voltages, a flow of current at a given voltage reveals not only the type of compound present in the solution, but also its amount (more current, more compound). "So you get quantitative and qualitative information in the experiment," he says.

"If you've got metals in water, it can measure them at concentrations pretty much below any other means we have of detecting them. You can look at 20 different metals, including lead, zinc, copper, and cadmium."

Mr. Belli and Mr. Kaul's simulation, written on Hypercard software for Macintosh computers, replicates on a computer screen the switches and controls of an actual polarograph. Students set the desired polarograph profile—including the scan rate, drop time, pulse height, and initial and final potentials—by pointing and clicking a mouse. If a student is uncertain of a control's function, Mr. Belli says, he or she may use the mouse to call to the screen a detailed explanation—a user's manual is built in.

As the simulation can be copied onto individual floppy disks, each student could, in effect, carry around his or her own polarograph, using it at any Macintosh computer on campus.

After the computer runs the simulation, it plots a graph of the results—a polarogram—and creates a table of the substances and their concentrations, both of which can then be printed out on a single page, along with a record of the instrument settings for that run. After running a variety of simulations, Mr. Belli says, students develop a good sense of the functions of the various controls.

In addition to its educational utility—polarography is an important part of Chemical Analysis 362, a required course for chemistry majors—the program can collect data directly from an actual polarograph. Computerizing the collection of data offers several advantages over traditional methods. Normally, Mr. Belli says, polarograms are printed on a strip chart, and a ruler is used to approximate the values of specific points on the chart. With the polarograph program, however, the exact values of any point may be displayed instantly with a click of the mouse. Moreover, data collected by the computer can be saved as a computer file, then transferred to an electronic spreadsheet for arrangement into graphs and charts suitable for publication. "You have a lot more power to use the data by collecting it in the computer," says Mr. Belli.

"In the development of the simulation," Mr. Belli says, "Deepak and I learned a lot about the technique and the theory and how the different controls affect the experiment, a lot more than even sitting down with the simulation for an hour or two." Noting that the person who writes an educational program is often the one who best benefits from it, Mr. Belli says he would like to develop a program that would make it easy for students to assemble their own simulations of scientific instruments. "I think that would be a level up from having a simulation made for you to use.

"We don't want computers to take the place of lab work," Mr. Belli says. The polarograph simulation, he says, allows students to learn about the tool outside of the lab, so that in the lab they can concentrate on the chemistry, not the mechanics, of polarography.
Campus gigs and rehearsal space are scarce, but rock is a labor of love. Meet four student bands who keep the faith.

Photos and interviews by Wm. Smith Greig

**QUESTION OF TASTE**

**Band Members:**
- Michael Rozett '90: Bass, vocals
- Eric Thompson '90: Drums, vocals
- David Shapiro '91: Keyboard, vocals
- Sean Pearson '90: Guitar, vocals

**Music:** Contemporary rock

**Rehearsal space:** Basement of Town House-D9

**What they play:**
- Mr. Shapiro: We do Steely Dan, Beatles, Squeeze . . .
- Mr. Rozett: . . . Billy Joel, Greg Allman, a little Sting here and there. It's pretty damn eclectic. I don't think it fits under any one category.
- Mr. Shapiro: We're gonna start doing goofy stuff. There was a riff in there from "Sesame Street," and we're gonna be doing some Madonna tunes.
- Mr. Thompson: We try to pick the best music from the last 20 years rather than concentrating on a genre. Rock and roll is in our blood. Luckily we've got degrees to fall back on, that's why we didn't major in music.

ALL: Exactly.

**MAGIC BEANS**

**Band Members:**
- Andrew Warden '90: Bass
- James Peale '91: Guitar, vocals
- Dave Roth '92: Drums
- Jon Goldstein '91: Guitar, vocals
- Dan Messinger '91: Sax, harmonica, vocals

**Music:** Psychedelic funk

**Rehearsal space:** Basement of Raymond

**On the importance of music:**
- Mr. Roth: Rehearsal is something I look forward to. My classes are on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and rehearsal is what pulls me through. I love playing music with these guys.
- Mr. Peale: College would be a lot easier if we didn't have to go to classes and we could just sit around here and play all the time.
- Mr. Messinger: Sometimes it's very spiritual playing here. Sometimes we have some amazing spiritual experiences when we're playing here.
- Mr. Goldstein: Yeah. At some point, 50 years down the line, we'll probably have a reunion concert.
Band Members:
Rebecca Odes '90: Vocals, bass
Will Baum '90: Guitar, drums, vocals
Alan Licht '90: Drums, guitar, vocals
Music: punk and rock
Rehearsal space: Room in house on Collegeview Avenue

On their songs:
Ms. Odes: Mine are taking one thing that I really like or that I really dislike and trying to write a song about it. I wrote one song about being harassed on the street.
Mr. Baum: My songs are about lost love and found love and everything in between.
Mr. Licht: Mine are pretty much like stream of consciousness.
Ms. Odes: Alan's lyrics change all the time.
Mr. Baum: It's not unfair to call us a rip-off of everything that happened in the early '70s.

Band Members:
Bob Greenspun '91: Drums
Nicky Last '91: Guitar, vocals
Brad Kogut '91: Guitar
Doug Glazer '92: Congos, percussion, vocals
Jesse Shadoan '92: Fender Rhodes keyboard, vocals
James Price Engel '92: Bass, lead vocals
Music: Bay Rock
Rehearsal space: Basement of Jewett

On their concept of the band:
Mr. Kogut: William's Doll . . . is not just a bunch of guys doing covers, as much as a very cohesive group with everything planned, there's a goal for everything. We're very well organized, and we have a strategy laid out, and we're going to be very famous.
Mr. Glazer: I would say our music is influenced by the Dead, but I don't think anyone in the band wants us to be a Dead cover band.
Mr. Shadoan: We're gonna be the new age of psychedelia.
Mr. Kogut: We play Bay Rock—it's a new genre of music, groups that have been influenced by the Grateful Dead and the Bay Area groups, Santana, Hot Tuna, the Allman Brothers, bands like Max Creek, or Solar Circus, Phish. We feel that very soon it's going to be a sought-after genre of music.
... And Then There's  

**A Cappella**

The live music scene at Vassar (we're talking non-department here) is not all rock and roll and a boon to the power company. *A cappella* groups continue to thrive. The Flora Doras (popular in the '30s, '40s, and '50s) may no longer grace the world of Vassar entertainment, but the Night Owls, Gospel Choir, and Accidentals do. Here's a rundown on *a cappella* groups active on campus.

**Measure for Measure**, sometimes known as M4M, is an 11-member all-women group that has been around since 1981. Their theme song is "Temps Jam," a Temptations original, and their quirky repertoire includes songs by such artists as Carole King, James Taylor, Queen, Blondie, the Eurythmics, and Carly Simon. Member Jessica Seigel '92 proudly reports that M4M "has sung for Chase Manhattan Bank's annual banquet, and we have plans to sing for Green Haven Prison's Pre-Release program." In the spring of 1989, the group recorded an album at RCA studios in New York.

The **Night Owls**, one of the two oldest all-female *a cappella* singing groups in the United States (along with the Smith College Smithereens), was formed in 1944/45 by quarantined students suffering cabin fever during a polio epidemic. That's the origin story reported by the group's current "pitch" (director), Anne Pullis '90. The Night Owls traditionally wear all black for their performances and don pearls and gloves for their formal concerts. The semi-professional, four-part singing group (they've made about six albums to date) often performs in New York City and has gone on tours along the eastern seaboard and to Bermuda. Their jazz/be-bop repertoire of mostly 50s and 60s songs includes "Under the Boardwalk" and "Breaking Up Is Hard to Do."

Vassar's 25 member, co-ed **Gospel Choir**, formed in 1972, is "going *a cappella* for the first time," according to Stacey Floyd '91. The choir, which sings traditional and early gospel selections, is unusual in that it holds no auditions; interested persons are trained to sing. One of the group's most honored traditions is singing at the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, held at the Vassar Chapel.

Though **Matthew's Minstrels** took a one-semester hiatus this past fall, this 14-member, co-ed group generally sings everything from French madrigals to pop jazz. The group was formed in 1978; it has sung at the Hunt Club in New York, at Trinity College, and on the streets of New York City. Its song list includes "Babylon," "Only You," and "Mon Coeur."

An as yet unnamed *a cappella* group has recently been founded by Kira Smith '90, also a member of Matthew's Minstrels. This group, with just eight members, is the smallest of Vassar's *a cappella* singing organizations. Its repertoire will focus mainly on choral arrangements.

A famous Alumnae House dessert is the inspiration for the **Vassar Devils**, a 16-member, coed group founded in the spring of 1988. Member Andy Jacobs '92 notes that the group wears black and white during performances and sings stirring renditions of the Rolling Stones' "(Hey You) Get Off Of My Cloud," along with "I Second That Emotion," "Wonderful World," and the theme song of "Linus and Lucy" (no lyrics).

Vassar's only all-male *a cappella* group, the **Accidentals**, has, says member Tim Hyde '91, a "crazy and pretty nontraditional" style. Its song list includes "Blue Moon," "Is She Really Going Out With Him?" by Joe Jackson, "Got to Get You into My Life" by the Beatles, and "Neurotic Girl," an Accidentals original. The group's nontraditionalism extends to its road trips as well (they've been to California and Florida). Mr. Hyde says that "when we go to McDonald's, we like to sing to the crew, usually through their microphones."

Each group performs its own "big" concert each semester. They also sing at dorm dinners, on Founder's Day, and on such occasions as parents' weekends, alumnae/i events, and "A Cappella Night at the Retreat."

Paige J. Swartley '92
Quarterly assistant
French 105-106: Elementary French

Intended to give a solid foundation in the basics of the language. Students learn to read French of average difficulty, to understand standard spoken French, and to express simple ideas correctly and idiomatically, both orally and in writing.

Back to Basics: Learning to Talk

Chicago Hall, 8:30 A.M., the first day of classes in 1989/90. A professor strides rapidly into a classroom; he is speaking French; he nods, he smiles, he gestures; he stops. Several students get up and walk out. He has said, briefly in English, that anyone who understood his previous remarks should leave. They belong in a more advanced class. After a few introductory and necessary preliminaries in English, the class resumes as it will continue throughout the semester—in French.

Five times a week, 50 minutes a session, students who are as babes to the French language stumble and stutter their way into another world. Their learning may not have the same sense of graceful miracle that seems to mark the average infant’s acquisition of language. Parents, after all, don’t need to coo conjugations to their infants. Yet assistant professor of French Brad Williams says he finds the process of introducing college students to a new language “parental.”

“I, who am neither married nor have children, find it very exciting insofar as this is truly beginning language. One watches students who have had absolutely no French at the beginning of the year, and at the end of the first semester, they put sentences together. I’ve not yet known a baby to have done that in so brief a period of time.”

In all sections of 105, it is standard practice to teach in French. Mr. Williams, himself a 1977 graduate of the department, says the technique of teaching a language in the language itself is to insist that students see the unfamiliar language as a “new reality.”

“We’re trying to teach them that although they’re going through 105, it’s only a preparation to something that is much more exciting,” he says. “Namely, it’s the introduction not only to a language, but to a new universe, or an aspect of the universe. And one can only discern [that new universe], in my opinion in any case, with a fair amount of objectivity if one is looking and listening through the ears of another people. And that comes necessarily through the verb to be and the verb to go and the present and the future and the past perfect and so on and so forth.”

Weekly, each section of Elementary French meets for three classes with a professor, one drill session with student interns, and one period of supervised practice in the audio lab. In addition, the instructional program being used this year—which emphasizes spoken, colloquial language—includes videos that portray native speakers using a careful and deliberate French in scenes that take place in college dormitories, at cafés, on the street, in markets.

For Mr. Williams, the emphasis on spoken language corresponds to what he perceives to be an increased cultural dependency on oral rather than written communication.

“The approach that we are now embracing in teaching 105 I think corresponds to that need to have oral proficiency. It gives us the wherewithal to get on with it now, right away, in very direct and economic terms. We’re not going to talk about the future perfect for a while. We’re not going to talk about the literary form of the past tense. That’s what we’re going to use in the next few months. We want to learn how to buy bread,” says Mr. Williams. “We want to learn how to go to the movies, we want to be able to understand other people’s conversation. All of that which is intrinsic to both your everyday life and mine.

“The acquisition of a language to the point where one becomes proficient, and not only proficient, but fluent, starts with spoken language. Spoken language is the cornerstone.”

In the classroom, then, the pedagogical technique is to talk, and to get students to talk back in French as well. Students still need to invest considerable time and effort in memorizing nouns, adjectives, adverbs, colloquialisms, and, of course, in conjugating verbs. But they also start off learning complete sentences, ones they can use right away, such as Qu’est-ce que ça veut dire? (What does that mean?); Répétez, s’il vous plaît. (Please repeat.); Comment dit-on…? (How does one say…?). Initial vocabulary includes words for items found in the classroom: desks, chairs, maps, notebooks. Lessons then move on to language one might use in discussing classes, cafeteria food, dorm life, family vacations. By the end of the first semester students can talk, simply and haltingly to be sure, about a range of topics—shopping, food and drink, entertainment—in the past, present, and future.

Mr. Williams says that 105 is perhaps the most challenging of courses to teach. One has to be sensitive, he says, to “the moments of excitement and fear, like the baby who begins to walk, and who looks around to make sure that everyone has seen him because he’s not sure it’s going to last. Every student has those moments, at different times, of course. One has to be sensitive to each student to see when that moment is coming, and not to miss it. If the baby falls without having been seen, he can wonder as to whether he stood. The student who has not been noticed can feel slighted.

“That’s why 105 is emotionally and physically so taxing. One has to be much more in tune with one’s students than in other classes, where you can permit yourself at given moments to just give information.”

But when a student has his or her moment of success, “I feel that as an instant of great joy. Those are the truly great moments.”

Georgette Weir is auditing French 105-106 this year.
Is It Time for an Earth Ethic?
We Must Rehabilitate Our Views of Nature if We Are to Heal the Wounds of Our Home Planet

by Caroline Merchant '58

The spring of 1958 a group of senior science majors was preparing to leave Vassar College to enter life beyond the stone walls adjoining Taylor Gate. One was heading for a year of study at Wood's Hole Oceanographic Institute. Another was off to Harvard University Medical School. A third was to enroll in the graduate program in biological chemistry at the University of Michigan. A fourth decided on advanced work in mathematics. Another was set to enroll in graduate work in physics at the University of Pennsylvania. Two decided to forsake chemistry for graduate work in philosophy at Columbia. These seniors, my classmates, were moving out into a world of expanding scientific opportunities propelled by the successful launch in 1957 of the Russian satellite Sputnik.

As I sat in Vernon Venable's Philosophy 105 class the year that Sputnik was launched, I learned from him that Galileo and Newton in the 17th century had discovered all the fundamental principles necessary for a successful satellite program. Only the technology remained to be developed. In 105 that year, life seemed simple and solutions to the world's problems possible (although neither seemed true of Mr. Venable's philosophy course). Science was thought to hold the key to human progress; indeed, it appeared to be a cohesive social, almost religious force in our culture. An expansive sense of optimism prevailed that science and technology could solve most of the world's pressing social problems, even as it was also creating the most devastating one of all—the possibility of nuclear holocaust.

In 1993, when today's Vassar freshmen exit Taylor Gate for the last time, they will be entering a very different world than the one that awaited our class 35 years ago. Then, a global environmental crisis was only dimly apparent. Today, it is painfully visible: ozone depletion, global warming, the destruction of tropical rainforests and American "old growth" forests, the rapid pace of species extinctions, toxic waste, soil erosion, ocean dumping, the disruption of marine ecology by 30-mile-long drift nets used for fishing. The Alaskan oil spill tragically transformed a pristine shoreline surrounded by lush rainforest into black, motionless, silent beaches of dead birds, seals, sea otters, and contaminated waters devoid of the life that sustained local fishers and their families. Time magazine's January 1989 person of the year award went to "The Endangered Earth," graphically illustrated by sculptor Christo as a suffocating globe wrapped in plastic and bound with twine.
With increasing public awareness of environmental problems, public concern has mounted. The debacle in Alaska aroused millions. A New York Times/CBS poll in June 1989 found that an astonishing 80 percent of all those questioned overwhelmingly agreed with the statement: “Protecting the environment is so important that requirements and standards cannot be too high, and continuing environmental improvements must be made regardless of cost.”

Healing the earth’s wounds will require the best all of us can give as citizens and offers opportunities to current students thinking about careers in science, technology, government, and industry.

The words of 17th-century poet John Donne, which I first read in Miss Russell’s English literature class at Vassar, pertain just as well to our world in the late 20th century as to the world of his own time. Donne compared the death of the world soul of the Renaissance organic cosmos to the death of a young woman, Elizabeth Drury:

Sick World, yea, dead, yea putrified, since shee
Thy intrinsique balme, and thy preservative,
Can never be renewed, thou never live.

Every section of Donne’s poem, describing the dying world as a cripple, an ugly monster, a wan ghost, and a dry cinder, was followed by the dirge-like refrain, “Shee, Shee is dead; shee’s dead.” Is this refrain also appropriate to a small blue planet in the late 20th century?

Between the time of my graduation in 1958 and the entry of the newest class of Vassar students this past fall, skepticism about the ability of science to solve the world’s problems has increased. Today, classical science as we learned it in the 1950s is viewed as part of the problem, even as it seems essential to the solution. What happened to erode the optimism over science that prevailed during the age of Sputnik?

In the 1960s, as the parents of today’s freshmen were finishing high school and entering college, the United States was undergoing a revolutionary challenge to the values of the post-World War II era. The civil rights movement erupted in the South and spread across the country, engulfing us in sit-ins, demonstrations, and a wave of legislation aimed at providing equal opportunities for minorities. The Vietnam War protests called into question the principle of a just war, sacred to the World War II mobilization against fascism, anti-Semitism, and the Holocaust. The women’s movement emerged in part from women’s efforts to play leadership roles in the new social movements and in part from their need to get out of the home and to engage in meaningful creative work. Many lives changed irrevocably, either in sympathy with these social movements or in opposition to them.

In 1970, the year of birth for many current students, the first Earth Day galvanized an incipient environmental movement into national action. An outpouring of citizen concern resulted in the passage of environmental laws and tighter regulations. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was signed in 1970 and with it the President’s Council on Environmental Quality was created. The Clean Air amendments of 1970 strengthened the Clean Air Act, first passed in 1955. In 1972, water regulation was also brought under stricter federal control.

Then in 1973, when most of those who now comprise the class of ’93 were still toddlers, we were fretting about the 30-minute-long lines at the corner gas station and contemplating curtailing weekend and vacation excursions. A national energy crisis brought forth an array of alternative energy proposals, from solar heating sources and wind energy supplements to shale oil extraction and home energy conservation.

During the seventies, I was teaching the history of science at the University of San Francisco. My students were aroused by the issues of science and society raised by the environmental and energy crises. They wanted to know how these problems had evolved and what science had to do with them. Excited by the questions they were asking, I began to rethink the history of science as I had learned it in graduate school in the sixties. What were the historical roots of the environmental crisis? What did the 17th-century Scientific Revolution, on which I had done my doctoral dissertation, contribute to the world view of the 20th century? What was the role of women in science and how were society’s concepts of women reflected in it? Rethinking the roots of modern science and its role in today’s world resulted in my book The Death of Nature.

Through my teaching and the research for my book, I came to understand that when nature ceased to be viewed as alive and the earth to be perceived as a nurturing mother, a profound transformation took place in human ways of relating to the earth. For millennia, most premodern peoples experienced the world as alive, filled with spirits and responsive to human action. If a deer was to be shot for food, a tree cut for fuel, a brook dammed for water, seed sown on a freshly plowed field, or even a mine shaft dug for ore, a ritual of propitiation was made to the living spirit of the animal, plant, or earth mother. If the deer escaped, if plants died, or wells ran dry, humans and their rituals were at fault.

In European culture, too, the world was treated as a living organism down through the Renaissance of the 16th century. It had a body, soul, and spirit, and the earth had respiratory, circulatory, and reproductive systems just as humans did. If a harvest failed or disease struck a village, people had not behaved properly toward nature or toward God. They accepted their fate and tried to live better lives.

With the rise of a capitalist market economy and of modern science in the 17th century, human at-
titudes toward the earth changed. Francis Bacon and the experimental scientists of the 17th century taught that the earth should be tortured to reveal her secrets for the sake of humankind. Rather than following nature in her footsteps and learning from her as had farmers, alchemists, and miners, Bacon argued, as I wrote in my book, that nature should be "forced out of her natural state and squeezed and molded." Miners and smiths should "search into the bowels of nature" and "shape her on the anvil." Technology should not just "exert a gentle guidance over nature's course" but should "conquer and subdue her" and "shake her to her foundations."

Other philosophers and scientists such as René Descartes and Isaac Newton conceptualized nature as dead, inert atoms moved by external forces. They removed the soul from the world and the spiritus mundi from the heavens. They left the earth as dead matter, devoid of any resemblance to the human being. Nature was described by mathematical laws, God was a mathematician and engineer, human bodies and animals were miniature machines, and the mind resembled a calculating machine that added up perceptions of the outside world in a logical sequence. The "death of nature" metaphorically gave humans power to control and manipulate it for their own benefit. They could intervene and repair the earth from outside, just as God repaired the world machine from on high. Newton believed that God periodically had to set the planets back on their elliptical courses when their orbits were disturbed by a passing comet entering from outside the solar system.

The Enlightenment of the 18th century accepted this philosophy of domination and turned it into tremendous optimism over the capacity of human beings to control their own destinies. This faith in science and its power over nature continued into the 20th century with the discovery and harnessing of nuclear energy, the space program, large-scale hydropower projects, and medical advances. Today it is reflected most strongly in the new field of biotechnology, as scientists search for ways to combat cancer and AIDS and to engineer more resilient crops and livestock.

Yet offsetting these hopes for new medicines and technologies is a profound skepticism about the style of classical science as it was done in the Sputnik era. The optimism about the progressive implications of the mechanistic worldview of the Scientific Revolution is being questioned. This year's freshman class begins college as we make the transition into a new decade and at a time when many people are searching for a new relationship between humans and nature. We may be experiencing a scientific revolution as profound as that of the 17th century, one that casts nature and science as partners on the stage of history. The machine image and its control of nature seem to be giving way to something new. Some call the transformation a "new paradigm"; others call it "deep ecology"; still others call it a "postmodern ecological worldview." They suggest that a partnership ethic may be replacing the ethic of domination. They assert that science and nature can indeed work together in mutual benefit.

How can we meet the environmental challenges of the 1990s using a partnership ethic? In addition to the contributions of traditional fields such as chemistry and physics, a number of new scientific fields have recently emerged that are based on an ecological philosophy that everything is related to everything else and that there are no free lunches.

**Sustainable development:** In developing countries there is a great need for agricultural science and environmental analysis. Working with local peoples, science and policies must be formulated that provide for basic human needs and food security while preserving ecosystemic diversity.

**Restoration ecology** is the human act of reconstructing original ecosystems that have been polluted or destroyed by human activities. Scien-
physically replant and rebuild prairies, forests, rivers, and lakes, not as dominators of nature but as imitators of ecological patterns. Restorationists are dedicated not to taking nature apart by analysis but to recreating ecosystems by synthesis.

**Conservation biology** is the effort to preserve biological diversity throughout the world. This includes saving human communities that have used plant and animal species for hundreds of years through successful subsistence ways of life. These *in situ* conservation activities preserve whole ecosystems for future generations. Such efforts require talented scientists, anthropologists, and policy analysts willing to work sensitively with indigenous peoples and local governments.

**Agroecology and agroforestry** both attempt to combine the wisdom of traditional peoples with the principles of ecological science to create sustainable methods of producing crops, animals, and trees. They imitate natural patterns by using wild plant systems as models.

**Feminist science and ecofeminism** attempt to apply women's perspectives to ecological problems. During the past decade, women around the world have emerged as ecological activists. In Sweden, they used their traditional talents in gathering and preserving berries to protest the use of herbicides on forests by offering jam made from tainted berries to members of Parliament. In India, they joined the Chipko, or "tree hugging" movement, to preserve fuelwood for cooking in protest over market lumbering. In Kenya's Greenbelt movement, they planted millions of trees in an effort to reverse desertification. Native American women protested uranium mining linked with an increased number of cancer cases on their reservations. At Love Canal near Niagara Falls, housewives demanded action from New York State officials over an outbreak of birth defects and miscarriages in a neighborhood built on the site of a former hazardous chemical dump.

But *Sputnik*-era science has also been challenged at the level of theory. Emerging over the past decade are a number of scientific proposals that question the Scientific Revolution's mechanistic view of nature.

**The Gaia Hypothesis:** In 1980, atmospheric scientist James Lovelock revived the Greek goddess Gaia as a metaphor for a living earth. He proposed that the earth's biota as a whole maintain an optimal, life-supporting chemical composition within the atmosphere and oceans. Since then a number of conferences have been called to scrutinize his theory and further develop its implications.

**Process physics:** Theoretical physicist David Bohm draws on some of the same ideas about nature held by ancient Indian and Chinese philosophers in challenging the assumptions of mechanistic science. He argues that instead of starting with atomic parts as primary and building up wholes from them, a physics is needed that starts with a flow of energy called the holomovement. The Newtonian world described by classical physics—the world in which we live and work—actually unfolds from a higher "implicate" order contained in the underlying flow of energy.

**Order out of chaos:** Another challenge to mechanism comes from the new thermodynamics of Ilya Prigogine. Nineteenth-century thermodynamics had beautifully described closed, isolated systems such as steam engines and refrigerators. Prigogine's far-from-equilibrium thermodynamics suggests that higher levels of organization can spontaneously emerge when a system breaks down. His approach applies to social and ecological systems, which are open rather than closed, and helps to account for biological and social evolution.

**Chaos theory:** Chaos theory in mathematics proposes that it is perfectly normal for a butterfly flapping its wings in Iowa to cause a hurricane in Florida. Chaos, in which a small effect may lead to a large effect, may be the norm, while the equations we learn in freshman calculus may apply only to the unusual. Most environmental and biological systems, such as changing weather, population, noise, nonperiodic heart fibrillations, and ecological patterns, may in fact be governed by nonlinear chaotic relationships.

What all these developments suggest is the possibility that we need to create a new science and a new worldview to guide us in finding an ecologically sustainable way of life, one to which Vassar's young scientists and philosophers could contribute. A new approach to science and a new ecological ethic, however, must be accompanied by a commitment to the recycling of renewable resources, the conservation of nonrenewable resources, and the restoration of sustainable ecosystems that fulfill basic human physical and spiritual needs.

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On April 22, 1990, communities and colleges across the country will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the first Earth Day in 1970. Local, national, and global environmental issues will focus the celebrations. I propose that among the activities on Earth Day 20 be a nationwide signature campaign endorsing an environmental amendment to the Constitution of the United States. It would read, "Every person has a right to a clean, healthful environment. The Congress and the individual states shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation." With enough citizen backing it could be introduced in Congress and passed by a two-thirds majority in 1990. In the new Environmental Decade of the 1990s, state after state could ratify the amendment, and people could enter the new millennium with constitutionally protected environmental rights. In this way, we of the 20th century could bequeath to our children and to our grandchildren in the 21st century the possibility of a clean, healthful, beautiful earth on which to live.
It was early morning, about 5:30, and the sky above the rainforest of northern Australia was thinning with a pink wash of light. We splashed through the dew-soaked grass of a bordering farm, then stepped under the leafy canopy into the black darkness of the forest. The silent atmosphere was vitally alive: cool earthy smells, a sweet taste in the air, even the still silence itself seemed active and tense. The air complemented our own anticipation of the dawn chorus that was about to begin. I vainly tried to absorb the entire universe in one large, deep breath.

I was in Australia with 23 other college students from the United States on a science program offered by the Boston-based School for Field Studies. Leaving behind our walled classrooms and replacing them with the first-hand experiences of research, on-site lectures, and field trips, we went to the rainforests of Queensland for a semester last year to learn about one of the last great natural areas on earth. The credits I would earn through the program would be accepted by Vassar.

On this first morning in the field, we stood just inside the forest, our heads bowed and our ears attuned for every anticipated sound. The air was first carved by the piercing whistle of the lesser sooty
Rain was pounding down. Crystal clear streams turned chocolate brown as they crossed the road, carrying unknown tons of soil, smothering corals of the Great Barrier Reef that had planted themselves only a few feet offshore.

The tropical rainforests of Africa, America, Asia and Oceania are indeed special. Though they cover just 2 percent of the earth's surface, they are home to roughly 50 percent of its living things: a staggering 5 to 15 million species. Queensland's rainforests, little more than half the size of Connecticut, are restricted to a narrow band between the coastal cities of Townsville and Cocktown. They support at least 1,161 species of higher plants (including most of the world's primitive flowering species), 89 mammal, 128 bird, 160 reptile, and several thousand known insect species. But what is most important about Queensland's forests is not so much their diversity as the unusually high occurrence of endemism: hundreds of primitive flowering plants, possums, kangaroos, birds, amphibians, and reptiles evolved here and are found nowhere else in the world.

There are 13 types of rainforest in Australia, distinguished by such things as rainfall levels, soil quality and depth, and geographical location. During our three months in the country, we visited several of these on field trips. One such trip took us to the Wongabel Botanical Reserve, a minuscule patch of upland rainforest on the western edge of the Atherton Tablelands, above the coastal city of Cairns. We were there to try our hand at identifying tropical plants.

I joined another student and together we stepped off the path to inspect a tree with interesting roots. Serpentine buttresses emerged from points on the trunk well above my head; they spread out 15 or 20 feet, branching several times before plunging into the moist soil. Most tropical trees have very shallow root systems to absorb nutrients from the soil surface before they are leached by the heavy rains. Such roots provide very little structural support, however, for a towering tree whose canopy is battered by cyclonic winds. Partly as a consequence of this, many tropical species have evolved buttress roots similar to those of the mahogany we had stopped to inspect. These roots support more than the tree, however.

Mosses covered the roots we examined and competed for space with an occasional fungus. Ants industriously patrolled their ridges, creepers clung to their sides, beetles zipped around the pools of water that collected between the roots, craneflies danced in the recesses, spiders the size of my hand built their webs in the open spaces, skinks darted into the protected shadows. In short, a whole community existed amid the gothic roots of this one tree. Fascinating though this assemblage was, it would not even match the web of organisms found high up in the canopy. Thousands of insects, birds, plants, snakes, frogs, and mammals sustain themselves on only the nutrients and water in the canopy, in some cases never once coming down.

We walked over to an adjacent tree, underneath which were scattered several dark brown seed pods, each six to eight inches long. The tree was a black bean; rich in a class of chemicals that have been used extensively in medical research, this particular species is now believed to have potential value in the treatment of AIDS. The chances that the tree one is leaning against may be the source of a future cancer treatment are quite high in tropical rainforests, whose immense plant diversity, though almost completely untapped, has supplied us with roughly one-quarter of our medical drugs.

We picked our way back to the main path, where we met up with others in our group, who excitedly told us they had come across a stinging tree—one we were all eager to see for curiosity and safety's sake. The leaves of these plants are covered with fine, glasslike hairs that penetrate the skin of unwary explorers and cause a painful rash that renews itself every time the surrounding muscles contract and break the embedded hairs, exposing new edges. We gathered around the plant, daring each other to touch it, like children before an electric fence. Each of us wanted desperately to experience
the forbidden, struggling with our own temptations, and it was with mixed relief and frustration that the tension was broken by a call to return to the van.

Australia is famous for its unique fauna, evolved in total isolation from the rest of the continents over the past 50 million years. We had a chance to see one of these unique animals one evening as we spent a few hours spotting nocturnal yellow-bellied gliders. These marsupials live primarily in southern Queensland, but are represented by a small satellite population in the north, where they inhabit the tall eucalypt woodlands that border the rainforests on the west, nesting in tree holes and patrolling a number of food trees. We waded through the grassy undergrowth and situated ourselves on a knoll near a tall tree with a few holes high up in the trunk. Presently, an adult popped its head out of a nest, rotated its oversized ears to the front, looked around to make sure the night was safe, and scurried up to the top of the limb, pausing occasionally to look at us and our red spotlights. Then, with a fluid, catlike leap, it launched itself, falling a foot or two until the folds of skin between its legs caught the air. It glided silently over our heads, singularly illuminated in the blackness by our spotlights. It approached a nearby feeding tree, pulled up to stall momentarily, and landed with a soft clack as its claws gripped the bark. It scampered up a few feet to where the most recent hole had been chewed into the bark and proceeded to lick the sugary sap. Two more soon followed, gliding into the darkness for their nocturnal repast.

Because this northern population is isolated and inhabits a different environment than the main population to the south, it has a different genetic makeup. This uniqueness makes the preservation of such isolates particularly important. The conservation of the gliders is threatened by a proposed hydroelectric dam that would flood many of the food and nest trees on which the gliders depend. Whether the animals could survive such habitat destruction remains to be established.

The conservation of the world’s tropical rainforests is certainly the most urgent global crisis facing us today. Few in number and small in extent, the forests that have continually endowed our planet with renewed vitality following even the most drastic periods of volcanoes, floods, droughts, and glaciers, may be gone within a single human lifetime, falling victim to our own bulldozers and chainsaws.

I joined three friends one day in taking a walk down a dirt road that was cut two years ago through coastal rainforests north of the Daintree River. Just a few dozen meters to our right was the point at which the Great Barrier Reef is closest to the shore, making this the only place in the world where the most complex terrestrial and marine ecosystems come together. Rain was pounding down. Crystal-clear streams that descended from the hill on our left turned chocolate brown as they crossed the road, carrying unknown tons of soil out across the broad beach and into the water, smothering the corals that had planted themselves only a few feet offshore. It was a powerful contrast, one that robbed us of proper words.

We walked in gloomy silence down to the beach, each of us pondering the impact that something as simple as a road can have on such a seemingly stable and everlasting wilderness. The road was built hastily by a shire council with little money. In some places the swath cut through the forest is still hundreds of meters wide; in others, it is whole kilometers from where the council maps say it is. In all places, it is a sign of destruction: snakes killed while sunbathing in the left lane; bats and birds dying unseen, unable to fly across the wide open gap; cubic kilometers of soil and trees washing away; corals smothered and poisoned by oil-tainted mud.

As I watched the sediment quickly settle around my boots, the fact that the apparently impervious and stable ancient rainforests are in truth fragile and easily lost was graphically etched into my brain. The shock of illusion came suddenly and with great force, and I could only think that we, who consider ourselves the only impervious and everlasting presence on the earth, are fatally mistaken.
ASSAR College celebrated its Jubilee Year in 1915 with a special convocation on October 15 at which Emily C. Jordan Folger, class of 1879, gave the principal address. Mrs. Folger, who earned both her A.B. and A.M. at Vassar (her master’s thesis was “The True Text of Shakespeare”) and with her shy but wealthy husband collected first editions of Shakespeare and founded the Folger Library, chose as her topic “Some Women Interpreters of Shakespeare.”

Her speech is preserved in faint black and red typescript, in a leatherbound box in the Vassar library. Also in the box is a precious copy of the manuscript *Concordance to Shakespeare’s Poems* that Mrs. Horace Howard Furness had prepared for publication in 1874, as well as some essential correspondence with women interpreters of Shakespeare in her time, both scholars and actresses. The latter, Mrs. Folger claimed in her address, were the unacknowledged women students of deep learning and regard. “When Ellen Terry last recited for us ‘the quality of mercy is not strained,’” Mrs. Folger wrote, “she gave us all of her philosophy of life and her hope of heaven.”

If that somewhat effusive tone suggests violets, Victorian fainting, and exclamatory passion, the tone of the rest of the written speech tells another story. Emily Folger throws down a feminist gauntlet. Part of the story of this cache in our library is that she set about a campaign to gather evidence for her speech and her rebuttal to a British author who wrote under the title and pen-name of *Shakespeare Redivivus* in the London Times. Mrs. Folger apparently wrote letters to every woman Shakespeare scholar of the day and to many actresses asking for information on their studies and interpretations of Shakespeare. Some of the women, not having been asked before to give voice to such personal feelings about their lives, answered amply. Those replies, gathered in this box, constitute a study of women.

When I first came on Mrs. Folger’s Vassar box in 1988, I at once wanted to burrow in it, to try to
Shakespeare in Vassar's Folger Collection

understand what it was. At the same time, I wanted to broadcast the news of it so that the Vassar army of women's studies scholars could go to work. Someone should unearth the likes of Madam Anne Merrick, who wrote on January 21, 1638, from the country that she couldn't go up to London for the theater season because she had to spend time reading Shakespeare and a book called, enticingly, *The History of Women*. This is an item which Charlotte Slopes uncovered and which Emily Jordan Folger serves up to us in her speech. Where is the *History of Women* the 17th-century upper class were reading in the home village library? The detectives need to get on the trail.

The *London Times* piece—and we can imagine certain feminists who might have been responsible for such a point of view, one not necessarily to be assigned to a man—had claimed that women interpreters of Shakespeare were disappointing trifers who express themselves only in scraps—or scrapbooks. Here is the opening of Mrs. Folger's speech, her declaration of contest:

An editorial in the *The London Times* on Shakespeare Redisivus says: "Considering what he has done for them we cannot help thinking that women have done singularly little for Shakespeare. His comedies are a revel of feminine supremacy; and yet . . . We can recall only one woman in modern times who talks of Shakespeare's women as one woman in any drawing room will talk of another—Mary Coleridge; and she wrote nothing deliberate about Shakespeare, but scraps here and there, in diaries and letters, most femininely . . . It is a fragment of the spirit which we deserve to see." He gives illustrations—very clever. Have women done 'singularly little' for Shakespeare? We think not.

Now English classes could spend a good quarter-hour on the tone of that opening, the effect of starting with the self-damning quotation and its challenge, the assumptions that scraps in diaries and letters could not measure up against longer and
very often dull tomes, as if women weren't doing other things, like acting and caring for households. Emily Folger, who was childless, at no time reaches to maternity as an excuse for what women have or have not done. Instead, the rest of her speech is a summoning of evidence to make Redivius look like a fool. She is angry. She is polite. She is careful. And she is, and this is part of the effect of pleasure and tragedy in having spent time with this oversized box, willing to wait for time to catch up with what she has assembled. Vassar was a safe repository and a safe place to vent her anger.

But there is none of this in the covering note she wrote to President MacCracken upon presenting her "little gift" (one thinks of Chaucer calling his Troilus a "lytle boke") to the library:

We who are represented in it hope that it will aid in some degree as Vassar presents to students the pleasure and profit from the earnest consideration of the poet Shakespeare.

Despite the appropriately formal, and hence opaque, tone of that covering note, Emily Folger has enough of a saucy nature to inform us in her speech that Daniel Webster said Mrs. Furness "had treasured every word of Shakespeare as if he were her lover and she his." A maker of dictionaries eroticises another lexicographer's attachment to words. Is that condescending, apt, or both? Puzzling over such questions has made me slow to get out the news of what our library holds.

oward the end of her remarks, Emily Folger offers us two glimpses of Mary Coleridge, a poem and something any women's studies scholar of today would rush to track down for comparison with Virginia Woolf's Orlando, with Spenser's martial, allegorical women, and with the curious effect on bookloving and playgoing women of four centuries upon learning of the cross-dressing required of Shakespeare's boy actors, cast, in the time of Elizabeth I, as women.

That was an age when wealthy men wore lacy clothes in imitation of a female monarch, velvet for its softness, perfumes for sweet fragrance, and when men had to do all the public interpreting of Shakespeare's women as well as his men. Mary Coleridge takes a kind of imaginative revenge on that monopoly, and here is what Emily Folger says about her 'scrap':

There is a passage in one of Mary Coleridge's sketches in which she imagines herself a man, and wonders which of Shakespeare's heroines she could have been happiest with: "Beatrice frightens me a little, but when I think of her at the other end of my dinner table, Browning, Leighton and Mr. Gladstone listening delighted to her remarks, I am a proud and happy man."

The social eclat of Beatrice at the dinner table, the audacity of imagining oneself a man with a woman as one's prized accompaniment, the actual people at Mary Coleridge's parties, all this is worth looking into.

I am less curious myself about the Freudian implications of a woman imagining herself married to a woman or the obvious symbolism of Emily Folger keeping a treasure box out of the main collection in Washington. Had she forgotten it by 1930 when Henry died, the construction of the museum having just begun? Emily went down to Washington, and, according to the Biography of American Women, this is how she was perceived carrying out the terms of her husband's will:

His will charged the trustees of Amherst College with the administration of the library and of the $10,000,000 endowment fund he had left for its maintenance and expansion, but the trustees were directed to consult with Mrs. Folger "on all plans and all regulations and all disbursements." Although then seventy-two, Mrs. Folger went immediately to Washington to supervise personally the completion of the $2,000,000 building, the selection of a staff, and the installation of 100,000 books and manuscripts and innumerable [sic] associated works of art and pieces of antique furniture. Gentle, courteous, and feminine, she was nonetheless self-confident, used to her own way, and possessed of her own views, and she met the demands of this assignment with a degree of vigor and determination which occasionally confounded the trustees.

It seems to me that Emily Folger did not call back her gift from Vassar not only because that would have been in bad taste, but because she had a vision, as Matthew Vassar had, of a new form of study. Forgetfulness or management considerations do not explain what she did in the first place, which was to put together for us a social history of her moment, a study of women.

Had she recalled her gift and placed it in the main collection at the Folger Library, it would have been both buried and possibly dispersed, with the handwritten letters and Concordance in no way making a statement about how women spent time serving Shakespeare (and their own marital harmony—there are clues to this as well). Moreover, the small but significant gender-laden attitudes would have been scattered. One of the typewritten replies she received is a gem and excusses itself for its "masculine" presentation in this business form on the grounds of a poor hand. The writer, scholar Mary Cowden Clark, wanted to be legible as she rehearsed her own education in response to Emily Folger's novel request for the history of Mrs. Clark's interest in Shakespeare.

What comes through in the box is that Emily Folger knew what she was doing in collecting it. What comes through in her address for the Jubilee, which after all is not just a cause for merriment at the number 50, but originally, the attainment of that year in which all slaves and bond servants among the ancient Hebrews would be set free, is that it is an attempt to free us from the shackles of chauvinist thinking.
Mrs. Folger threw down a feminist gauntlet. She apparently wrote to every woman Shakespeare scholar of the day and to many actresses for information on their studies and interpretations of Shakespeare.
PLANS OVERBOARD

Great expectations die hard on a U.S.-Soviet trans-Atlantic sail.

by Matthew Witten '84

This past summer I participated in the Soviet-American Sail, a six-week voyage from New York City to Leningrad on a 156-foot, double-masted schooner. Twenty-two Americans, 21 Soviets, a Dutch captain, and a German cook comprised our crew of citizen diplomats.

Our aim was to demonstrate in microcosm that cooperative personal exchanges across cultural divides could lead not only to respect and compassion, but could also get us across the Atlantic Ocean, succeed in accomplishing several scientific projects, and equitably take care of the day-to-day chores of living. We met our goals, but with more hitches than some of us had anticipated. We discovered that cultural and personal differences forced us to deal primarily in the basics of human relations: communication and acceptance.

The venture was sponsored jointly by two groups. On the American side was Soviet American Sail, an organization created specifically for the trip; on the Soviet side, the club Travels for Peace and Environment made the arrangements. Scientific work would focus on collecting samples of oceanic plastics and coastal bacterial levels. The trip would include seminars on our cultures, languages, oceanic pollution, and sailing.

Or so we thought. Apparently, the Soviets and Americans received different orientations for the sail. The Soviet crew members voiced their concerns for the environment, but it was clear that for several, the voyage was to be a bit more of a vacation than anything else. We do not know what these crew members were told by their organizer, or if he had time to tell them much at all. Scarcely any expected to stand watch, lead seminars, or do scientific experiments. Yet, for all the Americans, these were key elements of the sail and had been repeatedly discussed beforehand.

What resulted was a clash of expectations. A cadre of Americans fiercely held to the program that had been agreed to by the respective leaders; many of the Soviets, on the other hand, expected things to develop organically and were offended by the implication that they should do as they were told. During the first week on the boat we heard the frequent ironical jabs, "Commisar!" or even "Gestapo," said mostly in jest, but still expressing a basic rejection of decisions made by apparent fiat by Americans. The fact that the American leader was 27 years old and a woman may have prompted the Soviet men to respond defensively. And perhaps the age difference between the two contingents heightened the sense of Americans being pushy and uncivilized. Though the crew ranged in age from 18 to 73, in general, the Soviets were in their 40s and 50s and the Americans in their 20s and 30s. This makes cultural differences more difficult to define, as some may be attributable to a generation gap.

It must be said that the Soviets had little recourse to change the tone of events, at least in the first stage of the trip. The American organizer stuck to her guns. She was angry and in disbelief that so many of the fundamental premises of the venture—particularly that of equitable and cooperative sharing of the work on ship—seemed to disappear. Other Americans as well persisted in their attempts to realize the original vision of the project.

I believe that the disparity in expectations led to conflicts as we journeyed. I had mentally prepared myself for the differences in culture that I knew would appear when people from our two countries mingled, but I was nevertheless surprised by certain incidents. The episode with the Soviet cook Tanya is illustrative.

During the first week of our voyage, we had rough weather much of the time. About a dozen people walked around with pesty faces, swollen lips, sweaty brows, and disconsolate eyes—seasick. Tanya was the worst of all. After a few days she didn't budge from her bunk and would not eat—two of the biggest mistakes one can make when in such a miserable condition. Getting up on deck and eating bit by bit will put most people on the way to recovery. Tanya, however, refused to move and even had trouble taking fluids. The doctor, an American, became very concerned that she would become dehydrated.

Owing to extensive damage to the ship in a gale six days out to sea, we took a detour to Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, for repairs. There the doctor recommended that Tanya put an end to her misery and fly back to Moscow from Canada. The captain, an English-speaking Dutchman, concurred, as did the

Matthew Witten is a freelance writer on environmental issues. He lives in Vermont.
American organizer. A meeting was held including these people, the Soviet organizer, and Tanya. The Soviets insisted that Tanya stay on board for the voyage. And, in what we would soon perceive to be a pattern, all the Soviets agreed to the same position. Most of the Americans were incredulous.

As Tanya had the good luck of feeling fairly well in the calm seas that followed, no catastrophe resulted. We left the impasse behind us as best we could. I believe, though, that the ghosts of such disputes drifted in and out of the relationships on board in the ensuing weeks. It highlighted the need for earnestness, patience, and acceptance.

A more freely and frequently discussed topic was gender roles. Each person standing watch was to take a turn at doing dishes in the galley. One or two of the Soviet men asked their wives or girlfriends to take their places for this task and the Soviet women complied. The female American cook, there at the scene, was outraged. She, in her mid-20s, forbade a man in his 40s to have his wife cover for him. This had major repercussions and gave rise to waves of discussion during the voyage.

The Soviets' ability to entrust certain tasks to others and to minimize problems came in sharp contrast to American frusbudgeting, especially over our Declaration of Purpose. The last week of the voyage, a few crew members from each country got together to draft this declaration regarding our venture. After a few meetings in which the general ideas of the statement were decided upon, it was agreed that for the sake of style members of the two countries would write final drafts separately. Two Soviets wrote their version and their crewmates quickly affirmed their work. The Americans, however, spent hours agonizing over words, phrases, and ideas. One group of people would sweat through the night with it. Then new comments (if not attacks) would filter in and the group — some dropping out, some joining — would sweat it over it again.

Finally, the declaration was brought out in front of the whole crew on deck for final approval. The Soviets looked at it, made a few comments, and then, as the Americans began to argue, walked away. The Americans proceeded to spend a couple hours reconstructing the entire work, each person eager to exert his or her will on the process. It was at the behavior of some Americans. Surely, it was understandable for Americans to be frustrated at the fact that not all the Soviets had the same plans as the Americans did. But for some, their disappointments blinded them to compromise. The Soviet reaction to this, I think, was acute. Once they saw that a few Americans kept smoldering, some of them lost their will for heartfelt exchange.

Yet, in the end, we met our aim of collaboration all the same, although the level of exchange was more basic than we had expected. I think participants from both cultures envisioned a much more sophisticated sharing of ideas. Perhaps herein lies the message: that on such an adventure, where strangers from such radically different cultures join, ambitions should not run too high. I am grateful that I have made some Soviet friends and seen how they live — how they sink into thoughts or sing for joy — under challenging conditions.

This gives me faith in the future. As long as we can scale down our expectations of our Soviet counterparts, we can focus on who they are. This is no easy task. The Soviet crew members' approach to Tanya's seasickness, to gender roles, to political processes, as well as countless other events, varies greatly from our own. Only by surmounting the confusion and anger that such deep differences sometimes draw forth can American and Soviet people embark upon projects together. It can be done.

We arrived safely in Leningrad on July 14 after a month and half at sea, a crew both happy yet fatigued at the considerable adjustments we had made for each other's cultures.
by Alexis Greene '69

It was five when Roe v. Wade was passed," says Jodi Sandfort '90, a women's studies major who has written vigorously about abortion rights for the student newspaper Left of Center. "It was inconceivable to me that the situation would change."

In July 1989, the Supreme Court, in the case of Webster v. Reproductive Health Services of St. Louis, Missouri, upheld that state's restrictive abortion law, which bars public employees from performing abortions and prohibits abortions in public hospitals and clinics. Justice Harry Blackmun wrote in his dissenting opinion that with its action, "this court implicitly invites every state legislature to enact more and more restrictive abortion regulations." The decision was widely acknowledged to have cleared the way for increased challenges to Roe v. Wade, the 1973 decision that declared abortion a constitutional right during the first six months of pregnancy.

The impact of the Webster decision has been swift and disturbing to many of Vassar's young women and men, as it has been to many undergraduates at campuses across the country. Women who grew up believing they could take the choice to have an abortion for granted face the prospect that abortion could become nearly illegal nationwide, perhaps compelling them to seek the life-threatening solutions of an earlier generation; that abortion may become so expensive it will be beyond their reach; or that they must notify a spouse (as Pennsylvania legislated in October 1989).

"I can't believe this is happening," says Stephanie Vuckovic '90, chairperson of the Campus Health Organization for Information Counseling and Education (CHOICE). "Abortion just seems like a right, an inherent right."

Alert to what they perceive as a threat to their rights, a number of Vassar's undergraduates are mobilizing politically. Last October, pro-choice students marched in a "Pro-Choice/Your Choice" rally in Poughkeepsie, carrying homemade signs that read "Pro-Choice Vote Choice" and chanting "Not the church, not the state, women must decide their fate." The campus Feminist Union sponsored three buses to the national pro-choice march in Washington, D.C., on November 12. And seven students have started the Vassar Pro-Choice Coalition, which aims to broaden student participation in the pro-choice movement through lobbying, letter-writing campaigns, and fundraising. Their slogan is "Choice through the power of voice."

"For too long people just accepted the rights they were given," says Susan Grobman '92, the coalition's coordinator. "And now there's a result that's completely backward. So I want this to be a permanent organization on campus."

The pro-choice students respond passionately and personally to the anti-abortion threat. Their primary argument, which is also the one that underlies Roe v. Wade, is that a right to privacy is implicit in the Constitution and extends to a woman's right to decide what to do with her body.

"I don't believe there should be any laws legislating my body to procreate, or not procreate," says Joanna Pearlestein '92, an English major who attended the Poughkeepsie rally.

Matthew Kagan '92 agrees. "If all the anti-choice legislators have their way," says Mr. Kagan, a political science major who is also managing editor of Left of Center, "then my friends are going to be treated like criminals for exercising control over their own bodies."

For Stephanie Vuckovic, being pro-choice also expresses her social consciousness. "I worked at a clinic for sexually transmitted diseases in New York City last summer," says Ms. Vuckovic. "I saw pregnant 17-year-old girls coming in with syphilis. Women who become prostitutes in order to buy crack get pregnant. They don't get prenatal care, the kids are born blind, the kids are born addicts. It's a horrible thing. I think a child is worse off coming into a life like that than never coming into it."

Vassar students, and the faculty who observe them, agree that the majority of the undergraduates are pro-choice. Yet there are also young women and men at Vassar committed to the right-to-life view; if fewer in number and less vocal.

Julian R. "Bandy" Schwarz '92, a music performance major who is also culture editor for the Vassar Spectator, a conservative student newspaper, believes that life begins at conception. "Can they prove it isn't a life?" he asks. "It's up to them to prove
that.” He maintains that the Constitution guarantees the right to that life and would prefer that Roe v. Wade be rescinded.

Regina Peters, a senior majoring in economics, was raised as a Catholic and believes with her church that life begins at conception and is sacred. “To me,” says Ms. Peters, “abortion is murder.”

Susan Montello ’91 embraces both points of view. “Personally,” she says, “I could not have an abortion under any circumstances, whether rape or, God forbid, incest. In Jeremiah, God says, ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I set you apart.’ In other words, God knows us from the moment of conception. Only God can take a life, and that relates to abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, suicide. They are all connected and all wrong in God’s eyes.”

Yet, Ms. Montello is also pro-choice. “I have a realistic perspective. Abortions will happen anyway. I come from a poor economic background, and I know what happens in the slums. The poor are the ones who will not be able to have the abortions.”

Last April, Ms. Montello attended the national pro-choice rally in Washington that drew more than 300,000 people. “I’ve chosen, in a sense,” she says. “My pro-life stems from my pro-choice. The only reason I can be pro-life is because things are pro-choice now.”

Despite the strong feelings on the part of those who are against abortion and those who, as Feminist Union member Kim Roth ’91 puts it, are “pro-woman’s life,” the two groups do not seem to engage in much formal exchange of views. (In this, they do not differ greatly from the rest of the country recently.) During one week last October, Mr. Schwarz and Ms. Peters set up a table in the College Center to display right-to-life literature. “We had people screaming at us,” says Ms. Peters. Some of the right-to-life students report that even when they have expressed their views to other students privately they have been snubbed. “It’s not right,” says Ms. Roth, “but it’s probably true.”

Ms. Roth, believing that neither side is going to change the other, prefers to use her energy organizing buses to marches and writing letters to legislators. “At the march last November,” she recalls, “I felt stunned. Some felt it was just great, they felt empowered. But I felt a lot of hopelessness. I couldn’t believe we were there again.”

Dr. Irena Balawajder, chair of the Vassar Health Service, says the service counsels seven to 10 pregnant women each semester, and she notes that those who contemplate abortion have many concerns. (The health service does not perform abortions; it will, if asked, provide a list of clinics in Dutchess County that do.) Even if a student finally decides to end a pregnancy, and Dr. Balawajder reports that in her four years at Vassar only one student has chosen to take a pregnancy to term, “they are scared, not sure what to expect, sometimes there is guilt or grief. They want reassurance in terms of their future ability to become pregnant.”

The health service does give guidance to students on issues of sexuality: there is written information and one-to-one counseling about birth control, safe sex, and other aspects of sexual interaction in the nineties. During freshman orientation week, nurse practitioner Anne C. Dadarria usually includes some mention of the gynecological services available from the Women’s Health Care Unit, and last fall the Feminist Union sponsored a Women’s Health Care Day. CHOICE sells condoms at a low price (as does the health service) and encourages men and women to come to them with questions about sexual health, although according to Stephanie Vuckovic, few students use the organization. A number of people on campus, including the three chaplains and the Rev. Janet Cooper Nelson, director of religious activities, frequently talk in confidence with students about sexual issues.

Some of the concern that Dr. Balawajder observes in those pregnant students considering abortion probably stems from the questions that inevitably face any woman who considers the issue, whether in fact or theory: does life begin at conception and if it does, is that life more or less important than my life?

For Diane Shinberg ’90, a major in Science, Technology, and Society, the answer is clear: “Life does not begin at conception. Something begins with conception, but it’s cells. There is no consciousness.”

Jodi Sandfort would agree. “I believe that life involves human interaction,” she says. “Is a bit of tissue more important than the woman carrying it?”

In its 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling, the Supreme Court established the 24th week as the critical point in a pregnancy for questions of legal restrictions to abortion. Diana M. Gurieva ’71, president of Planned Parenthood of New York City (see sidebar), points out that the ruling to allow abortion through the 24th week was built on the medical evidence of the time that fetuses could exist outside the womb only after the first six months of gestation. “The cutoff between the second and third trimesters was sort of a setup,” she notes, “because you could expect that at a certain point technology was going to impact on that.”

In the intervening years, technology has become increasingly able to support fetuses outside the womb at earlier and earlier points in the gestation process. “Of course life begins at conception,” says Ms. Gurieva. “We can’t argue over that. What we argue about is the value of that potential life.”

Some students give less on this point than does Ms. Gurieva, but basically they reach the same conclusion. “Even if there is a human life inside you, which I don’t really believe,” says Susan Grobman, “I don’t think anyone can take away that right to decide what is right in your life. The government
Diana M. Gurieva ’71 is president of Planned Parenthood of New York City. With a budget of $13,000,000 and a staff of 300, it is the largest branch of Planned Parenthood in the country.

She is also a cofounder of Reproductive Health Services, the Missouri clinic that figured in the Supreme Court’s recent approval of restrictive abortion legislation in the Webster decision.

“In 1971,” she says, “I got increasingly concerned that where I was in Missouri, women were not able to access legal abortions. It was illegal for doctors to perform them. It was even illegal to counsel or refer to abortion. Being an underground radical type, I joined a group called Clergy Consultation Service, which was operating illegally and referring women for illegal abortions and for abortions in New York State, where abortion had been legalized in 1970.

“I spent almost two years with Clergy Consultation Service, spending one night a week as a volunteer, seeing women who were seeking illegal abortions. The lucky ones that were able to get money together, we were able to refer to New York. And the unlucky ones, those who could not get to New York, or whom we could not get to a local source for a safe illegal abortion, tried knitting needles and coat hangers and all the stories that everybody’s heard, which were very true.”

Early in 1973, shortly after the Supreme Court handed down its decision in Roe v. Wade, Ms. Gurieva received a call from a nurse, who told her to quit her job, because “we’re going to open a clinic so that women in Missouri won’t have to travel to New York.” That spring, Ms. Gurieva and her friend opened Reproductive Health Services, one of the first nonprofit abortion clinics to appear in the Midwest after Roe v. Wade.

Ms. Gurieva’s first job after graduating from Vassar, where she majored in psychology and worked for Senator Eugene McCarthy during his 1968 campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination, was at a house for runaways. There, issues of teenage sexuality and pregnancy compelled attention. Subsequently, she became involved in the pro-abortion/pro-choice movement, to which she has been committed ever since.

Still very much the activist, Ms. Gurieva encourages pro-choice students to educate themselves about the complexities of the issues and then mobilize.

“Students can organize into what is potentially a very powerful political force,” she says. “They can vote now. We couldn’t vote when I was working for McCarthy in ’68. It’s a big difference. A politically active and aware college-age constituency has the potential for carrying a lot more power than maybe they even think they can.”

A.G.

should allow me enough power to make a competent decision. Whether that decision is right or wrong is my problem.”

“There is no authority that can decide when life begins,” says Hilary Goldhammer ’91, a history major who served as a marshal at the Poughkeepsie rally. “Women shouldn’t concentrate on when it is murder or when it isn’t. It’s part of woman’s choice to decide when it is healthiest for her”

Behind these expressions that women ultimately should have control over their bodies is the equally strong belief that choice is part of the larger issue of equal rights for women. “It is interesting,” says Ms. Sandfort, “how various governments around the world manipulate choice to increase or decrease the number of women in the work place. After all, the more choice you give women, the more they will be involved in the economics of a country”

“There are already so many indications that a woman’s place [in our society] is defined,” says Ms. Grobman, “that the absence of choice would entrench us even more. I did have a friend who had an abortion. What would the alternative have meant for her? Possibly not finishing college? It’s like putting a woman right back with bare feet on the kitchen floor.”

“Especially as a black woman,” says Susan Watson ’87, a 36-year-old short story writer who attended the Poughkeepsie rally, “where does the absence of choice leave me? Choice is not a word that exclusively belongs to this subject. I’m pro-choice about everything.”

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Remembering

GERT GARNSEY ’26

G.G.G., one faculty colleague recalls, had “mythological overtones . . . She was representative of a certain way of life, a certain way of looking at the world” associated with Vassar College as a whole.

Frances Prindle Taft ’42
Former AAVC president
AAVC and VC trustee 1973-1985

The symbol of Vassar College for me was not a pink-and-gray banner, not Taylor Gate, nor our hard-to-sing Alma Mater; it was Gertrude G. Garnsey. G.G.G. represented the quality of a Vassar education, a life-long experience where diversity and individuality thrive in an atmosphere of energy and excellence. As director of the AAVC she made the young feel more “mature” and the old feel forever “young.”

The years of Gert’s devotion to Vassar began in 1922, when she entered as a freshman, and ended only with her death on October 22, 1989. The Garnsey years for AAVC began in 1936 when, after 10 years of post-college occupational adventures in New York, Boston, Iowa, and Japan, she returned to College to be executive secretary of AAVC. She moved into the Alumnae House, where, for 33 years, she lavished her attentions on the House and its gardens and above all on its alumnae (all one gender in those days). They all flourished!

The most intense, demanding, and, I guess, rewarding years for me were those I spent as president of AAVC [1966-1972]. If I grew in those years, it was because Gertrude was there to guide me and because we shared a profound love of, and devotion to, Vassar College.

Rosalie Thorne McKenna ’40
AAVC director 1966-1969

G.G.G. stories? I don’t have (or wouldn’t tell)! Gert was a genius at making me feel wanted at Alumnae House. It never mattered how full the house, who I brought, or when I arrived, she always found space. Even when I lived nearby in Millbrook during my 20s, I went to the Alum primarily to see her. As I watched her grub about in her garden behind Williams (all the time asking me about what I was doing) and grouse about other gardeners, my youthful discouragements dissolved.

A bit of gossip, a few laughs, and I forgot why I went. Actually, I always felt her tales out of school were for my ears alone, so I savored and harbored them for a time and forgot them. Maybe that’s why she remained such a good friend to so many of us—we all felt special and we all kept her secrets.

Tanya Goss Evans ’59
Assistant to executive director 1959-1962

Gert was my first introduction to a bona fide “business woman” and working for her was sort of like taking a graduate course in public relations. I remember with great fondness the humor, the tact, the discipline, the dedication, the soft voice, the selflessness, the humility and dignity, and, most of all, the fierce loyalty to Vassar. She was the quintessential “Boss” with a wonderful ability to inspire and encourage and extract the very best, and her magical persuasiveness made saying “No” absolutely impossible.

John Holmes
Secretary of the college 1952-1957

I remember back somewhere in the mid-fifties commenting to a bright dedicated Vassar alum (it could have been Mary Villard), “You realize how lucky Vassar is to have such a consummate professional as Gert Garnsey in the alumnae director’s seat?” Her answer was, “I never think of Gert as a pro. She is simply a warm, dear friend!” Of course, we were both right.

Nelson B. Delavan, Jr.
Nephew

My Aunt Gert was a tomboy who loved dogs and horses and the rough-and-tumble of outdoor life. There is the classic family story of Gert as a young girl summing up at Lakeholme on Cayuga Lake, the family farm where her father was born. There was a large flock of sheep on the farm, headed by a mean ram. One day, as she passed through their pasture, the ram charged her and chased her all the way down the long hillside until they had reached the lake shore. With no place to go, Gert wheeled on the ram and chased it back up the hill again. The story is typical of the spirited young girl who dared the world to challenge her.

Elizabeth Hyde Brownell ’26
Classmate
AAVC and Vassar trustee 1955-1966

Gert was a good Democrat—all enlightened, unfanciful, positive. There was an occasion, just before we were to meet with President Sarah Blanding to discuss Sarah’s and my trip to Chicago, Indianapolis, and St. Paul in search of “significant” gifts to the $25 million fund we were in the midst of raising. I had the temerity to mention that I was going to suggest to S.G.B. that she do a little refurbishing of her wardrobe in the light of the calls to be made on the financial and social leaders of those cities. Behind those glasses, Gert’s eyes turned to steel and she barked: “Elizabeth, you may say you are a Democrat but you are acting like a Republican!” My response was: “No, Gertrood, I am a realist.” The meeting following this exchange should have been tape recorded. The end result—S.G.B. and I went shopping.

Susan Getman Abernethy ’63
Executive director 1973-1975
Assistant to executive director 1964-1967

Gert’s room on the second floor corner, above the Pub, was where President Sarah Gibson Blanding and Assistant to the President Florence (Fliss) Clothier Wislocki ‘26 came to relax over bridge. It was where nightcaps were offered to AAVC board members and Vassar trustees. Issues were aired, information exchanged, lives caught up on, and laughter shared. Often, “Gert’s table” in the AH dining room was the center of the action. Gert sat with her back to the back-terrace window in order to see everyone who entered.
the room; she waved to or got up and hugged alumnae and their spouses and children as soon as she saw them. Everyone across the generations was made to feel welcomed home to Vassar.

Constance Dimock Ellis ’38
Vassar trustee 1969-1972
AAVC trustee 1961-1969

Gert was acutely aware of the real business of Vassar College and concerned that the education it offered was the very best possible. She was fascinated by and supportive of the experiments going on in Vassar classrooms and was an early supporter of the then somewhat radical notion that the whole student mattered, that emotional equilibrium and effective learning went hand in hand. This later bore fruit in Gert’s key role in Vassar’s innovative Mellon program and in other pioneering changes in educational policy.

It was because of her concern for teaching and learning that, when she retired, her friends and admirers established in her honor the Gertrude Garnsey Fund for Experimental Teaching, to which we may now add in memory of a warm, generous woman and an adventurous friend of learning.

Mary Meeker Gesek ’58
AAVC executive director
Associate director 1969-1985
Assistant to executive director 1959-1965

It is impossible to cover the landscape that was Gert in a few words, so I’ve selected just one of many examples of her statesmanship.

Whatever her personal opinion, Gert’s professional position was firmly on the fence during the months of stormy debate that followed announcement of the Vassar-Yale study in 1966. She believed that educational policy was the responsibility of the college’s board of trustees; the alumnae association’s job was to keep its constituency informed about the issues. It was not a comfortable perch for someone so closely identified with AAVC. Many, including several of her oldest friends, believed the decision to move Vassar to New Haven was a fait accompli and that the study was designed to determine how, not whether, to proceed. Others, including some members of the administration, thought alumnae, if not supportive, should be silent. Both camps put enormous pressure on Gert to use her considerable influence to rally support to their side of the debate.

News of the study broke in December of 1966. Early in the winter of ’67, four alumnae submitted copy for a paid ad in the Vassar Quarterly entitled “Is This Trip Necessary?” Certain that it would be read as representing the association’s point of view, Gert opposed running the ad. While not happy with the format, AAVC’s board of directors did not believe it was desirable to suppress alumnae opinion and overruled her objections. Without missing a beat, Gert swung into action and the June issue of the Quarterly carried another paid ad, signed by 63 alumnae, class of 1901 through 1964, that began: “Vassar’s Future: We Are Not Yet Committed To Any One Plan But We Are Committed To The Study Of All Plans.”

C. Gordon Post
Professor emeritus of political science

From the start of Gert Garnsey’s directorship of the AAVC, it was clear that she would make an impact upon both the college and the alumnae. She was far-sighted, clear-headed, a leader among women, and above all, a loyal supporter of the education that Vassar offered.

For me, Gert was more than this. She was a friend of long standing; in fact, that friendship extended far beyond 1969 when we both retired, to 16 years of neighborly visits, Gert in her lovely home overlooking Lake Cayuga, and we, in Aurora, overlooking the same lake. Our visits became shorter and shorter as it became obvious that Gert suffered increasingly; it was also obvious that there was great courage behind a deceptive front. Since 1985, when we returned to Vassar, only holiday greetings passed back and forth. Now only warm and happy recollections remain.

Lynn Bartlett
Professor of English
Secretary of the college 1966-1976

During a time when I seemed to spend almost as much time in Alumnae House as in my office in Main hall, I gained a renewed sense that Gert was Alumnae House, but Alumnae House not as a place, a building, but as a symbol of something beyond the building, something much larger. All the things that I had previously merely sensed about her or merely heard about—the inner mental and emotional strength within that frail frame, the shrewdness and tough-mindedness (in the best sense of those terms), the sharp perceptiveness and knowingsness clothed in a quiet, dry, and good-humored irony—were indeed all there. But what I shall always remember especially about her was the depth of her devotion to Vassar College . . . No matter what her private feelings, she was discreet and judicious in all her dealings . . . and no matter what storms might be swirling around her, she remained calm and controlled, never losing her sense of humor or her capacity to take long and detached views of things. At the same time, for all her institutional loyalty, she never ceased to be completely herself . . . She was a very solid reality and of the best kind.
BOOKS

Books for Quarterly notice should be sent to Vassar Quarterly, Alumnae House, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601. Books for the Alumnae Collection in the library should be sent to Vassar College Special Collections, Box 20, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601, attn: Alumnae Collection

Yona Zeldis McDonough '79, Books editor

In Memoriam:
Mary McCarthy '33

Mary McCarthy '33, noted critic, novelist, and journalist, died of cancer on October 25, 1989. She was 77 years old.

In both her published work and her personal life, Miss McCarthy was fervently motivated by the belief "that there is a truth and that it is knowable." She acted as a sort of intellectual gadfly by provoking others to redefine and perfect their thoughts.

Miss McCarthy won numerous awards throughout her literary career, including two Guggenheim fellowships, the Edward MacDowell Medal for outstanding contributions to literature, and the National Medal for Literature. In 1988, she was elected to membership in the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

She wrote reviews for the Nation and New Republic and later joined the Partisan Review as editor, where her critical appraisals and satiric wit won her national recognition. Her published work includes volumes on travel (The Stones of Florence and Venice Observed), politics (The Mask of State: Watergate Portraits), autobiography (Memories of a Catholic Girlhood and How I Grew), and fiction (Birds of America). Perhaps her best known work is her 1963 novel The Group, a portrait of eight Vassar alumnae that explores in candid detail the day-to-day pressures women faced in the 1930s in the areas of sex, birth control, marriage, motherhood, and careers.

Miss McCarthy’s relationship with her alma mater became temporarily strained over her 1951 article for Holiday, “The Vassar Girl.” In it she expressed disappointment with the conservative Vassar campus of the 1950s, so unlike the bohemian atmosphere she had cherished there in the 1930s. Both this article and The Group shocked the Vassar community. But Miss McCarthy had always sought to awaken and instruct her readers.

A warm regard for her own Vassar experience is evident in Miss McCarthy’s memoirs and much of her fiction. “A good deal of education consists of unlearning,” she wrote in How I Grew. “This was emphatically true of a Vassar education: where other colleges aimed at development, bringing out what was already there like a seed waiting to sprout, Vassar remade a girl. Vassar was transformational.” Similarly, Mary McCarthy helped to transform society’s opinion of the female intellectual, becoming widely respected as “our First Lady of Letters,” as Norman Mailer called her. In doing this, she established a forum for future women’s voices, both in literature and in the world at large.

During the past decade, Mary McCarthy visited Vassar on numerous occasions. In 1982, she spent a week in residence as the first President’s Distinguished Visitor, a program designed by President Virginia Smith to honor Vassar College alumnae/i. Miss McCarthy also attended a ceremony celebrating the acquisition of her personal and professional papers by Vassar in 1985. The collection includes manuscripts, important correspondence, and family photographs. Of the acquisition itself she said, “There is something very personal involved, as though the “private” in private papers couldn’t be shed. So what one wants is a kind of almost protective family environment. I suppose Vassar is a family to me . . ..” She visited the college in 1987 for a book-signing party held in honor of How I Grew, and again in 1988 to read from The Group to mark the 25th anniversary of its publication.

A well-attended memorial service was held by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Miss McCarthy’s publisher, at the Pierpont Morgan Library on November 8, 1989.

Laurel B. Cardone '88

Laurel B. Cardone lives in New York City and is on the staff of Modern Bride.

In 1979, Eunice Clark Jessup ‘33 recalled in a piece for the Quarterly ("Memoirs of Literates and Socialists 1929-33") the doings of a campus literary coterie of the early 1930s that included Eleanor Clark ‘34, novelist and essayist; Muriel Rukeyser ‘34, poet and biographer; Elizabeth Bishop ‘34, poet; and Mary McCarthy ‘33, “who needs no introduction.” The article includes the following reflection:

If we contributed our untutored mite to the social and literary revolutions of the era, the sexual revolution was lost on us. Aside from a furtive look at Lady Chatterly’s Lover and some uncomprehending yak about Freud, we were basically "jeune fille en fleur." A good friend came up to me late at night my senior year and said, “If I told you I wasn’t a virgin, would you hate me?” One can imagine the clank of that remark in today’s Vassar. We considered Mary McCarthy to be on a level of sophistication we wouldn’t attain until after marriage, if then (a hunch that her subsequent novels bore out). Not only was she going to marry an actor, a species that none of us had ever seen except across footlights, but she bought her clothes at Saks instead of Peck & Peck. Another girl said to me once, “Mary McCarthy says there are perverts who make love to dead bodies. Can that be true?” “Well,” I answered weakly, “if Mary says so.” It was a great faculty, but they couldn’t tell us everything.
The Kneeling Bus
by Beverly Coyle
Associate professor of English
Ticknor & Fields, New York, 1990

It is a true pleasure to discuss this wonderful first novel by Beverly Coyle. Told in the first person, The Kneeling Bus is the story of Carrie, a Methodist minister's daughter growing up in rural Florida in the 1950s. The novel traces the progress of Carrie's developing awareness of the world, yet the eight chapters into which the book is divided are not the explicit records that such a description might suggest. Instead, they are subtly and delicately constructed, like ice crystals, organic yet astonishingly complex. We watch Carrie's increasing understanding of what is beautiful, cruel, and passionate in the world. While each chapter has its own self-contained plot, the deeper sense one makes of Ms. Coyle's novel comes from thinking about these story lines in relation to each chapter's sub-plot or its metaphorical elements.

The stories in each chapter are engaging; the consistent quality of the prose is what unites them. It is this careful, eloquent writing that allows us access to the deeper meanings of each chapter, the intricate design of the protagonist's epiphanies. The novel's messages are not blatant; instead they must be gleaned in a thematic or poetic way. And there is certainly much poetry here: whole passages of Ms. Coyle's prose could be separated into stanzas and scanned for meter.

"It was Florida in August and all the women in Boynton Beach had hankies." Carrie's childhood home is a lush landscape where "the mango trees were full of boys." In the grove behind her family's parsonage, Carrie teaches her pet parakeet to talk, mulls over the rite of baptism with Martha, a naive girl so delicate she "could have been carved from pink marble."

As Carrie grows older, her narratives broaden to include an array of situations and characters ranging from the comically (or perhaps tragically) familiar to the carnivalesque. We meet Aunt Dove from Valdez, a town lit nightly by a neon celery stalk, and her dubious suitor, Mr. Frank Bishop of Southern Bell Telephone, a prophet of Direct Dialing. There is also a young man with a disturbing obsession, and Mr. Comfort, a teacher and conscientious objector to World War II, who "continued to pay for his point of view by living in Pompano Beach with a very low social standing and almost no salary." Ms. Coyle's gifts at characterization are evident throughout, as Carrie learns something particular from each of the richly realized people she encounters.

My favorite chapter was "The Baboon Hour," which offers a serious and impassioned look at Carrie's mother, Carolyn. Here Ms. Coyle explores the life of a minister's wife, with its evident demands and restrictions and its accompanying fulfillment. We have been reading about Carrie's mother all along, but in this chapter, the middle-aged Carolyn discovers that she is unexpectedly pregnant. Ms. Coyle honestly portrays the psychological and physical difficulties of Carolyn's pregnancy. And the new character introduced here, Rachel Beales, deserves a novel all her own.

Jessica Neely '82

Jessica Neely is a fiction writer and teacher living in Washington, DC. She was recently awarded a grant for fiction from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace
by Sara [Loop] Ruddick '57
Beacon Press, Boston, 1989

Like a Margaret Mead observing the American landscape of the late 20th-century, Sara Ruddick—doctor of philosophy, activist, spouse, and "anthropologist of mothering"—sets her sights in this study on the conceptual context of maternal thinking. Not to be confused with the biological process that creates motherhood, "maternalness," as elucidated by Ms. Ruddick, is a concept that transcends gender and which can, she argues, provide remedies for much that troubles our strife-plagued world.

After examining the activities and values associated with maternal thinking—and the flaws within it—Ms. Ruddick uses the framework as a springboard to discuss the philosophy of peace. She considers maternal thinking as a visionary standpoint from which to criticize the destructiveness of war and to advocate nonviolence. Through daily struggles to preserve the peace and effect compromise, mothers are, she says, instru-

ments of conscience, effecting on a small scale what could be accomplished globally.

To defend her viewpoint, Ms. Ruddick examines the rhetoric, terminology, and changing technology of war, explores male and female reactions to death, and contrasts the militaristic and maternal conceptions of the human body—the former justifies organized death, she says, while the latter promises life.

After proposing the general framework of maternal thinking as nurturer of peace, Ms. Ruddick turns specifically to examples of women's politics of resistance and response to dictatorship, notably the madres of Argentina and Chile, and their continuation of the pacifist tradition set forth by Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

A memorable and refreshing subtext in this work is Ms. Ruddick's marriage of maternal thinking and feminism. All too often, these standpoints cross swords in popular and scholarly documentation, as well as in ubiquitous media commentaries. Ms. Ruddick, however, always a pluralist accepting myriad truths and perspectives, views them as allies. In the fight to end the immorality of organized violence, it is time, she urges, for all women to join as one.

Since history was first recorded in the days of Herodotus, definitions of male/female, masculine/feminine, and war/peace have been cultural denominations. With Maternal Thinking in hand, the reader is invited to reflect on his or her own maternal empaties and to reinvent a politics of joy and peace that transcends cultural, racial, and social restrictions. The aim is to halt the lunacy of aggression and violence etched in the final years of the 20th century.

Mary Ann McLaughlin '81

Mary Ann McLaughlin is an editor/writer with experience in social science and environmental publications.

The Water Walker
by Nancy Willard
Lecturer in English
Random House, New York, 1989

It comes as no surprise to learn that Nancy Willard had a great-grandmother in Deep River, Iowa, who believed she could turn water into holy water simply by chanting a few words. Like her great-grandmother, Ms. Willard believes that language has transformative powers. The poems in her latest collection, Water Walker, support Ms. Willard's magical view of life, a belief in the liveliness of things named.

"Consider how the other half lives," suggests the speaker in "Saints Lose Back." And that is exactly what Ms. Willard does in choosing subjects like hardware stores, fish, potatoes, water, and sports headlines. Deemed unworthy of our attention, these subjects generally remain hidden from view.
Tying the Knot: A Guide to Emotional Well-Being from Engagement to the Wedding Day

Yona Zeldis McDonough

When Yona Zeldis became engaged several years ago, she marched off to a local bookstore, a sensible reaction in an era when there are a dozen (at least) how-to books offering strategies and solutions for every sin, symptom, syndrome, and sacrament imaginable. Ms. Zeldis, however, was not searching for advice on how to attain the perfect wedding, the usual pursuit at this stage. Her immediate interest was the travel section. She was thinking ahead to the honeymoon. But she was on the slippery slope.

For it wasn't far from Caribbean Getaways to Weddings, Parties, and Event Planning. The shelves there were stacked with pictorial tomes brimming with authoritative advice on everything a bride-to-be should know. A perfect wedding (and perfect married life), these volumes seemed to suggest, could be Yona's if only she were careful to select the perfect invitations, floral arrangements, and color scheme.

Ms. Zeldis, now Yona Zeldis McDonough, suspected there was more to this wedding business than pulling off a stunning party. In Tying the Knot, she brings a welcome, even cheering, dose of reality and common sense to her warm, insightful, and fundamentally useful guide to getting married.

She has written a wedding how-to book all right, but not one, she rightly cautions, that will "help you plan your wedding according to a neatly organized time table or offer tips on the best way to find a caterer or buy a wedding dress." No, Ms. McDonough's subjects are the complicated feelings, altered relationships, and down-to-earth considerations leading from engagement through the wedding day.

Though written for women, Tying the Knot, with its emphasis on the human dimension of getting married, has as much to say to men. The book starts with a chapter on the engagement itself and how, despite its contemporary informality, this ancient declaration alters the outlook and behavior of both the bride- and groom-to-be. In this chapter and throughout the book, Ms. McDonough shares lively, sympathetic anecdotes that animate her observations.

Those who prefer to approach weddings and marriage as if this rite and institution were all about dreamy bliss instead of all about every ribsticking emotion in the human universe should probably avoid Tying the Knot. Other couples setting out on the ancient path will find this positive, proactive, clear-eyed (and well written) primer to the shared epoch preceding marriage every bit as useful as the prettiest party planner in the wedding section of the neighborhood bookstore.

Eric Marcus '80

Noted and Received

Nonfiction

Stolen Words: Forays into the Origins and Ravages of Plagiarism

by Thomas Mallon

Stolen Words: Forays into the Origins and Ravages of Plagiarism

by Thomas Mallon

According to Thomas Mallon, plagiarism isn't exactly murder. But he concedes that it is a bad thing which does considerable damage to everyone involved. Stolen Words is his account of literary thefts in centuries past and our own. What prompts the plagiarist? What harm is there in it? What punishment is meted out for the transgression? These are some of the questions Thomas Mallon attempts to answer. Packed Continued on page 34
The Lure of the X-Rated

Men Confront Pornography
Edited by Michael S. Kimmel '72

In a 1982 article in the Village Voice, feminist critic B. Ruby Rich issued this challenge to her male readers: "Finally, here's a proper subject for the legions of feminist men: let them undertake the analysis that can tell us why men like porn (not, piously, why this or that exceptional man does not) ... how Oedipal formations feed the drive, and how any of it can be changed." In Men Confront Pornography, Michael Kimmel, a sociologist at Rutgers University, has collected 35 essays by men who do just that. The men writing here—among them cartoonist Jules Feiffer, novelist and essayist Philip LaPata, psychoanalytic critic Jeffrey Masson, and social scientist Edward Donnerstein—explore what extent pornography shapes and informs their feelings and perceptions about men's sexuality, women's sexuality, and relations between the sexes. Examining both the political and the personal, the topics covered here—incorporating the relationship between pornography and violence against women, fantasy and male sexuality, the Meese Commission and the question of censorship, as well as the politics of feminism and pornography—indicate the wide range of voices with which men speak to this issue. Provocative, disturbing, and enlightening, Men Confront Pornography is an important addition to the ongoing debate. Here is an excerpt from the introduction, written by Mr. Kimmel:

Men look at pornography, but we do not see it. We read pornography, but it is not literature. We watch pornographic films, but we are indifferent to narrative content or cinematic technique. And pornography is not just men watching. It is men producing images for men to consume. And consume it we do. In 1984, for example, 200 million issues of 800 different hard and soft core magazines were sold in the United States alone, generating over $750 million.

Men consume pornography, using pornographic images for sexual arousal, usually without considering the relationship between what's in the pictures or stories and the sexual pleasure we seek. What matters with pornography is its utility, its capacity to arouse. Its value appears to be contained in its function. And most of the images produced by men to be consumed by men are images of women. In 1970, the President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography found that 90 percent of all pornographic material is geared to male heterosexuals and 10 percent is geared to male homosexuals, and that consumers of pornography are "predominately white, middle-class, middle-aged married males." Though today more women are both producing and consuming pornography, and men always appear in gay male pornography, the percentages probably remain comparable; I'd estimate that now male heterosexual pornography might compose 80 percent of the market, with gay men constituting 15 percent and women the remaining 5 percent.

As men have been producing pornography for other men to watch, read, and look at, women began, with the rise of the women's movement in the 1960s, to talk about pornography, about how they feel about seeing other women's bodies portrayed in pornography, about how pornography makes them feel about themselves, about their sexuality, about other women, about men. The debate about pornography has split the women's movement in painful disagreement, dividing women on issues as fundamental as the nature of women's oppression, the organization and expression of sexuality, and the forms of political resistance to women's oppression. To some women, pornography is, in the words of Susan Brownmiller, "the undiluted essence of anti-female propaganda." To these women, pornography graphically illustrates the subordination of women in our culture. And what is particularly objectionable about pornography is that it renders this brutal subordination so that men can experience sexual arousal and pleasure from it. Pornography, they argue, "makes sexism sexy," as John Stoltenberg writes in this volume. And they feel it is a major cause of men's violence against women—especially rape. As Robin Morgan wrote, "Pornography is the theory, rape is the practice."

Other women are distrustful of feminist-inspired efforts to combat pornography. Some have claimed that pornography helped them to break away from traditional passive definitions of women's sexuality and to claim a more active, vital sexuality. Some women are even attempting to create their own pornography about lustful women who act on sexual feelings and initiate sexual encounters.

What have men had to say about the pornography debate? Frankly, very little. In large part, men's response to this debate has been a deafening silence. Perhaps it is the sheepish silence that conceals a guilt of the pleasures taken from pornography. Perhaps it is the frightened silence of the culpable child caught with his hand in the cookie-jar. Perhaps it is the angry silence that seeks to protect privileges now threatened by women's interference. Perhaps it is the bored silence of a non-issue, of men who know that anti-pornography feminists are not going to put Playboy out of business. Of course, for many men, there is silence about the question of pornography because there is no question: pornography is a vital part of many men's sexuality, and the feminist debate may threaten that privilege. Silence is a refusal to acknowledge the debate. Perhaps all these; perhaps more. I think that men have been the silent spectators in the debate about pornography because, quite simply, we don't know what to say. Even among those men who, in general, sup-

"Although most pornographic images are of women, pornography is, at its heart, about men."


**BOOKS**

Continued from page 32

with literary anecdote aplenty, *Stolen Words* probes the thought-provoking issues raised by this most unusual of intellectual crimes.

Y.Z.M.

*Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth Century America* by Ann Braude '76

Beacon Press, Boston, 1989

The Preschool Years: *Family Strategies That Work* by Ellen Galinsky '64 and Judy David Times Books, New York, 1988

Excerpt: “As parents of preschoolers, each of us imagines that while in everyone else's house parents and children are sitting cozily side by side talking and looking at books, only our child is jumping on the dining room table. While other people's children are playing catch, only our child is throwing the ball at our face. While other people's children are going cheerfully to bed at night, only our child is standing at the top of the stairs saying that there are monsters in the room. We imagine that our child is being difficult because we are older parents or younger parents, because we work too hard at our jobs or we've devoted ourselves to our children too much, because we're rich or poor, because . . . Yet in all of our homes, no matter the circumstances, similar scenes are taking place.”

Ecological Revolutions: *Nature, Gender, and Science in New England* by Carolyn Merchant '58

The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1989

Composition as a Human Science: *Contributions to the Self-Understanding of a Discipline* by Louise Wetherbee Phelps '62

Oxford University Press, New York, 1988

Art as Spectacle: *Images of the Entertainer since Romanticism* by Naomi Gargill Ritter '59

University of Missouri Press, 1989

Mother and Daughter by Gertrud L. Wyatt

Wellesley, MA, 1989

A “personal biography” of writer Cornelia Wyatt '64

**Fiction**

Special Interests by Linda Wollner Cashdan '64

St. Martin's Press, New York, 1990

Romantic intrigue in Washington, D.C.

The Salt Point by Paul Russell

Assistant professor of English

E. P. Dutton, New York, 1990

Kill the Messenger by Elizabeth Daniels Squire '47

St. Martin's Press, New York, 1990

“A newspaper mystery.”

**Children**

A Good Knight Story by E.J. Jagen and Dennis V.N. McCarthy

co-edited by Patricia J. Cooper '78

White Feather & Company, Solomons, MD, 1989

**Poetry**

To a Sailor: Poems by Dora Rosenbaum and Mary McGreedy '57

P.O. Box 900, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Fragments of Stained Glass III by Joan C. Westcott '41

Sarasota, Florida, 1988

**Plays**

Waterworks by E.J. Safirstein '83


This play was the 1988 cowinner in the American College Theatre Festival's Short Play Award Program.

**Music**

Two Plus Two: New American Piano Music by Two Men and Two Women performed by Margaret Aydelotte Mills '55

Newport Classic, CD and cassette formats, 1989

106 Putnam St., Providence, RI

This first solo recording by Ms. Mills includes *Intercalations* by Richard Wilson, Vassar professor of music, written for the performer in 1986. Also, pieces by composers Elizabeth Lauer, Miriam Gideon, and Anthony Newman.
From the AAVC President: Our New Wave of Vols

As AAVC president, I am sometimes questioned about the volunteer support offered to Vassar College by young alumnae/i. Young people want to know how they can contribute (a call to the AAVC offices at Alumnae House can connect anyone to the varied opportunities offered through club and class work, including student recruiting, public relations, fundraising, career networking, and event planning). They want to know whether they can make meaningful contributions, will they be made welcome by older alumnae/i, will there be chances to meet their peers?

For their part, alumnae who have given many years and thousands of hours of volunteer time to Vassar wonder whether their young colleagues are making the same commitment.

To both groups, I am able to answer with a single, resounding Yes!

Some examples:

The leadership of our 79 club networks includes 23 presidents, 56 admission chairs, and 35 other officers who graduated between 1975 and 1989—people such as David Weintraub ’81 who is president of the South Florida Vassar Club, and the husband and wife team of David Dufresne ’81 and Christina Bachelder Dufresne ’81, who head up Central New Jersey. They recognize, as their predecessors did, that Vassar’s continuing strength depends in large measure upon the volunteer and financial support of her alumnae/i.

And they know that as the college’s representatives at the regional level, they and the Vassar clubs they lead play an important role in sustaining and expanding that support. Under the direction of these young alums, club and regional activities continue to focus on alumnae/i and community relations, student recruitment, career networking, and scholarship fundraising.

Activity among the classes of the ’70s and ’80s is also flourishing. Alumnae and alumni are returning in droves for their 5th and 10th reunions. For the reunion coming up in June, Lori Rhodes ’84, Amelie Tseng ’84, Jeff Weinstock ’85, and Debbie Hertz ’85 are now hard at work planning the schedule of events for their respective classes; we anticipate that hundreds of their classmates will return to campus June 8, 9, and 10.

In addition, seeing each other in the years between reunions is just as important to younger alumnae/i, perhaps more so, as it is to those of us who graduated in earlier classes. Examples of recent activities include:

- Some 32 young alums attended AAVC’s Vassar in Chicago program last April.
- The class of ’76 returned to Vassar last November for a mini-reunion at Alumnae House. They visited with faculty guests and attended programs on campus.
- The class of ’81 met in Central Park in New York City in August for a party to celebrate 600 Nights Til Reunion. The class of ’89, meanwhile, had a 100 Nights After Graduation party in New York City on September 9. Not satisfied with just one party, the class of ’83 scheduled a series of Thursday night get-togethers in Boston, Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia in June and July.
- Young alums also turned out to support Vassar’s crew team at various October competitions: the Head of the Connecticut on October 8; the Head of the Charles in Boston on October 22nd; and the Head of the Schuylkill in Philadelphia on the 28th. Young alumnae/i are important components of Vassar’s student recruiting efforts. Many, working through the admission committees of the clubs and with the Office of Admission, interview applicants, represent Vassar at college fairs, and talk about Vassar today to parents and potential students.

Others provide career advice and networking services both on and off campus, again through the clubs as well as through programs planned by the Center for Career Development and Field Work.

In fundraising for Vassar, the Annual Fund is tapping the organizational talents of many young volunteers—such as Daniel Hinerfield ’85 in Los Angeles, C. Forbes Sargent ’82 in Boston, and Pam Costello Speer ’81 and Mark Ordan ’79 in New York City—through its new 21st Century Committee. The goal of this committee, which has branches in major cities around the country, is to increase giving among young alums.

Younger classes are also providing their fair share of leaders for AAVC’s needs. These include Kevin Green ’85 and Barbara Aaron ’84 of the nominating committee, and Karen Cox ’80 and David Rosenbaum ’83, members of the AAVC board.

Are young alums committed to Vassar? All in all, their enthusiasm seems boundless. Perusing a recent column in Class Notes, my attention was grabbed by the announcement of the birth of a member of the class of 2011. And we don’t even have a committee for that kind of giving.

Liz Wexler Quinlan ’59
AAVC president
**The NYC Vassar Club**

The Vassar Club of New York is unique in more ways than one. It is located in the area of the United States with the highest concentration of Vassar alumnae/i—some 3,400 live in Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island, and the Bronx. (Brooklyn, with 500 Vassar residents, has recently established its own club.) With more than 900 dues-paying members, it is the single largest Vassar club. It is also the only Vassar club with its own offices and paid staff: a full-time professional executive director and part-time assistant director, who together administer the day-to-day affairs of the club, respond to all types of alumnae/i inquiries, and assist volunteers in planning club events.

In recent years, the club has more than once been a victim of the vagaries of the Manhattan real estate market. For 10 years the group had offices in and access to the facilities of the Lotos Club. About three years ago, however, says current club president Ron Schwartzman '75, the Lotos Club decided not to renew the Vassar club's lease. New facilities were found in the Chemists' Club on 41st Street near Madison Avenue. But when the chemists sold their building about a year ago, and extensive interior renovations were begun, both clubs needed to find new quarters. The Vassar club moved its offices to the adjacent 295 Madison Avenue; it maintains its association with the Chemists Club.

That association, along with a yearly per person fee of $100 (above and beyond Vassar Club dues), gives club members entry to the facilities of five other New York clubs: Princeton, Williams, Women's National Republican, City Mid-Day, and Club 101.

Mr. Schwartzman notes that the Vassar club is entirely self-supporting. It strives to attract members with a wide and interesting variety of programs: career panels, movie nights, museum tours, lectures, debates, scholarship benefits, as well as informal job and housing networks. In the fall and winter of 1989, he says, the club offered a tour of the Cooper Hewitt museum's Alexander Calder exhibit, given by textiles curator Gillian MacBain Moss '58; a lecture on Velazquez by Vassar assistant professor of art history Steven Ostrow, and a subsequent trip to the Velazquez show at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; a pre-election debate on New York City's proposed charter reform; and an evening at the New York Historical Society (see separate story, this page).

Events scheduled for the year end and early 1990 included a Holiday Open House, with underwriting—a first for the club—by the Rome-based Fendi fashion house; a visit to Manhattan's Abigail Adams Smith Museum; a scholarship benefit party with author Letitia Baldrige '46 in celebration of her new book on etiquette; and the ever-popular Broadway scholarship benefit, which this year will be *Lettice and Lorelai,* starring Maggie Smith.

For more information about the New York Vassar Club, contact Mona Lober, Executive Director, at 295 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10017-6304; telephone, 212/949-7994.

Ron Schwartzman '75, NYC club president

For details on the upcoming Broadway benefit and information about hotel discounts in New York and London, see the club's notices in this issue's PP&T (page 39).

W.S.G.

**An American Sampler: Close-up of a NYC Event**

When the New York City Vassar Club gathered in early October at the New York Historical Society, it was to share wine and cheese, converse, conduct some club business, and view an exhibit that had opened there just one week earlier, *An American Sampler: Folk Art from the Shelburne Museum.*

Present to provide the New York club with a personal introduction to the Shelburne folk art was Vassar trustee Eugenie Aiguier Havemeyer '51, whose husband, Harry, also present, was the nephew of the Shelburne's founder, Electra Havemeyer Webb. Electa Webb, Mrs. Havemeyer says, shocked the aesthetic sensibilities of her parents—collectors of the works of Degas, Manet, and other Impressionists—when she acquired her first piece of folk art, a wooden cigar store Indian, in 1907. But, trusting her tastes, Mrs. Webb continued collecting quilts, trade signs, scrimshaw, carvings, carousel animals, weather vanes, and other types of American folk art, ultimately acquiring thousands of pieces. In 1947, she established the Shelburne, her vast array of folk art objects its original endowment.

Mrs. Havemeyer's anecdotes about the folk art exhibit were followed by a brief but comprehensive introduction to the New York Historical Society itself, given by its president and chief executive officer, Barbara Knowles Debs '53.

Founded in 1804, the historical society, Mrs. Debs says, is the second oldest in the United States. With millions of sheets of original historical documents, more paintings than the Whitney museum, and one of the two or three greatest collections of American painting, it is, Mrs. Debs says, "a great repository of what is now fashionably called 'material culture.'"

"It's not only a venerable institution and a collector's institution," she says, "but it's a very challenging institution."
Black Alum Forum 3
The first mailing informing members of the African American Alumnae/i of Vassar College (Triple A VC) of the upcoming Black Alumnae/i Forum 3 has gone out. The forum will be April 6 to 8 at Vassar College; program chairs are Kevin Green '85 and Valerie Hartman '79.
African American alumnae/i who did not receive the mailing and who are interested in the program and/or in being added to the Triple A VC mailing list should contact Krista Johnsen at the AAVC; telephone: 914/437-5442.

Informal Reunion Schedule, 1990
The following classes have scheduled informal reunions at Alumnae/i House for 1990.
1947: June 15, 16, 17
1967: April 27, 28, 29
1932: October 2, 3, 4
1943: October 7, 8, 9
1958: November 2, 3, 4
Additional details will be mailed, along with registration forms, in advance of the informal.

Bio Updates To Be Sent to Reuners
This spring, a brief questionnaire will be sent to the members of several classes reuniting in June 1991. The questionnaire seeks address, career, volunteer, and other biographical information that will keep AAVC records up to date. The classes scheduled to receive the survey are '86, '81, '76, '71, '66, and '61.

Class Nominating Deadlines for '90 and '91
If you are a nominating chair for a class reuniting this year and your slate of new officers is not now on file with AAVC, you are late. Please forward it to Terri O'Shea so that it can be included in the final reunion mailing.
If you are a nominating chair for a class reuniting in 1991, it is not too soon to begin the process of gathering names of potential candidates for office. A list of the new slate of officers to be elected in June should be sent to AAVC no later than March 15, 1991. This will ensure that the slate will be distributed prior to reunion.
If you are president of a class reuniting in 1991 and do not yet have a nominating chair, now is the time to put one in place.

President Visits Clubs Nationwide
President Frances Fergusson's calendar in 1989/90 includes visits to nine clubs. Coming up this spring are stops at the clubs in New York City (March 12) and Maryland (April 29). Already this year, President Fergusson has visited Pittsburgh, Kansas City, St. Louis, and Hawaii. As this issue was going to press, she was scheduled to be making February trips to Florida with stops at the clubs in Naples, Sarasota, and West Central Florida, and to Arizona, with visits to Tucson and Phoenix.

New Officers to Get Orientation at Reunion
On Sunday, June 10, 1990 (Reunion weekend), AAVC will hold a breakfast meeting in the Dodge Room, Central Dining, during which there will be a brief orientation for all newly elected class officers. Handbooks for class officers will be distributed, and AAVC staff and board members will be available to answer questions. Retiring officers are also invited to attend and to extend suggestions and guidance to their successors.

Leadership Workshop
AAVC will host a workshop for class leaders September 14, 15, and 16 at Alumnae House. All newly elected class officers as well as those from classes reuniting in 1991 are expected to attend. Officers who could not attend the workshop this past fall will also be invited.
The workshop will include sessions outlining the duties and responsibilities of class presidents, vice presidents, treasurers, secretaries, and class correspondents; how to set goals and meet them; and services available from AAVC to do the job. There will also be plenty of opportunities to share ideas with volunteers from across the generations.
One idea we urge now, is for class officers to plan an executive committee meeting for the 16th. It is an excellent opportunity to take advantage of the gathering of your committee members, the availability of AAVC staff, and the enthusiasm and ideas that will have

Katharine Forbes Erskine '11: 1889-1990

Katharine Forbes Erskine '11, age 100, talks with alumnae on campus for AAVC’s Fall Council in October. Mrs. Erskine, who was still an active volunteer 78 years after her graduation, died in January.
percolated throughout the weekend to plan programs for your class.
More detailed information about the workshop program will be mailed, with
a registration form, this summer.
Contact: Terri O'Shea, assistant
director for classes, 914/437-5439.

Krista Johnsen '88
J oin s AAVC sta f f

Krista J. Johnsen '88 has been appointed
AAVC assistant for recent classes.
Ms. Johnsen was a political science
major and an active member of the
college community. She served as
freshman class president, played varsity
field hockey, was an assistant student
fellow, and a member of the Student
Class Council, Student Entertainment
Committee, and Dorm Senate.
Her work as a student assistant in the
Annual Fund office during her
sophomore year and as the business and
international intern in the Center for
Career Development during her junior
and senior years put her in touch with
alumnae/i in two important areas of
voluntary support for the college.
Following graduation, Ms. Johnsen
worked in Dusseldorf, West Germany, for
several months, programming computers.
Upon her return to the United States,
she moved to Boston, where she worked
as an accountant and became involved
with environmental issues through
Greenpeace. During the past year, she
also traveled throughout the Far East,
focusing her journey mainly on New
Zealand and India.
In her new position, Ms. Johnsen will
plan and implement programs and
events for young alumnae/i and
undergraduates.

AAVC
Telephone Directory

Record Room
914/437-5445
Executive Director
914/437-5437
Associate Director for Classes
914/437-5439

Associate Director for Clubs
914/437-5441
Assistant for Recent Classes
914/437-5442

Secretary to the AAVC Board
914/437-5436
Editor Vassar Quarterly
914/437-5447

Assistant Editor Vassar Quarterly
914/437-5448

• Visit an undergraduate son or daughter.
• Get to know Vassar in the '90's.
• Have a roommates' reunion.
• Take a nostalgia bath.
• Enjoy the beautiful Mid-Hudson Valley.

There are so many reasons to come back. And
Alumnae House awaits you with handsome public spaces
like our newly decorated living room, good food, fine
accommodations, and the extras that make it Alumnae
House and not just another hotel.

For more information call (914) 437-7100, or
write to Alumnae House, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601.

Open to the public.
PERSON PLACE & THING
Vassar faculty, students, alumnae/i, and staff are invited to submit items to Person Place & Thing. There is no charge for this bulletin board service. Submissions should be typed. 75 words or less. Deadlines are three months in advance of each issue. Please note that AAVC cannot verify the terms of ads that are unrelated to AAVC activities.

The long-awaited New York production of the London hit comedy Lettice and Lovage, starring Maggie Smith, will be the 67th annual Scholarship Benefit for the New York Vassar Club on Tuesday, April 3, 1990. Written by prize-winning playwright Peter Shaffer, author of Amadeus, Equus, and Royal Hunt of the Sun, the play opened to rave reviews in London's West End in 1987. Miss Smith recreates for the Broadway stage her lead role as Lettice, an eccentric opera singer, now a tour guide, who befriends Lovage, a staunch upholder of conservative, “very English” values (Margaret Tyzack). Through many zany conflicts and happenings, they come to appreciate each other's differences and friendship grows.

Plans for the evening also include 5 P.M. cocktails and 6 P.M. dinner at Sardi's, located just around the corner from the theater.

Tickets: $160, $110. Pre-theater dinner at Sardi's: $36. For theater tickets and dinner reservations or further information, call the Vassar Club of New York at 212/849-7994, or write the Club at 295 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10017-6340.

The Vassar Club of New York is currently aiding eight undergraduates and has provided scholarship assistance to 242 students through the generosity of benefit supporters over the years. All Vassar College alumnae/i, their families and friends are cordially invited to this year's event.

The Philadelphia Vassar Club will present Dolobran as its 24th annual Designers' Show House. Dolobran is one of the most striking structures made by the noted American architect Frank Furness. Dolobran, like the mansions of Newport, “combines the colors and massiveness of Romanesque Revival with certain details derived from the Georgian and Federal periods.” The owner has hired architects to restore this historically significant Victorian edifice, and the Philadelphia Vassar Club is proud to be participating in a project that will not only benefit our local scholarship fund, but will also make a lasting contribution to the Philadelphia area. Dolobran will be open to the public from Saturday, May 5, to Monday, May 28, 1990. Hours: Monday through Friday, 10 A.M. to 3 P.M.; Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings, 6 P.M. to 9 P.M.; Saturday and Sunday, Noon to 4 P.M. Admission: $10 at the door. For additional information, contact Sarah J. Warden [74]. Telephone: 215/356-0802.

Vassar Institute of Publishing and Writing presents a week-long intensive study of children's books in the marketplace, exploring all stages of the writing, editorial, production, and marketing processes, including critique of students' manuscripts and artwork, June 10-17. The week features top professionals from the children's book industry, including: Ann Martin (creator of The Babysitter's Club series); Nancy Willard (Newbery Medalist and Vassar Lecturer); publisher Margaret K. McElderry; artist David Wiesner (Caldecott Honour Book winner); and artist's agent Dylis Evans. A special program of events on Friday and Saturday is open to the public, with meals and lodging available on request. Further details from Publishing Institute, Vassar College, Box 300, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601; or call the Office of Conferences and Summer Programs at 914/437-5900.

Hot off the press! Shakespeare Garden note cards and postcards by artist Ellie Daniels '56. Eight 5-by-7, full-color note cards, boxed with envelopes, $7.50 per box. Ten 4-by-6 postcards, $4 per box. Also available, Vassar Farm note cards and postcards at same prices. Vermont residents add 4% sales tax. Postage and handling, add $2 on orders of $7.50; add $3.50 for orders up to $30; add $5 for orders up to $50. Make checks payable to Quadri, P.O. Box 26, Richmond VT 05477-0026. Telephone: 802/434-3899. A percentage of all proceeds will be used for class of 1966 25th reunion gift.

Lesbian and Gay Alums: we're planning Reunion '90 events now. We need your comments and suggestions. For further information please contact Ann Northrop '70 (home: 212/787-5743; office: 212/633-8920) or Eric Marcus '80 (home and office: 415/673-3214).

Rugby alums. An Old Pink alumni side is now being formed to play spring and summer 1990 rugby tournaments. Any and all alums who are still playing or would like to start contact Gary Heavner [77] at PO. Box 442, Pomonca, NY 10970; telephone: 914/362-1088. Dates and locations of tournaments have not yet been determined. Looking forward to some reunion rucking.

Yes, there is a Vassar sailing team, and you can support us by buying official Sailing Team T-shirts. One hundred percent cotton, in large or X-large, with logo on front, and 'VC' in flag code on the back in red and blue: $12 each plus $1 postage. Also, we've heard there was a team at Vassar in the '50s. Anyone with information, please write to us! Sailing Team, Box 1650, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY, 12601.

For well loved daughters, granddaughters, for anyone who cooks and loves flowers—Kitchen Bouquet Cookbook. Imaginative arrangements in color by award-winning team Boots (Edith Johnston '39) and Arend Vyn, over 300 treasured and tested recipes, a 47-year collection. Benefits Grand Rapids Vassar Club Scholarship Fund. Order from Boots Vyn, 2726 Middleboro Lane, N.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49506. $16.45 postpaid; Michigan addresses add $.60 sales tax.

Save on hotels in New York and London. By joining the Vassar Club of New York, you can save substantially on hotels and meals when staying in Manhattan and London. We are making this special offer to Vassar alumnae/i throughout the country. To learn more about this opportunity, contact Mona Lober, Executive Administrator, Vassar Club of New York, 295 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10017. Telephone: 212/949-7994.

Trustworthy, young poet/writer seeks some sort of housesitting (or extremely low rental) position in French or Italian city. Paris, Nice, Marseille, Strasbourg, Rome, Milan, or environs preferred but not required. If this fails, I'm also interested in obtaining overseas employment (previously employed in major London investment bank; presently employed as researcher in environmental field). Position in communications/arts or international affairs most desired. Wo/man may not live by poetry alone, but with your help I can try. Other suggestions invited. Please contact Gerald Fox ['88] at 2944 Upton St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008; telephone 202/363-6139.

I am looking for an apartment to sublet in New York City for May and June, while I play in the American Ballet Theatre Orchestra. I don't practice in the apartment, I don't smoke, and I am very responsible. I'm glad to take care of mail, phone messages, and plants. Please contact Joan Kalisch [71], 511 Texas Ave., Austin, TX 78705. Telephone collect: 512/489-0660.

Continued on page 62
Wanted: News for Class Notes

Handy postcard enclosed.
What's New with You?

Let your friends know on the postcard enclosed in this magazine.
What's New with You?

Let your friends know on the postcard enclosed in this magazine.
For rent: Seabrook Island, South Carolina, Pelican Watch Villa directly on clean, unpolluted, white sand beach where you can swim, race dolphins, hunt shells, fish, tally shrimp boats, and laze in the sun. Enjoy Charleston (23 miles). Sensational seafood and southern specialties. Our all-electric, fully air-conditioned condo sleeps four and is rentable weekly or monthly. Call owner Patricia Kersten Brooks ['47] at 203/966-0610.

Aspen, Colorado. For rent: Elegantly restored, spacious Victorian in Aspen’s West End. Beautifully furnished, two-story house with two bedrooms, two baths, exquisite views, fireplace, cable, basement laundry, and maid service on request. It is only a five-minute walk to town and the lifts. Available by the night, weekly, or monthly. Contact Marta Chaikovska ['72], P.O. Box 9698, Aspen, CO 81612. Telephone: 303/925-2272.

Paris: Large studio, two bedrooms, kitchen, bath, elevator, central heating; quiet, sunny, top floor. For rent during summer, fall. Length of time negotiable. Mrs. F.G. Phillips [Margaret Harmsworth '51], 15 Square de Chatillon, 75014 Paris. Telephone: Paris 45 42 57 03.
Letters

Continued from page 64

We too are upset by the gratuitous prejudice, ignorance, mistrust, and fanaticism which have developed on both sides. However, Ms. Cooley forgets that not all Palestinians are engaged in an effort to establish a state alongside Israel and that groups within the PLO still adhere to the Palestinian covenant which proclaims the destruction of Israel and the expulsion of most of its Jewish inhabitants. When Yasser Arafat even mumbles a discreet recognition of Israel, he is met by threats and forced into equally evasive retractions. Some Palestinians simply see the “two-state solution” as the road to the eventual eradication of Israel. The growing Muslim fundamentalist party of Hamas advocates an Islamic republic.

As Ms. Cooley, I am struck by the discipline and tenacity of the Palestinians during the current events. However, I am also struck by the amount of murder, torture, and rape meted out by their shock troops to those whom they view as collaborators with Israel. To date, 125 Palestinians have been killed by fellow Arabs for so-called collaboration. How disciplined is stone-throwing, firebombing of buses and cars, and stabbing innocent civilians whose only crime usually is being Jewish? Does one express devotion to the land by burning its forests? To write of the brutality and excesses on the part of Israeli soldiers without noting the violence of the Palestinians is misguided and misleading.

I doubt whether cutting aid to Israel will bring a solution any closer. What is necessary are state men on both sides who have courage, vision, patience, and wisdom. The Americans hopefully can then bring them together. Let us hope that such leaders will emerge soon.

Rivkah Duker Fishman ’67
Jerusalem, Israel

Beyond Class Notes

After years of reading the surface facts of the class notes, one is reminded of Wally Shaw’s remark in My Dinner with André: “By performing these roles we show how we’re hiding the reality of ourselves.” Do you ever consider that the inner reality might be interesting to track for the reader?

Miriam Dodge Young ’42
San Francisco, California

A Quake Encounter

On Friday, October 20, at noon, I sat at the San Francisco Airport in a window seat of United Airlines flight 206, awaiting departure to Houston. I could hardly believe my good fortune. I had survived the earthquake, shared with three terrific psychologists from Sweden. My house, although violently shaken, appeared unscathed. The power had been off for only 24 hours. Phone service, although intermittent, had returned. I had not heard from the psychologists but I could assume they were on their way to Los Angeles. And I, thank heaven, would soon be out of my beloved Bay Area on a long-planned trip to what I perceived as solid, steady ground.

Then the occupant of the aisle seat appeared. She was dressed in a sweat suit and sobbing. “I’ve been alright until just now when I met a friend who asked me how I was. All at once I realized that I have no home, no way to get my clothes or any of my belongings, and I don’t know what I am going to do. I’m so worried about my father who is 72 and did not want to move to San Francisco in the first place and now may not move back.”

Feeling almost guilty about my own luck, I tried to rally myself to say something to her, when another passenger who obviously knew her came to her. A helpful listener who seemed to understand, he encouraged her to pour out her story. I turned to my book and eavesdropped.

During one hour in which we waited for United to locate a missing first officer and a second hour while we were grounded during President Bush’s visit to view the destruction of the quake, I learned that both my seat mates were M.D.s. She was the assistant medical director of the Irwin Memorial Blood Centers. She described how well the blood centers had functioned during the crisis and the extraordinary incidents of caring that had occurred.

Eventually we were airborne and the conversation beside me veered away from the quake to the conference in New Orleans at which the woman was scheduled to speak, then to technical medical matters beyond my understanding. However, at one point I overheard something about courses that she had taken at Vassar. Of course, I thought, that’s why I had begun to feel that I knew her. She represents so many of the qualities I have come to associate with so many Vassar alumnae, true professionalism, organizing ability, and incisive thinking coupled with deep concern for others.

When she went off to the lavatory, I revealed my eavesdropping to our seat mate and commented that I, too, was a Vassar alumna. On her return, we introduced ourselves, comparing our Vassar and later life experiences. Thirty years difference in graduation dates seemed easily bridged. I felt proud to be invited to share the champagne the flight attendant brought her as a tribute to her valor. And very happy to have had such a meaningful encounter with a young alumna, Cherie Evans ’66.

Millie Almy ’36
Berkeley, California
LETTERS

The Quarterly welcomes letters to the editor, preferably typed, double-spaced, and no longer than 350 words. We reserve the right to edit letters for style and length. Letters reflect the opinions of the writers and not those of the magazine, AAVC, or Vassar College.

On AIDS Memorial

I would like to express my admiration to the Vassar Quarterly staff for your courage in printing The Last Page memoriam to Hank Cohn '74 in the 1989 Winter edition. This eloquent tribute brings to the Vassar community the tragedy of AIDS in a very personal way.

Thanks for keeping the Quarterly ever pertinent to today's world.

Marion Siskind Liebowitz '54
East Schenectady, New York

The next to last sentence on The Last Page (Winter 1989 VQ) comes as a cruel shock to many who lost family or friends in Vietnam. Those fortunate not to have been affected personally "by Vietnam's dead" could see and share the grief suffered by the survivors. The persons who "really were unaffacted by Vietnam's dead" (or others sacrificed in line of duty) are not with the American mainstream.

Katherine Joan Hinman '45
Jacksonville, Florida

Praise for Time Out

I noted with great interest the reference in the Fall 1989 Quarterly to the Time-Out Grant II. An anonymous alumna is providing grants to provide assistance to an alumna or alumnus who wishes to create a change in midlife. I would like to commend this gracious alumna for what I think is an extremely worthy cause. It is much in the Vassar spirit to not only work for the benefit of society but also to help an individual.

Thank you on behalf of all of us.

Richard A. B. Gleiner '74
New York, New York

Fund Appeals Too Slick?

I have just received yet another appeal for funds. As I donate freely to many causes, it is fair to wonder why I always balk when asked to support Vassar College.

The fault lies with the appearance of the request. The package is too slick, the pictures and quotes too professional. I was taught at Vassar to resist manipulation and to cut through propaganda, which is why I toss each of these mailings into the garbage. I am suspicious of the panhandler dressed in a tux.

Also, it disturbs me to think how much of the funds donated must be handed over to the advertising agency which produces the materials for each fund-raising campaign.

And let me air a complaint about the wording of the donation appeals: Although I am sure all of us who attended Vassar are happy to hear the school maintains its standard of excellence, it is insulting to those of us who made up past classes to be told the present student body is even better than any that came before. It would be nice to hold onto the illusion that we were just as brilliant.

May the school continue to prosper. As long as it can afford to send me such fine requests for money, I am confident it is doing quite well without any help from me.

Carolyn Keiler '72
Portland, Oregon

Marta Garcia, assistant director of the Annual Fund, responds: Those of us who work on the format and style of the appeal are flattered to have it referred to as "too professional." Believe me, it is not prepared by anything or anyone remotely resembling the "advertising agency." Ms. Paul fears makes excessive profits from our campaigns.

Early each spring (April 1989) for this particular appeal, the Annual Fund staff meets to decide on the theme for the upcoming fall's campaign. We do this by reviewing literally hundreds of similar appeals that we are constantly collecting for this purpose. Once this decision is reached, the director of the Annual Fund works out the logistics of generating more than 31,000 appeals we mail to the various alumni classes, parents, and friends who we hope will respond with a gift.

While the printing of the appeal cards is handled by the company which submits the lowest bid for the job, the photography, typesetting, and even computerized names on the pledge cards are done by various in-college departments, including College Relations and the computer center.

The costs of our appeal are among the lowest and are kept at this level by the painstaking work of various Vassar offices.

This year our appeal focuses on faculty. Ms. Paul's impression that the college feels the "present student body is even better than any that came before" may be a misunderstanding of a statement by Professor Anthony Wohl. His remark: "In the year just passed, I have taught some [emphasis added] of the best students . . . in my 25 years at Vassar." Dr. Wohl was conscious of the need to assure Vassar's constituents that the maturation of a coeducational institution did not bring with it a decline of academic standards, as some had predicted.

One further thought: the Fund mails three appeals a year— in October, November, and February. If a gift or pledge is received in response to our October appeal, the subsequent two are not sent. Receipt of an early gift thereby saves us the cost of producing and mailing further requests for support.

Don't Forget Squash

I recently received the Fall 1989 issue of the Vassar Quarterly and read one of the articles about the women's varsity tennis team being the first Vassar team in any sport to achieve a national ranking in NCAA competition. The article was in error about this being Vassar's first national ranking for a Vassar team because in 1986/87 the men's varsity squash team achieved a ranking of 15 in the nation along with winning the Barnaby Trophy as the most improved team in the nation. The accomplishment of the women's tennis team speaks wonders about the growth of Vassar's athletics, but I'm sure the members of the '86/87 men's squash team don't want to lose their place in Vassar sports history.

Don Wright '87
New Orleans, Louisiana

Letter from Israel

As one who has lived in Israel for 21 years, I read with great interest Gila Silverman's [90] brief article on the peace movement "Women in Black" (Summer 1989) and the letter by Laura Cooley '83, and I shall reply to both.

Impressed by the provocative façade, Ms. Silverman exaggerates the importance of the "Women in Black," whose weekly demonstrations against Israel's presence in the West Bank and Gaza elicit more attention from right-wing extremists than from the general public. She does not even mention Peace Now, the largest and most active of peace movements here. Nor does she note the continuous efforts of the Association for Civil Rights (ACRI) and of various political parties, interfaith groups, trade unions, and educational facilities which have given sustained and long-term attention to Arab-Jewish understanding over the years. The gimmick and the quick-fix unfortunately have misled Ms. Silverman. All that glitters is not black.

Ms. Cooley's letter, however, is much more disturbing. Many here share her concern and outrage at the excessive brutality and needless humiliation to which the Palestinians have been subjected, particularly since the outbreak of the Intifada two years ago.

Continued on page 63
Above: New address
Fabled gardener and AAVC executive director emeritus Gertrude Garnsey, is seen—barely—behind her beloved flowers in upstate New York. Miss Garnsey, who died in October, is remembered by friends and colleagues, beginning on page 28.

In what she described as her "early days" as AAVC executive director, Gert Garnsey '26, wondering how she might go about "getting to know a few students," decided that a direct route from the college to the Alumnae House might attract more visitors to both the House and the AAVC offices. She later wrote about her efforts to have a walk made, and her subtly humorous reflections reveal that, along the path from initial idea to actual asphalt, she overcame more than one obstacle.

I proposed that a path should be made directly from the college gate across "Rock Lot" and up the hill to our House. The Trustee Committee on Buildings and Grounds received the suggestion politely. That august body went and solemnly paced off the distance to be saved by following my suggestion. They reported that it was just 150 feet longer to go around on the existing sidewalk, and certainly the young ladies did not need to be spared that much exercise. My pleas that it was psychological left them unmoved.

Earlier that spring, however, Prexy MacCracken had had tons of rocks from an old discarded stone fence dumped upon our property in case we wanted a low wall around our parking areas. My eye lit upon this great heap and I was glad of my gardening back and my gardening equipment. Evenings and weekends, after that Trustee decision, I toiled slowly and patiently with load after wheelbarrow load of stones down the hill, and gradually there developed a path of stepping stones. This, quickly dubbed "Garnsey's Folly," led directly from the gate of the college to Alumnae House. Everyone used it, at once. The students leapt from stone to stone but an alumna turned her ankle, and the college, in a fright over a possible law suit, immediately paved over the stones with a smooth macadam path.
Woodie!
I haven't seen you since—

You never know who you'll run into at a Vassar Reunion.

Come Back to Vassar

8-10 June 1990

25, 30, 35, 40, 45-4, 50, 59, 60, 65, 70, 80, 84, 85