Editor’s Note

“For the many students who do interdisciplinary Plans, it’s the dialogue that’s important,” said theater professor Paul Nelson at an open forum about the recent SymBiotic Art and Science conference (see page 29). Paul explains that whether two disciplines collide or intersect may depend as much upon the student as on the different fields involved, but it always creates an interesting dialogue. Ultimately it broadens our lives and has a humanistic impact beyond the studies themselves.

Interdisciplinary exploration is a well-practiced approach at Marlboro, as you can see from many of the Plans of Concentration listed in the commencement section of this issue of Potash Hill. Like all academic endeavors, that work never stops as we explore new and deeper connections between apparently separate perspectives. This issue celebrates Marlboro’s interdisciplinary realism, whether it’s between philosophy and economics in Isaac Lawrence’s article on the Vermont Land Trust, or literature and international development in Rosario de Swanson’s piece on Guinean writers. It also explores new horizons in the SymBiotic Art and Science conference mentioned above and the Embodied Learning Symposium hosted here on campus.

As always, we welcome your comments. How has interdisciplinary study made an impact on your life and career, and what exciting new syntheses are out there to explore? You can find responses to the last issue on page 60.

—Philip Johansson, editor

Parting Shot

James Munoz ’14, Ryan Hitchcock ’12, Aaron Evan-Browning ’12 and Jacquelynn Ward ’13 strike a pose with some other memorable characters during their Spring Break trip to Yellowstone National Park.

Photo by Travis Trumbly

Marlboro College Mission Statement

The goal of Marlboro College is to teach students to think clearly and to learn independently through engagement in a structured program of liberal studies. Students are expected to develop a command of concise and correct English and to strive for academic excellence informed by intellectual and artistic creativity; they are encouraged to acquire a passion for learning, discerning judgment and a global perspective. The college promotes independence by requiring students to participate in the planning of their own programs of study and to act responsibly within a self-governing community.
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The Magazine of Marlboro College

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Restoration ecology has been called the “acid test” of ecological sciences. If we really understand how ecosystems function, we should be able to put them back together again. Bob Cabin is rising to that challenge in the devastated dry forests of Hawaii.

I could see the charred remains of the ghost forest from the highway. One mile below me, the dead trees rose up from the land like giant skeletons. There were many reasons not to walk down there: the steep slope, the intense heat, the dense swaths of neck-high African fountain grass I would have to fight my way through to reach the ruined trees. Even worse, I’d worked as a restoration ecologist in Hawaii long enough to visualize the devastation I was going to see when I got there. But a glimmer of hope for this ecological wreckage also compelled me to go, so I stepped off the highway and into a sea of dead grass, toward the barren lava flow and the burnt forest beyond.

The lowland, dry, leeward sides of all the main Hawaiian Islands were once covered by vast, magnificent forests teeming with strange and beautiful species found nowhere else on earth. Tens of thousands of brightly colored, fungi-eating snails slithered through the trees and chased their way along the dark undergrowth leaf litter. Vast flocks of giant flightless geese squawked across the forest understory; dozens of species of finch-like honeycreepers sipped nectar, gobbled insects and sought shelter from the heat and hungry eagles, hawks and owls.

The Hawaiians loved these forests and often chose to live in or near them. Due to the hot and dry climate, many of the trees grew extremely slowly and produced some of the hardest woods in the world, which the Hawaiians fashioned into buildings, tools, weapons and musical instruments. They also made exquisite, multicolored capes containing hundreds of thousands of bird feathers, and strung elaborate leis out of vines and sweet-smelling flowers. The first time I walked through a patch of native dry forest containing a grove of ‘ala‘īa trees in full bloom, I told my native Hawaiian colleague that the light fragrance of their delicate white flowers seemed to creep mysteriously in and out of my nostrils. He smiled and explained that the Hawaiian word ‘ala‘īa literally means “to move through the forest like an octopus.”

Today we can only imagine what these complex ecosystems looked like and guess at how they worked. Tragically, about 95 percent of Hawaii’s original dry forests have been destroyed, and many of their most ecologically important species are functionally, or actually, extinct. For example, most of the native birds and insects that once performed such critical services as flower pollination and seed scarification and dispersal are now gone. Many of the once dominant and culturally important canopy trees are also extinct or exist in only a few smaller populations of scattered and senescent individuals.
The demise of Hawaii’s dry forests began soon after the Polynesian discovery of these islands around 400 A.D. Like indigenous peoples throughout the tropics, the early Hawaiians cleared and burned the dry coastal forests and converted them into cultivated grasslands, agricultural plantations and thickly settled villages. Captain James Cook’s arrival in 1778 set in motion a chain of events that dramatically accelerated the scope and intensity of habitat destruction and species extinctions throughout the Hawaiian Islands. While the Polynesians had deliberately brought many new species to Hawaii in their double-hulled sailing canoes (and some toweways such as the Polynesian rat, geckos, skinks and various weeds), their impact was trivial compared to the ecological bombs dropped by the Europeans. Thinking the islands deprived of some of God’s most useful and important species, Cook and his successors, with the best of intentions, set free cows, sheep, deer, goats, horses and pigs. Over time, foreigners from around the world unleashed a veritable Pandora’s box of more ecological wrecking machines, including two more species of rats, mongooses (in an infamously ill-advised attempt to control the rats), mosquitoes, ants and a diverse collection of noxious weeds. These included the African fountain grass that scratched my bare arms and legs as I struggled to reach the burnt forest.

In a bittersweet way I was glad that I had never been there, because even without any personal connection to this place, the sight of those wrecked trees was almost unbearably depressing.

During relatively rainy periods, when fountain grass greens up and is in full bloom, large swaths of the leeward side of the Big Island can look like a lush Midwestern prairie. But inevitably, the merciless kona (leeward) sunshine returns, and the rains disappear for months on end. The fountain grass dries to a sickly brown; then all it takes is somebody to park their hot car over a clump of grass for the whole region to burst into flame like a barn full of dry hay. In contrast to most Hawaiian species, fountain grass originated within a savanna ecosystem that regularly burned, and consequently has had thousands of years of evolve mechanisms to cope with and even exploit large-scale fires. I have watched fountain grass rise up from its ashes like a green phoenix after several seemingly devastating wildfires. Vigorous new shoots quickly appear within the old burned clumps, seeds germinate en masse and the emerging seedlings rapidly establish within the favorable post-fire environment of increased light and nutrients and decreased plant competition.

The net result of these fires is thus more fountain grass and less native dry forest. More grass means that during the next drought there will be even greater fuel loads, which in turn leads to more frequent and widespread fires. This growing cycle of alien grass and fire has proven to be the nail in the coffin for dry forests on the Big Island and throughout the tropics as a whole. The reason we don’t hear about campaigns to save tropical dry forests is because there are now virtually no such forests left to save. If we want at least some semblance of this ecosystem to exist in the future, we’ll have to deliberately and painstakingly design, plant, grow and care for them ourselves.

As I approached the dead trees, I was hot and frustrated that I had not even seen this forest before it burned. Yet in a bittersweet way I was glad that I had never been there, because even without any personal connection to this place, the sight of those wrecked trees was almost unbearably depressing. This had apparently been one of the best native dry forest remnants left within the entire State, but now we would never know which species had lived here, and we would never be able to collect seeds or cuttings from its gnarled old trees that were now on the very edge of extinction.

I looked back up at our tiny parcels of native trees straddling the highway. To preserve and restore these forest remnants, our Dryland Forest Working Group collectively spent thousands of hours installing fire breaks, killing fountain grass in the kona grasslands with fire, and propagating and transplanting thousands of native plants. Local groups ranging from troubled Hawaiian teenagers to real estate agents had repeatedly donated their time and labor to help with these efforts. Hundreds of people within and beyond the Hawaiian Islands had come to see and study this ecosystem. My own scientific research program had progressed from documenting the demise of these forests to experimenting with promising techniques for restoring them at ever-larger spatial scales.

Looking at the fruits of our work from this distance, I felt a wave of optimism sweep over me, and for the first time truly believed that even this saddest of all the sad Hawaiian ecosystems could be saved. I turned around again and looked at the scorched trees. “We can grow another forest here,” I muttered. “We know what to do, and how to do it.” I stomped on a clump of resprouting fountain grass, slung on my pack and marched back up to the highway to get to work.
Phylogenetic Tree: The Evolutionary Legacy of Bob Engel

Bob Cabin is one of the many former biology students of retired Marlboro professor Bob Engel who has gone on to make his own mark in the world of life sciences. He said, “Bob was the first professor I ever had that really challenged me, the first to befuddle me in a real, substantive way and the first to tease me mercilessly.” Although the elder professor Bob would rather that we observed his retirement with a simple, “He rode his motorcycle off into the sunset,” that would hardly do for many Potash Hill readers. Instead, we rounded up a small sampling of Bob’s “academic genealogy” to share a bit about their own careers and Bob’s impact on their trajectories.

Tom Good ’86 received his Ph.D. from the University of Kansas, where he studied hybridization in seabirds along the Pacific coast. Since 2001 he has been a senior research scientist at Port Townsend, Washington, where he conducts research on seabird-fisheries interactions (see Potash Hill Winter-Spring 2007).

After leaving Marlboro, Hali Cashman ’82 received his M.S. in ecology and evolutionary biology from the University of Arizona and his doctorate in biology from Northern Arizona University in 1989. He is now a professor of biology at Sonoma State University in northern California, where he has been teaching and conducting research on population and community ecology since 1994.

“Bob’s influence on my life and professional trajectory was, and still is, nothing short of profound. To this day, I vividly remember meeting him in 1978 during an epic snowstorm. I visited Marlboro as a prospective student. I was considering multiple colleges and majors at the time, but after this meeting, I decided to attend Marlboro, study biology and work closely with Bob. This decision is one that I have never regretted—I am still devoted to Marlboro, biology, teaching and research.”

Jenny Ramstetter ’81 went on to get her doctorate in ecology and evolution at the University of Pennsylvania and conducts research on the physiology and ecology of insects and salamanders. He has taught biology at the University of Arizona since 1995, and in 2009 was made the interim director of Integrated Biosciences, a doctoral program he helped develop. “Bob made me want to be a biologist, and that came out of nowhere. Bob’s teaching was transformative like that for many students. Leading by example, he encouraged and guided his students to be creative, analytical, playful and passionate. Bob is the most gifted teacher I have ever encountered or probably ever will. I fondly remember his frequently foul-mouthed but nuttily satirical musings. He was the best!”

Bob’s colleague at Marlboro for 22 years and counting, Jenny Ramstetter ’81, said, “Bob helped shape my childhood love of nature into a life of studying plants and teaching.”

Dr. Lara Knudson ’05 received her M.D. as well as a master’s degree in public health from George Washington University in 2008, after extensive international experience working on women’s health in Uganda and Peru. She is currently finishing up a residency in family medicine and in August plans to move back home to Chicago with her husband, Chris Jones (10).

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Post-Marlboro, Tracey Doulin ’82 earned a master’s degree in science education and taught biology and physical sciences at the high school level and at Landmark College. A long with Dan Torney ’79, we subsequently started Marlboro’s Learning Resources Center (now Academic Support Services), which offered assistance with learning and teaching skills and strategies to students and faculty. For the past several years, Tracey has been a private tutor and a stay-at-home mom.

“During our first field trip for Plants of Vermont, we stood shrouded in down and cold atop the top of Mount Mansfield listening to Bob expound upon the adaptive strategies of some tiny, tiny plant while the wind whipped around us. It was so cold that one student had both his bookstore slip into his pocket so she wouldn’t get hypothermia, while others were wearing spare socks on their hands. I thought, ‘This is education.’

“Bob introduced me to Quilotoaquito on a Marlboro field trip in 1979, as I’ve thought fondly of it ever since. I’ve spent many days of working out there in the dust, mud, bulrush, siring wildlife. A frickin’ honeybee and 110-degree heat. I came from a rough, rural public high school, and Bob taught me to learn, think and grow better. His passion for and knowledge of biology was highly contagious. My vocation has been an attempted 30-year extension of Bob’s desert biology field course, minus the wild nights at the Bum Steer in Tucson.”
Spanish professor Rosario de Swanson traveled to Equatorial Guinea last year to talk with Guinean writers about their difficult history and the emerging role of literature in a more hopeful future.

"Throughout Equatorial Guinea, from the very date of independence, we experienced a lack of freedom and a shortage of food that was impressive," said writer Juan Tomás A Villa Laurel. "But as the things we lacked were things many of us had never had, we did not realize we did not have them. And as the administration was almost nonexistent, it was normal that education was merely testimonial. It's almost a miracle that a single writer could come out of Guinea from that time." A Villa Laurel is living proof that such a miracle has occurred, and he is just one of a large group of emerging writers from the only African nation where Spanish is spoken.

My interest in Guinean literature and culture is closely connected to the themes I explored in my dissertation: the emergence of Afro-Hispanic American literature in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru and the causes that delayed its recognition until well into the 20th century. I was surprised to learn that there was an African literature written in Spanish, with themes similar to those found in Latin American literature, that many of us Latin Americanists did not know about. The study of this rich literature and culture is important because it challenges established literary borders, as Guinean writers frequently reference not only Africa and Spain but also Latin America. In March 2010, I traveled to Equatorial Guinea to interview A Villa Laurel, part of the first postcolonial generation of writers there, and to talk with other writers whose works form the nueva literatura Guineana.

Equatorial Guinea's inequalities are rooted in the colonial past and exacerbated by a globalized present. Located in central Africa, between Gabon and Cameroon in the Gulf of Guinea, this tiny territory was a distant outpost that served primarily to assert Spain's former imperial power after losing its American colonies in 1898—and for the extraction of human and natural resources. As a late colony of Spain (1788-1968), the historical trajectory of Equatorial Guinea is markedly different from that of Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as from that of other African countries. Yet the Latin American experience informed the Spanish colonial enterprise in Africa.

The literature of Equatorial Guinea was born in the crucible of two great traditions: Afro-Bantu oral traditions and the written forms of Hispanic traditions. The birth of Guinean literature, different from the colonial perspective of Africanismo literario, can be traced back to the missionary newspaper La Guinea Española. In 1947 the newspaper opened a section to black Guineans entitled "Historias y Cuentos." This section published the works of the native literati, who were invariably male students and teachers of the missions and seminaries, and opened a space for reflection about the place Guinean culture occupied within the Spanish and Latin American cultural and linguistic spectrum. It was here that the first transcriptions of Guinean oral traditions from the different ethnic groups (Fang, Ndowe, Bubi, Bissio) began to undergo a process of reinterpretation and synthesis.

Leoncio Evita Enoy, widely considered the father of Guinean literature, wrestled with the task of colonization in his work. He was among the first writers who moved away from a mere retelling of myths and legends to an in-depth interpretation of Guinean reality, availing himself of all the formal elements of the Hispanic written tradition available to him. Enoy's Cuando las cosas Luchaban ("When the Combat Used to Fight"), published in 1953, is considered the foundational novel of Guinean letters. By comparing his novel to a breach in the monopoly of intellectual discrimination, Enoy demonstrates that he is aware of the importance of his work. His words testify to his consciousness as a Guinean intellectual deeply aware of an intellectual tradition that had not been hitherto given a "written" voice.

Guinea's transition to independence was achieved rather peacefully in 1968, primarily due to U.N. pressure on the Franco regime and local support for independence. However, as a result of Spain's extractive colonialism, the new nation had little or no infrastructure, even in the capital city of Malabo. Once the station of independence passed and elections were held, the newly elected president, Macías Nguema (1969-1979), instituted a military dictatorship. The Macías regime imposed Fang authority as the national paradigm. The repressive practices of the Macías regime caused the exile of many intellectuals and writers, leading to a period known as los años del silencio. Today, despite the fact that the Obiang government has implemented many changes and improvements, the paradigm of inequality established by Macías is still in force.
the same distrust of the economic benefits of "civilization" as his predecessor Leoncio Evita Enoy, who in his novel referred to it as a "sickness." "Some believe ... in the world without believing that it is a sin not to have taken the same steps as other countries on other continents."

that takes into account ethnic diversity, the environment and the material and spiritual needs of the people. Although the term "barbarism" was once associated with Guinean inequalities, its history and politics, and the contradiction between state modernizing initiatives and life as it is lived by most Guineans. He also offers a penetrating critique of Guinean culture, traditions and attitudes, rooted in Guinean's tragic and rich history, where he also finds the promise of Guinean's future.

In our interview he said, "The Guinean intellectual should denounce certain things that happen in our society, not because he is an intellectual but because there are some people who have the possibility of having their opinions disseminated and heard. Since this is a multiethnic nation, our cultures should reconcile or unify. Cultural manifestations should be the expression of our Guinean-ness, with culture understood as its crystallization."

Ávila Laurel explores the future of development in Equatorial Guinea in many of his essays, such as "Cómo convertir este país en un paraíso." In our interview he said he wanted Guinea to enjoy a kind of development that takes into account ethnic diversity, the environment and the material and spiritual needs of the people. Although the term "barbarism" was once associated with indigenous peoples, and served as justification for the colonial enterprises. Ávila Laurel criticizes the barbarism of the despotic model adopted by Macías and his successors. "If someone says they are developed but they lack human rights, they are not," he said. "If I dare to associate barbarism with Macías, it is to relate his regime to Western culture. Macías was more the product of Western civilization than of African culture."

The essays of Juan Tomás Ávila Laurel provide a contemporary insight on debates that dominated Latin American intellectual and political thought at the end of the 19th and early in the 20th century but are now part of Guinea's intellectual discourse about the future. In the end, Ávila Laurel shares the same distrust of the economic benefits of "civilization" as his predecessor Leoncio Evita Enoy, who in his novel referred to it as a "sickness." "Some believe they are superior to others because they come from a society that has learned to influence nature," said Ávila Laurel. "Usually the so-called civilized society is the leader in the domain of nature. It is clear that those who have managed to dominate nature have abused this privilege. Guinea's struggle is to find its place in the world without believing that it is a sin not to have taken the same steps as other countries on other continents."

Cold War Femininity

Not unlike postcolonial African writers grappling with their national identity, acclaimed author Flannery O'Connor struggled with issues of femininity in the postwar era. Although most scholars have downplayed it, Elizabeth Ferrill "I chose to focus on this struggle in her plan of Concentration. "Despite O'Connor's persistent refusal to accept that her female characters experience a plight beyond religion, it is still apparent that she had a unique stance as a critically acclaimed female writer in the 1940s," said Elizabeth. In studying the multifaceted female characters in O'Connor's short fiction, Elizabeth concluded that their complexity extends to gender dynamics as well as religious themes. "Much like these characters can't be contained within the traditional submissive female role, they also refuse to be pigeonholed into being plot devices for religious purposes."
ENGAGING IN MULTIPLE DISCIPLINES TO ADDRESS THE SAME SUBJECT CAN SOMETIMES RESULT IN MIXED RESULTS. WHEN ECONOMICS AND PHILOSOPHY LEAD TO DIFFERENT CONCLUSIONS REGARDING AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENTS, ISAAC LAWRENCE TURNS TO HIS OWN EXPERIENCE ON—AND OFF—THE GROUND.

Since its founding in 1977, the Vermont Land Trust (VLT) has had a hand in conserving nearly 8 percent of Vermont’s total land. The land trust’s primary means of conserving land lies in the purchase of development rights—what’s known as a “conservation easement.” Conservation easements allow lands to stay in traditional uses like forestry and agriculture, despite the financial allure of developable values on land. The money paid for development rights can prove the difference for struggling farmers between staying in and getting out of farming, but at what future cost?

Two years ago, I spent the summer working with the Vermont Land Trust and reflecting on the conservation easement as a tool for the conservation of farmland. I find two approaches in particular—the philosophical lens of Wendell Berry’s agrarian thought and the economic concept of “efficiency”—to be especially suitable to the task of considering conservation easements. I also find the two accounts at odds with one another, particularly concerning the perpetual nature of the VLT’s agricultural easements: Which perspective is right?

The premise of agrarianism is simple: Farming, food and family are the natural and best centers of our lives, and should remain so. This does not mean to imply, of course, that we should all go out and become farmers, but instead that we take as model an agricultural life. Berry, often considered the father of contemporary agrarian thought, writes, “Connection is health.” In our modern industrial society, he says, we have “disconnections between body and soul, husband and wife, marriage and community, community and the earth.”

For Berry, the antidote is “good work.” “We are working well,” he writes, “when we use ourselves as the fellow creatures of the plants, animals, materials and other people we are working with.” This is the work that gives us health. A red such work, for Berry, comes with good farming—that is, farming that respects the diversity and connectedness of our lives to all other life on this planet. Berry’s concept of good work asks that we know our farmers and make frequent and meaningful connections to them, and that we know where our food comes from.

From an agrarian perspective, we can see that the work of the VLT is good work indeed. If good farming is happening on Vermont land, we must go to great lengths to protect it. Conservation easements serve to compensate farmers for protecting their land from development. This influx of cash allows many to continue farming, to pass farmland along to their children and to continue sustainable farming practices without cutting corners to save money. Indeed, Wendell Berry has himself donated development rights on his 117-acre Kentucky farm, citing his desire to keep the land in farming after he and his wife pass away.

The economics of conservation easements are a little more complicated. Easement prices are calculated as the difference between the full market value of a piece of property and its value for only the uses allowable under the terms of the easement—in this case, just agriculture. In other words, the price is what would be paid, in free exchange, solely for the rights to develop the property for non-agricultural uses; the farmer is paid the market price for this one right among the bundle that constitutes property ownership. It is clear that this is an economically efficient exchange, at least on the farmer’s end, so long as we assume that property markets function efficiently and without impediment from ill-advised regulation or market failures.

From an economic perspective, there’s one problem, however: conservation easements, as administered by the Vermont Land Trust, are perpetual. The lands in question must remain...
I later learned was characteristic energy and athleticism. Coming down, he assured me that I too needed to climb up, for the view. Afraid, I started up. Just as the drop below became utterly terrifying, the ladder acquired a cage, and only because of this was I able to get to the top. The view was, as my boss had suggested, spectacular. It was a perfect early July, Addison County day, and my view extended across miles of picturesque rolling farmland, with Lake Champlain and the Adirondacks in the distance. As a lifetime Vermonter, a descendent of Vermont dairy farmers on both sides, and as a longtime lover of the outdoors, I found the sight stirring.

Not surprisingly, my past predisposes me to some sympathy for Berry’s account and for perpetual conservation easements on farms—future generations’ potentially different wants be damned. At the same time, I also have great sympathy for the economic account. It suggests that what matters most is the aggregate welfare of all the people affected by a particular decision, rather than considering one person’s values more important than another’s. Which perspective is right?

In this case I can confidently say that preserving farmland for small, conscientious farmers is likely to be a good thing long into the future. My meetings with farmers left me with the feeling that, for a multitude of reasons, the VLT stands as a model for the future. The farmers struck me as admirable for their hard work, for their commitment to good land use and for their practicality.

My experience on the ground with farmers working with the Vermont Land Trust has some bearing here. On one particular day, all three of the farmers we talked to recalled some initial hesitancy in the easement process. Giving up their rights to do what they will with the land can counter to what I took to be a real premium on autonomy. The easement had been something of a compromise for each of them, and each had different ends in mind. What was shared was a deep respect for the land and for farming as a lifestyle. None of the farmers I spoke with wanted to see their farms cut up into lots for houses, or sold for condominium development. They all expressed concern for the environmental health of their property. The conservation easement seemed a good conciliatory mechanism, and the farmers struck me as admirable for their hard work, for their commitment to good land use and for their practicality.

When we arrived at the third farm, we first went to take pictures that we would need to pitch the Project to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board for funding. My supervisor thought it would be best to get a shot from above, and the crew’s nest at the top of the silo seemed the best place. He climbed the narrow ladder on the outside of the structure with what

**Guitar Economy**

While agrarian ideals conserve rural landscapes, “craft” ideals offer alternatives to struggling urban communities. John Whelan ’11 says, “The creative economy is a model for economic development applicable to de-industrialized communities, communities once reliant on older industrial structures such as the mills in New England.” John’s Plan explores the role of craft production, specifically guitar making, in the creative economy of southern Vermont, and compares the values of local luthiers to those of veteran producers like Gibson, Fender and Taylor. “These large-scale producers aim to preserve a reputation that embraces some craft ideals, and also play an important role in the creative economy,” John says. What they typically lack, which he finds among local instrument makers, is a high level of community engagement crucial to a successful creative economy model. See a video of John describing his Plan work at www.marlboro.edu/go/john_whelan.
How was I going to occupy my time for the next four years? Prejudices intact, untried by academic demands, I had no intention of going near science or math, history or the social sciences. Well, there was still literature. I registered for 20th-century American, but this particular semester Dick Judd had decided to assign some of the lesser-known works of the canon. McGuffey, Salamone. Miss Rawell’s Conversion—well, there’s a reason some books are not read. I didn’t stick around for the next semester, when I’d have been excited by The Adventures of Augie March and The Floating Opera. On my own I wandered through Dostoevsky and Virginia Woolf. I read Henry James, whose articulations of the subterranean destructive bargains people make with one another impressed me as how life actually was.

I threaded my way through an odd assortment of classes, as if education were a swift-running stream to be traversed by individual stepping-stones. Freud taught by Ben Rubenstein, a local practicing analyst; Russian by Sam Streiff, a chemist who had retired to the area. I took a tutorial on symbolism with Alan Kantrow, and later wrote a thesis grudgingly entitled “Aesthetic Vision as an Alternative to a Moral Code.” (I found it a couple of years ago in a box in my attic; it’s pretty smart, but I admit that I no longer have a clue what it’s trying to say.)

By default I persisted only in the familiar atmosphere of creative writing courses, first with Hudde Herrick, in the converted schoolhouse where she lived, a short walk down South Road from campus. I loved to go there because it was a house; the walls were crowded by her boldly stroked canvases; and she often made dinner for the five or six of us in the class, after which we distributed carbons of our poems, which she read aloud, with adjectives and less predictable rhymes.

Next I took a poetry workshop with T. Wilson, and first felt the gaze of his gimlet eye upon my lines. I liked writing poetry, liked the close focus of the discussion, which made me feel so visible when my poems were discussed that I was afraid to move. I might have gone on writing poetry indefinitely, but felt a strange restlessness—though I only now see it as that—leading me toward longer forms. I’d heard of Marlowe only because my father had earned his master’s degree there in 1960—for “building the mailroom stairs,” as he liked to put it. In those days the college gave out the occasional M.A. on an ad hoc basis, so I applied. The college was in Vermont, however, expansive and leisurely, days of playing our idiosyncratic croquet in the sun, then the hilly lawn of our ramshackle summer house, or reading Tolstoy in an overstuffed rocking chair, or this relentless cold rain, these darkened leaves unfurled, this dray dormitory, seemingly built like a Bolshevik icon to repudiate bourgeois aesthetic decadence.

I’d heard of Marlowe only because my father had earned his master’s degree there in 1960—for “building the mailroom stairs,” as he liked to put it. In those days the college gave out the occasional M.A. on an ad hoc basis. I applied. The college was in Vermont, however, expansive and leisurely, days of playing our idiosyncratic croquet in the sun, then the hilly lawn of our ramshackle summer house, or reading Tolstoy in an overstuffed rocking chair, not this relentless cold rain, these darkened leaves unfurled, this dray dormitory, seemingly built like a Bolshevik icon to repudiate bourgeois aesthetic decadence.
A man with a horizontal football-shaped head and bushy mustaches peers with bafflement at the world. Mr. Earbrass is a writer, and his invertebrate reluctance about everything, his perplexed participation in a world that misunderstands—this I recognized too. A writer's life. I'd never read a description of one before.

Mr. Earbrass has rashly been skimming through the early chapters, which he has not looked at for months, and now sees T U H for what it is. Dreadful, dreadful, DREADFUL. He must be mad to go on enduring the uneasiable agony of writing when it all turns out drivel. Had he not become a spy? How does one become one? He will burn the MS. Why is there no fire? Why aren't there the makings of one? How did he get in the unused room on the third floor?

On I read: amazed, entertained, exhilarated. Accompanied. An afternoon not long after this I was taking a walk when a voice began to speak. I stopped walking and studied a stone wall in order better to listen to what was going on, seemingly distinct from me, in my mind.

"Edward was languishing next to the grape arbor," I heard, "when suddenly it dawned on him; he could just as well think she'd died (though for his Lucia to do something so distinct)—well, she had wilted. Certainly he should have known when she laughed at his ideas about islands . . ."

Lines of poems had used to arrive like that, but they had always been about me. Poetry I had used as a cri de coeur, a snapshot, an affirmation of self, but this was different. It felt different. I felt different, writing it. It was about someone else.

Inspired by the author of The Unstrung Harp, Edward Gorey, I had begun to discover a way out of anachronisms. At the time I would no more have permitted an automobile or Saran Wrap into my prose than I would have gone streaking through the dining hall (an event so common that sometimes people no longer even looked up from their lunch when naked persons went screeching past the tables). I could use words like "asylum" or "embonpoint" and inhabit the world they constituted—just not quite.

The Mourning Dove (the decorous title of the novel I wrote for my senior Plan) owed a substantial debt not only to Edward Gorey, but to Henry James and Virginia Woolf. A Lambert Strether-like character, my poor protagonist deserved to be deceived by the woman he loved because he didn't get it. He was the dupe. He had pulled the wool over his own eyes, so why shouldn't others do the same? This I evidently thought to be just. It would take me a long time to locate the source of my fascination with this archetypally dimwitted romantic—a complicated journey that would lead me back through the literature of my childhood—but I was experiencing the heady sense of participating for the first time in an ongoing conversation that really mattered to me.

By now I lived for the hour each week when I sat with T in his office in Dalrymple, and he questioned me about the chapters I'd given him. Would X really do that? Why is Y so unkind to Z? Why this scene in which poor Edward stands by the rhododendrons here and not later? I'd made these things up, but someone else felt proprietary about them.

To write thinking of one thing only to discover that I'd made another, which I could then revise and adjust, the better to approximate—this could have sat from dawn till dusk listening to T talk about my manuscript.

We were to have faith in the existence of truth while recognizing that we ourselves most likely would never attain it.

I'd grown up in the religion that held that the Great Thoughts had been propounded, and it was up to us latecomers to find out about them. We were to have faith in the existence of truth while recognizing that we ourselves most likely would never attain it. All through my school years I'd been obsessed with getting right answers—fearing to get it wrong while not believing that I could get it right. Now I was discovering a way out of this paradox.

Make things up. It can't be wrong if it's invented. It's not real—it's fiction. Except, of course, it is real, in a sneaky, roundabout way that mere idea can never master. If you can get it right, fictionally right—and this is the lifelong mysterious work of it—you do speak the truth, in words from which it cannot be extricated. Unlike with poetry, the work, not I, was the subject under discussion. For the first time, I felt like a writer.
"I map my life through the patterns of my art," said Sophie Mueller about her Plan exhibition. "It is a reflection of my experiences, showing my movement through the world's patterns and repetitions." Sophie lived all over the world as a child, and during college traveled to Nepal and Ghana, where she became interested in the patterns and symbolism of Adinkra cloth. "Each piece is a reflection and reiteration of a memory in my life abroad," she said.

Padma, "Lotus" mixed media etchings

Tamala, "A Graceful Leafy Tree" mixed media etchings
The Taste of Freedom

We asked our current and former Fulbright-supported Arabic language fellows from Egypt to reflect on the “18-day revolution” last January and the future of their country.

Ahmed Salama
Walking in San Francisco with one American and one Egyptian friend, in 2009, I was asked by the American, “What is the solution, from your point of view, to what is happening in Egypt?”

“A revolution,” I answered.

The Egyptian friend said, “But there will be a lot of blood.”

“Each revolution should have some victims,” I replied.

At that time, I never thought that my words would come to be true. The fact is that we have had a real revolution, a revolution that has changed not only a regime, but also people’s minds and behaviors. It has changed the way other nations look at us, the Egyptians. A lot of people still cannot believe that Egypt has changed. Many with private agendas are trying to take advantage of the current situation, such as the… a bridge to a real democracy. This will require a lot of hard work from all parties. However, many people are optimistic.

Mahmoud Mahmoud
What happened in Egypt is an answer to Langston Hughes’ “A Dream Deferred.” “What happens to a dream deferred?” the poem asks, concluding with the question, “does it explode?” Egypt definitely had to explode: that was inevitable. When I was in the United States, many people asked why the Egyptians didn’t fight. All the factors were ripe for us to rise: it was a matter of time, and the time has come.

Egyptians have finally spoken. For the first time in their seven-millennia-long history, Egyptians made the right choice. The dictator had to go. The fight is not over yet, though. Thirty years of dictatorship leave Egypt almost without a real middle class or strong infrastructure. Now it’s time to build.

But the revolution has restored Egyptians’ pride and sense of belonging. The future is definitely going to be better in many ways.

Ayman Yacoub
After 30 years of Mubarak rule, Egyptian revolution was inevitable. It was a long period of sleeping, and in January the volcano erupted. Peaceful protesters all over the country demanded a life with honor.

Since Mubarak’s resignation, I have been hoping for fast and effective reform in Egypt. I can see it happening now, and I can sense it in the smile on Egyptians’ faces, telling the whole world how freedoms taste. In my opinion, an ideal government for Egypt will be the government that the masses vote for, a new parliament of our own choice. What makes me so optimistic about this is the constitutional changes that have already been made, which will not allow a president to run for more than two terms of four years each.

Egypt is the heart of the Middle East. I look at the effect of its revolution on her neighbors, as well as the whole world, and I don’t wonder. Years from now, this revolution will be taught in history books in every corner of this universe: “How peaceful Egyptians were; how powerfully and bravely they stood; how profound was the effect of their revolution.”

Marlboro’s Arabic fellow in the 2008–2009 academic year, Ahmed Salama is now head of the foreign languages department at Learning Services & Solutions Center in Al Mahall Al Kubra, Egypt.

Marlboro’s Arabic fellow in the 2009–2010 academic year, Mahmoud Mahmoud went on to receive his master’s degree in African-American fiction and is now assistant lecturer of English language and literature at Sohag University in Egypt.

Marlboro’s Arabic fellow in the 2010–2011 academic year, Ayman Yacoub plans to pursue research in linguistics, translation studies, pedagogy and technology.

Marlboro’s Arabic fellow in the 2007–2008 academic year, Fisal Younis is now teaching English as a foreign language to high school students in Egypt and blogging on Arabic language and culture at Transparent Language, Inc: www.transparent.com/inside_author/yungodot/.

Fisal Younis
Mubarak’s failure cannot be justified. He had all the power, resources and fertile environment for progress. Naturally, he had a quite good start: the economy was refreshed, tourism flourished and the occupied land was fully restored. However, his regime moved like a turtle. He lacked vision and strategy for the future, and he ignored the will of the people. He froze at the very moment he had restored the last inch of the Egyptian land. He saw nothing else, while people were fighting for bread and dignity.

Soon, the ghost of corruption appeared. Hypocrites gathered around him and lifted him to the rank of a god. They expanded rapidly like cancer and monopolized everything. The people endured low incomes and favoritism, until poverty provided them. Some people warned that corruption was above laws and was about to cover them. Yet, he never listened; he was blinded, or unwilling to see.

Now, people are very happy to kick the back of that corrupt regime. The losses have been great, but the benefits are priceless. People are happy and proud. Honorable leaders are doing their best to help rebuild the country. We are all optimistic, and feel the delicious taste of freedom.

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ON & OFF THE HILL

SYMPOSIUM TRANSCENDS MIND-BODY DUALISM

In April, Marlboro students, faculty and staff joined with invited guests to explore concepts of embodied learning, drawing from both Eastern and Western traditions that embrace physicality, perception and context. The Embodied Learning Symposium consisted of four action-packed days of open classes, presentations and workshops on breaking down the Cartesian mind-body dualism often found in the classroom and studio.

"Embodied learning seems like something that ought to be intuitive," said Asian studies professor Seth Harter, who organized the symposium in collaboration with the Vermont Performance Lab and with support from the Freeman Foundation for Undergraduate Asian Studies Initiative II. "Heads and bodies—when you see them apart it’s already too late. We all have bodies—we can’t think without them—and yet that fact often goes unrecognized, if not actively dismissed, in our liberal arts teaching work."

Participants heard from leading scholars and practitioners of embodied learning such as acclaimed playwright and director Ain Gordon, who combines theater and performance art to bring forgotten histories to life. Livia Kohn, Dassan scholar and Boston University professor emerita, led participants through an embodied sense of Chinese cosmology, and University of Toronto professor Roxana Ng discussed "decolonized" learning. Participants had opportunities to experience Taichi Chuan, West African dance, yoga, energy dance and Japanese movement traditions firsthand. But perhaps the most rewarding presentations were by Marlboro faculty who have embraced the concept of embodied learning in their own classes.

"In reading poems, we’re thinking about what it is we need to know about the poems, how we need to think about the range of emotions, changes in tone, the dynamics of the poem, in order to read it well," said literature professor T. Wilson. Students from his Embodied Poetry class recited poems, with feeling, ranging from Robert Frost’s "Birches" to Amiri Baraka’s "Somebody blew up America."

"I think there’s a kind of internalization that happens when you have to repeat a poem on demand," said Ellie Roark ’12. "We embodied the mindset of the speaker."

Students in Tim Segar’s class, The Body, shared some of their novel approaches to the age-old subject of the human form, from Shea Witzenberg’s ’12 bullooey corporeal soft sculptures to Aaron Evan-Browning’s ’12 electronic headband that translates facial expressions to sounds. Members of Cathy Osman’s class, Two Arms, Two Legs and a Head, shared the

Opposite: Elizabeth Hull ’11 waves before joining the procession into commencement.

Above: Participants learn by doing, in an activity with performance anthropologist Tomie Hahn of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

Photos by Thea Cabreros

ON & OFF THE HILL
results of experimentally restraining their painting stroke to remind themselves of the physicality of painting. Students reported that they found the experiment freeing, even comforting, and the resulting figure paintings felt less contrived.

“T...
Concentration on utopias. “Reading about Trajan’s Column, you don’t realize how big it is. That’s big in a symbolic sense, ancient and powerful and so on, but also, very, very tall and hard to read. I was constantly in awe.”

Williams’s class considered how the Roman emperors tried to control their image through art and architecture, from the palaces they had built for themselves to the baths and amphitheaters with which they hoped to entertain the masses. Some of the highlights of their trip included the Colosseum (of course), the huge baths of Caracalla and a day trip to the Roman port town of Ostia to learn about the lives of the urban poor.

“A particular and unexpected highlight was the church of San Clemente, built on top of an early Christian basilica, which was itself built on top of a first-century temple to the god Mitras and an apartment block,” said Williams. The students were intrigued by the radically unfamiliar Roman religious system, visiting the great pagan temples such as the Pantheon, the dark catacombs where Christians and Jews were laid to rest, and the monumental churches that heralded the final triumph of Christianity. “Another favorite was Rome’s cat sanctuary, situated in the ruins of four Roman temples.”

“All the different landmarks that we read about in our Roman history readings were now tangible and accessible,” said Paul Lee ’14, who is interested in history and, now, learning Italian. “We got to visit so many historic sites that came alive in a way they couldn’t by simply looking at pictures or reading about them.”

Students were asked to analyze these monuments and sites in person, as ancient Romans would have experienced them. As they moved about the city, they explored the relationship of one monument to another, such as Trajan’s “triplet” of interrelated monuments—his forum, his column and his markets—or the emperors’ successive attempts to outdo one another in monuments on the Campus Martius.

“We’ve been discussing Roman town planning in class, and it was great to be able to say ‘in towns like Ostia, or Pompeii’ and know that the students had firsthand experience of what we were talking about,” said Williams. “When we came to Roman religion, it was great to be able to refer to ‘early Christian art’ and know that the students had seen countless examples in Rome’s museums.”

Above: Faculty and students explore ruins on the Palatine Hill, with the arch of Constantine and the Colosseum in the background.

Photo by Joanna Moyer-Battick

Meeting explores symbiosis of art and science

In March, a group of leading scholars in the life sciences, literature, visual arts and dance gathered at the National Science Foundation (NSF) in Arlington, Virginia, to explore what happens when artists and scientists work together. The conference, called “Symbiotic Art and Science,” was conceived by Marlboro President Ellen McCollough-Lovell and colleague Dr. Christopher Corneal, a neuroscientist and dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Montana.

“Where the arts and sciences come together they are creating a new synthesis, new ways of knowing,” said Ellen. “The scientists call on the artists to ‘re-enchant the world,’ and the artists need the scientists to observe and understand the world. The artists talked about their experiments, and the scientists their intuitive leaps. They found that not only do artists and scientists inform each other’s work, they can also cooperate to generate new creativity. However, this kind of collaboration is not often recognized within academic arenas or by funding agencies.”

Co-sponsored by the NSF and the National Endowment for the Arts, the meeting involved 24 participants ranging from Liz Lerman, founding artistic director of the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, to University of Vermont theoretical biologist Stuart Kauffman. Included were an art photographer who specialized in images of scientific experiments, a psychologist who analyzed literary characters and a rainforest ecologist who invited a Detroit rap artist into the forest canopy to communicate with urban youth about forest preservation. Participants from biology, astronomy, performance art, bio-mimicry, dance, painting, art conservation, bio-art, ecology and geology enriched the agenda as they mapped the range of possibilities.

“I have never considered my engagement in science as distinct from my activity as an artist,” said Bevil Conway, who teaches neuroscience at Wellesley College, with a focus on visual perception. “Although art and science differ in their modes of production, their expert communities and often their quantifiable utility, both avenues of investigation have provided me with a mechanism to appreciate, and hopefully uncover, the mysteries of perception. Both are fun.”

“The whole symposium was incredibly relevant to what we do here at Marlboro,” said dance professor Kristin Holtgen, who co-taught an Anatomy of Movement class with biology professor Jaime Tanner last fall. “I think that the big message I took home was that we could do a lot more of this, and it would be really healthy for our campus if we made a deliberate effort to create more science connections.” Rounding out the Marlboro contingent were alumni Melanie Gifford ’73, who works at the National Gallery as a conservator of 16th- and 17th-century paintings, and film student Jesse Nesser ’13, who documented the meeting.

“There was a spontaneous and very poignant discussion about the conditions under which this work happens and flourishes, about generative environments,” said Ellen. The majority of participants who had academic affiliations were from small liberal arts colleges, and two from big universities admitted that they collaborated across disciplines in spite of their institutions. When participants from Europe pointed out that European colleges offer combination art-science degrees, it didn’t escape Ellen and Kristin and Melanie and Jesse that this is also possible at Marlboro. “When you think about generative environments, it is incredibly reinforcing of our Marlboro model,” said Ellen.
Black History Month events accentuate the positive

If you had an interest in pop music during the 1960s civil rights movement, the Harlem Renaissance or 19th-century African-American farmers in Vermont, Marlboro was the place to be in February. For Black History Month, the college had a wide array of events celebrating the contributions of African-Americans to American culture and society.

Vermont historian Elise Guyette kicked off the program with a discussion of her book Discovering Black Vermont: African-American Farmers in Hinesburgh, Vermont, 1790–1890. The book, which won the 2010 Award of Excellence from the Vermont Historical Society, tells the story of a small black community in northern Vermont that was apparently accorded fair treatment and respect from its white neighbors during a period of U.S. history that spans legal aid slavery and Jim Crow laws. Guyette’s lecture took the audience through her process of discovering court documents, town records, newspaper articles and other primary sources to construct what the Valley News calls “a quintessential Vermont pioneering story.”

Later in the month, legendary jazz bassist William Parker brought an octet to the Whittemore Theater to perform music from his 2010 release, I Plan to Stay a Believer: The Inside Songs of Curtis Mayfield. Parker’s group included poet, playwright and activist Amiri Baraka, who founded the Black Arts Movement in Harlem during the 1960s and authored the Obie-winning play Dutchman. Parker and other band members also met with students and faculty to discuss the intersection between art and social consciousness during that era among African-Americans in general, and Curtis Mayfield in particular.

“If you had ears to hear, you knew that Curtis was a man with a positive message—a message that was going to help you to survive,” Parker said. His band performed jazz renditions of Mayfield’s songs, such as “People Get Ready,” “Move on Up” and “Keep on Pushing,” which became anthems of black power and black pride in the 1960s and ’70s.

The final event was a lecture and reading by author and University of Vermont Professor Emily Bernard, entitled “Carl Van Vechten and the Harlem Renaissance.” Bernard discussed the power and potential of interracial friendships through the historical lens of Van Vechten’s role as patron during this early 20th-century period.

“There was really no one like Van Vechten,” said Bernard, whose book Carl Van Vechten: A Life in Black and White will be published by Yale University Press later this year. “He did everything he could to promote black artists, he wrote articles and he had parties. He was a genius at throwing parties.” She described how the relationships formed in his apartment, at a time when clubs and other social venues were highly segregated, set the stage for the patronage of many influential artists, from Langston Hughes to Zora Neale Hurston.

Full lectures are available at www.marlboro.edu/news/videos.
Marlboro congratulates photography professor John Willis (above) for receiving a fellowship award from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation in April. John is one of 180 scholars, artists and scientists chosen from almost 3,000 applicants across the country. His application included work from his 2010 book, *Views from the Reservation* (*Potash Hill*, Winter 2011), as well as his 2002 *Recycled Realities* (*Potash Hill*, Summer 2001), in addition to other endeavors. John plans to use the award to continue pursuing artistic projects that integrate his work at Marlboro with the youth programs he has helped establish, the *In-Sight Photography Project* in Brattleboro and the *Exposures* cross-cultural youth arts program.

Recently retired (but never slowing down) biology professor Bob Engel taught a class in ornithology this spring at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, a continuing education program for seniors in Brattleboro. Also featured this spring was anthropology professor Carol Hendrickson, discussing indigenous peoples of Latin America in the 21st century. These Marlboro faculty members continue a long tradition of sharing their scholarship with elder community members at Osher, including in recent years William Edelglass, Lynette Rummel, Amer Latif, Meg Mott and Gerti Pfitzenm de Batlle.

“I explore functional forms that reflect industrial traditions; seeking to make work that may be, in some way, indicative of the eminence of the owner,” writes ceramics professor Martina Lantin in an article in the March/April 2011 issue of *Pottery Making Illustrated*. Titled “A Crowning Achievement,” the article describes Martina’s inspiration and technique for creating “crown jars,” original designs that ... are equally capable of holding the collected bounty of a batch of cookies or the ideas and aspirations of its owner.”

Anyone who has attended staff-faculty readings at the college has been delighted to learn that Marlboro’s president, Ellen McCulloch-Lovell (below), is also an accomplished poet. Last winter marked the publication of a fine book of poems by Ellen, Gone, in a limited edition from the acclaimed art book publisher Janus Press. Gone is illustrated with a lithograph by Janus founder Claire Van Vliet and includes 21 of Ellen’s poems printed on handmade paper from a mill in Maidstone, England.

Not everyone celebrates their birthday with a terzetto from Mozart’s *Magic Flute* and a fountain of molten chocolate. But then, not everyone is retiring language professor Edmund Brelsford (above). In March the venerable Marlboro Recorder Workshop, founded by Edmund, celebrated its 47th-anniversary concert season and Edmund’s 80th with a concert in Ragle Hall. The ensemble presented vocal and instrumental music of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the baroque and classical periods. Their concert paid homage to the late Blanche Honegger Moyse, as well as to retiring Marlboro colleague Luis Battle, and was followed by a reception with cake and, yes, molten chocolate for dipping strawberries.

“Where else is a nuclear disaster in the world’s only A-bombed country more potent than in the world’s first A-bombed city?” asked Andrew Tanabe ’12, reporting from his World Studies Program internship in Hiroshima, Japan. He was working at the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation, doing research and translation as well as helping to create a model “Peace Culture” that includes a clean energy economy and local food systems. In the wake of the nuclear disaster in north-east Japan, he was surprised to learn that Japanese citizens do not often connect nuclear weapons with nuclear power. “Interestingly, I think this sentiment is particularly strong in Hiroshima,” Andrew said.

Brenda Foley, theater professor and director of the World Studies Program, presented a paper in May at an interdisciplinary meeting in Warsaw called “Probing the Boundaries, Making Sense of Pain.” In the paper, which combines theory from the fields of disability and performance studies, Brenda explores how performance can be used to disrupt a socially constructed public image of disability that denies the reality of visible pain. “Culturally we perpetuate a hierarchy of disability according to visible difference,” she said. “We like our disabilities to be neat and tidy, not messy, sloppy, ugly or contorted in pain. But the potential exists in performance to blur that societal inscription.”
As if being dean of students and hosting a nationally syndicated radio show is not keeping him busy enough, Ken Schneck (above) went ahead and got elected to the Brattleboro Town Selectboard with 59 percent of the vote in March. His goal, as he said, is to “be the communication conduit as much as possible. Also, bringing some levity to the process? Not such a bad thing.”

“I’m off getting some fresh, new stories and insights to enliven my African Politics course this fall,” Lynette Rumore wrote from her adventures in Mali, where she spent three weeks of spring sabbatical. Lynette plans to use Mali as a case study country, to explore and examine the more general trends and patterns that she presents in class. “I’ve never been to Mali before, so it will make it new and exciting to reconsider common arguments and larger contours in a new and different light. For example, I wonder if many Americans are aware of our involvement in this country as a front against, you guessed it, al Qaida in the Maghreb.”

Those who read the last issue of Potash Hill (Winter 2011) will remember Sari Brown’s ’11 field research on gender and religion in Bolivia. This spring, Sari returned to Bolivia with anthropology professor Carol Hendrickson, supported by an Aron Grant, to look beyond discursive methods of documenting life in and around La Paz. They created artwork, recorded street sounds, took series of photos in stop-motion style and brought back food and garments from Bolivia’s rich material culture. “It was really interesting for me to go back and try to be conscientious about taking things in on a more bodily, sensorial level and looking for nondiscursive forms of meaning and communicating,” said Sari.

Philosophy professor William Edelglass writes, “It seems to be a natural development in all literate societies, and in many nonliterate societies as well, to ask difficult questions about the fundamental nature of reality, about what it is to be human, about what constitutes a good life, about the nature of beauty and about how we can know any of these things.” William and colleague Jay L. Garfield edited The Oxford Handbook of World Philosophy (ISBN 978-0-19-532899-8), published by Oxford this year, co-authoring the introduction and the chapter on Indo-Tibetan Buddhist philosophy. His recent publications also include a bibliographic essay on Buddhist philosophy for the Oxford Bibliographies Online.

As being dean of students and hosting a nationally syndicated radio show is not keeping him busy enough, Ken Schneck (above) went ahead and got elected to the Brattleboro Town Selectboard with 59 percent of the vote in March. His goal, as always, is to invite as many voices to contribute to town discussions and decisions as possible. “Our town government has not yet embraced social media,” said Ken. “In fact, we’ve barely said hello to electronic media. I want to create different avenues of participation for Brattleboro citizens to be heard, diversifying the communication stream as much as possible. Also, bringing some levity to the process? Not such a bad thing.”

Philosophy professor William Edelglass writes, “It seems to be a natural development in all literate societies, and in many nonliterate societies as well, to ask difficult questions about the fundamental nature of reality, about what it is to be human, about what constitutes a good life, about the nature of beauty and about how we can know any of these things.” William and colleague Jay L. Garfield edited The Oxford Handbook of World Philosophy (ISBN 978-0-19-532899-8), published by Oxford this year, co-authoring the introduction and the chapter on Indo-Tibetan Buddhist philosophy. His recent publications also include a bibliographic essay on Buddhist philosophy for the Oxford Bibliographies Online.
A gray and rainy day did not dissuade hundreds of graduating seniors, family, friends and community members from gathering in Persons Auditorium on May 15 to celebrate Marlboro’s 64th commencement. The class of 2011 included 69 graduates, completing courses of study ranging from psychology, politics to food studies, from jazz history to creative writing. President Ellen McCulloch-Lovell marked changes in the world since the class started their intellectual journey at Marlboro four years ago, as well as profound changes in the students themselves. Senior speaker Jonathan Jones reminded students of the impermanence of failures and the permanence of bonds formed on Potash Hill.

An honorary degree was conferred upon Claudine Brown, assistant secretary for education and access for the Smithsonian Institution, who encouraged the graduates to embrace change. John Scagliotti, Emmy award-winning filmmaker, television producer and radio broadcaster, also received an honorary degree in recognition of his efforts to celebrate the LGBT community’s contribution to culture and politics. Reverend R. Dewitt Mallary Jr., father of trustee Peter Mallary ’76 and grandfather of Rebecca Mallary ’11, offered the benediction, and the event was underscored with jazz guitar duets played by Zach Pearson ’11 and music professor Stan Charkey.

Who are you, now, today? Research tells us that the college years are that precious time to think, to create, to explore and to become, when a person’s identity is forged. Influential teachers challenged, then validated you. You learned from your peers—outside the classroom and on trips. You came with ideas and changed them. You went through the crucible of confusion and change—exploring your beliefs, your differences and biases, even suffering the loss of loved ones—to emerge with a stronger sense of self. You know more about what you are capable of, how convincing you are, how strong, what lats. You know through experience what educational philosopher John Dewey said: “The self is not something ready-made, but something in continuous formation through choice of action.”

Every one of us walking across this stage today is a creator of something magnificent, something born of ether and air, and it, and to give it. As far as family, I challenge anyone to spend even one week on this hill and tell me we aren’t one.

For more than 30 years, you have worked within the museum and philanthropy worlds to promote education that is both hands-on and multisensory. You have said that “museums create communities” and, as the director of education at the Smithsonian Institution, you are creating a new community of learning for students of all ages, ... You are asking, “What does it look like to be the nation’s museum in the 21st century, using all the tools that exist now to reach people?”

I have worked with smart people, crazy people, brave and defiant people, insecure people who were willing to put aside their fears for the benefit of others, shy people who chose to assert themselves when they were most needed and risk-taking young people who have grown into wise leaders, and I learned from them all. This work-life, that has been so very fulfilling for me, did not come about because I had an orderly plan. It has been about leaving my comfort zone and embracing discomfort—taking risk and embracing change. It has been about teaching and learning... It is highly likely that you will have more than one great idea. Give time and attention to your dreams and goals. Don’t just talk about them, do something about them. Others may achieve similar goals before you, but your interpretation and implementation of that goal will be unique. If you care about it, do something every day to make it real.

The end is near, and I don’t mean the rapture on May 21st... May you leave this place with affection, but even more with thanks for doors it has opened for you, for friends you have made, and for the intellectual tools you have acquired. May you find ways to use your gifts, not simply for gain or for pleasure, but for justice and compassion near and far. And whatever your particular spiritual resources, your particular religious or philosophical convictions, may your compass point true north.

For full transcripts of addresses and citations, as well as photos and videos, go to www.marlboro.edu/news/commencement/2011
The William Davison Prize, created by the Town Meeting Selectboard and named in honor of Will Davison, who served as a faculty member for 18 years and as a trustee for 22 years, is awarded to one or more students for extraordinary contributions to the Marlboro community. Anna Knecht and Sarah Verbil

The Ryan Larsen Memorial Prize was established in 2006 in memory of Ryan Jeffrey Larsen, who felt transformed by the opportunities to learn and grow within the Marlboro community and environs. It is awarded annually to juniors or seniors who best reflect Ryan’s qualities of philosophical curiosity, creativity, compassion and spiritual inquiry. Michael Thompson and Sari Brown

The Rebecca Willow Prize, established in 2008 in memory of Rebecca Willow, class of 1995, is awarded to students whose presence bring personal integrity and kindness to the community and who unite an interest in human history and culture with a passion for the natural world. Casey Chalke and Amanda Whiting

The Audrey Alley Gorton Award is given in memory of Audrey Gorton, Marlboro alumna and member of the faculty for 33 years, to the student who best reflects the Gorton qualities of: passion for reading, independence of critical judgment, fastidious attention to matters of style and a gift for intelligent conversation. Emma Goldhammer

The Hilary van Loon Prize, established by the class of 2000 in honor of Hilary van Loon, Marlboro class of 1962 and staff member for 23 years, is given to the seniors who best reflect Hilary’s wisdom, compassion, community involvement, quiet dedication to the spirit of Marlboro College, joy in writing and celebration of life. Eric Toldi and Kelly Athens

The Hilly van Loon Prize is awarded by the visual arts faculty for the best Plans of Concentration in the fine arts. Sophie Mueller and Lee Krasnianski

The Sally and Valerio Montanari Theater Prize is awarded annually to a graduating senior who has made the greatest overall contribution to the pursuit of excellence in theater production. Elizabeth Hull

The Dr. Loren C. Bronson Award for Excellence in Classics, established by the family of Loren Bronson, class of 1973, is awarded to encourage undergraduate work in classics. Emily Kimble and Amanda Whiting

The Helen W. Clark Prize is awarded by the visual arts faculty for the best Plans of Concentration in the fine arts. Sophie Mueller and Lee Krasnianski

The Roland W. Boyden Prize is given by the humanities faculty to students who have demonstrated excellence in the humanities. Roland Boyden was a founding faculty member of the college, acting president, dean and trustee. Eric Toldi and Michael Minar

The Freshman/Sophomore Essay Prize is given annually for the best essay written for a Marlboro course. Kathryn Lyon; honorable mention, Adam Halwitz

The Robert H. MacArthur Prize was established in 1973 in memory of Robert MacArthur, class of 1951, and recently rededicated to Robert and also to John and to John and Robert’s parents, John and Olive MacArthur, who founded the science program at Marlboro College. The contest for the prize is in the form of a question or challenge offered to the entire student community. Thais Cabrera, Eric Joyce and Lee Krasnianski, Tristan Pease

The Robert E. Engel Award in honor of Bob Engel, Marlboro faculty member for 36 years, is given to students who display Bob’s sense of wonder for the natural world and his keen powers of observation and inquiry as a natural historian. Kathryn Lyon and Clare Riley

For more on Bob’s legacy, see page 6.
Kenyon (Rosewell) Action
Bachelor of Arts
DANCE & SOCIOLOGY
Plan Summary: A study exploring the relationship of place, performance and social dance
Project: The design and production of a collaborative performance, integrating the work of students studying choreography and dance, sculpture/installation and interactive technology, and music composition and performance
Sponsors: Kristin Horrigan, Gerald Levy
Outside Evaluator: Elizabeth Seyler, arts consultant and visiting faculty at University of Vermont

Kathy Nicole Athrens
Bachelor of Arts
POLITICS & AMERICAN STUDIES/Disciplinary Studies
Plan Summary: An examination of retributive and restorative justice models, drawing on political theory, microhistory and folklore
Project: A sexual narrative analysis and an analysis reflecting personal experiences of retributive justice
Sponsors: Maggi Holt, Kathryn Ratcliff
Outside Evaluator: Alan Gatenby, University of Massachusetts-Amherst

Angela Allyn
Bachelor of Arts
AMERICAN STUDIES
Plan Summary: A study of race, gender and sexuality in the U.S. and Jamaica, drawing on feminist, historical materialist, anthropological and sociological theories and methodologies
Project: A paper titled "A Study of Homophobia in Jamaica," on the current anthropological and sociological theories used to examine the roots of homophobia in Jamaica
Sponsor: Kathryn Ratcliff
Outside Evaluator: Karen Honeycutt, Kennesaw State College

Morgan T Holmes Broadfoot
Bachelor of Arts
LITERATURE/Journalism & CULTURAL HISTORY
Plan Summary: An exploration of narrative strategies in combat journalism and nonfiction accounts of white-water paddlers, with particular attention to the assessment and presentation of risk and to the motivation of participants in such dangerous circumstances
Project: A paper comparing the narratives of the 1866 Taung expedition, exploring how the writer was told differently based on the author's relationship with the expedition and professional writing
Sponsors: T. Hunter Willian, Dana Howell
Outside Evaluator: Ethan Gisladottir, writer

Sari Lynn Brown
Bachelor of Arts
RELIGION & ANTHROPOLOGY
Plan Summary: An exploration of the role that gender plays in transforming and maintaining religious tradition, and the role that religious experiences play in transcending conventional gender roles
Project: An ethnographic study of gender, youth and leadership in the Bolivian Methodist Evangelical Church
Sponsors: Sarah Lavin, Carol Hendrickson
Outside Evaluator: Thomas Toleno, consultant and visiting faculty at University of Vermont

John Christopher
Bachelor of Arts
FILM/VIDEO STUDIES & LITERATURE
Plan Summary: An exploration of the relationships between film and literature, with a focus on the process of adaptation
Project: A paper examining film adaptation of the work of Cormac McCarthy and two screenplays inspired by the BBC’s Black Adder comedy series
Sponsors: Jo Cavan, John Shehy
Outside Evaluator: Kenneth Parks, film scholar and public television host

Christopher R. Carlton
Bachelor of Arts
PHILOSOPHY/Literature
Plan Summary: A study of art, society and conceptuality in Frankfurt School theories and contemporary poetry
Project: A study of the unique status of the art object in Adorno’s Aesthetic Distortions
Sponsor: William Edelglass
Outside Evaluator: Eric Seen Nielsen, University of Massachusetts-Lowell

Rylan Chinneck
Bachelor of Arts
PHILOSOPHY/Religions
Plan Summary: An exploration of the role that gender plays in transforming and maintaining religious tradition, and the role that religious experience plays in transcending conventional gender roles
Project: An ethnographic study of gender, youth and leadership in the Bolivian Methodist Evangelical Church
Sponsors: Sarah Lavin, Carol Hendrickson
Outside Evaluator: Thomas Toleno, consultant and visiting faculty at University of Vermont

James Evans
Bachelor of Arts
VISUAL ARTS & LITERATURE
Plan Summary: A study of the short story of Flannery O’Connor with an emphasis on religious themes and family dynamics, supported by a historical study of women and family in America during the Cold War era
Project: A paper concerning gender dynamics in O’Connor’s work
Sponsors: John Shehy, Kathryn Ratcliff
Outside Evaluator: Joanna Hayes, Greenfield Community College

Emily Elizabeth Fasica
Bachelor of Arts
WRITING & LITERATURE/Children’s Literature
Plan Summary: A collection of nonfiction pieces centering on personal construction of memory
Project: Two collections of linked children’s short stories
Sponsors: Laura Severson, Gloria Biemente
Outside Evaluator: Barbara Saulting, editor and children’s book author

Margarette A disastra Fields
Bachelor of Arts
WRITING & VISUAL ARTS
Plan Summary: An exploration of home, memory and family in encaustic, fiction and visual arts
Project: A collection of nonfiction pieces centered on personal construction of memory
Sponsors: John Shehy, Cathy O’man
Outside Evaluator: Brian Hannon, writer

Elizabeth Andrea Farrell
Bachelor of Arts
LITERATURE & AMERICAN STUDIES
Plan Summary: A study of the short story of Flannery O’Connor with an emphasis on religious themes and family dynamics, supported by a historical study of women and family in America during the Cold War era
Project: A paper concerning gender dynamics in O’Connor’s work
Sponsors: John Shehy, Kathryn Ratcliff
Outside Evaluator: Joanna Hayes, Greenfield Community College
Elizabeth Marie Hull
Bachelor of Arts
THEATER
Plan Summary: An in-depth study of the short stories, poems and plays of Tennessee Williams, culminating in a production of three of his one-act plays.
Project: Directing a theater production titled Play for the Wild, a showcase of Tennessee Williams’ one-act plays and poems.
Sponsors: Brenda Foley
Outside Evaluator: Aminare Bean, independent scholar

Courtney Frances Kanler
Bachelor of Arts
PSYCHOLOGY & RELIGION
Plan Summary: An exploration of madness and trauma with a focus on combat veterans and post-traumatic stress using psychological and religious perspectives.
Project: A study of how combat veterans experience post-traumatic stress and madness and their place within society.
Sponsors: Thomi Telines, A-Merf Lafti
Outside Evaluator: Shane Hammond, Greenfield Community College

Emily Kimble
Bachelor of Arts
LITERATURE & CLASSICS/Translation
Plan Summary: An examination of the relationship between identity and things.
Project: Two papers: one discussing the “Ithaca” chapter of Joyce’s Ulysses and one discussing the making of Alfred Hitchcock’s work on the world of film.
Sponsors: Thomas Toleno, Gerald Levy
Outside Evaluator: Valerie Varchelos, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Devin Green
Bachelor of Arts
POLITICS & HISTORY/Writing
Plan Summary: An in-depth study of the modern American economy, focusing on the causes and consequences of corporate outsourcing and offshoring.
Project: A paper examining the economics of corporate outsourcing and offshoring in post-WWII America.
Sponsors: James Tiber, Gerald Levy
Outside Evaluator: Valerie Varchelos, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Dilyana Khawiarou
Bachelor of Arts
SOCIOLegY & AMERICAN STUDIES/Sculpture
Plan Summary: An exploration of how states, groups and individuals negotiate issues of migration, rights and belonging with a theoretical, historical and ethnographic emphasis on statelessness and transnationalism.
Project: A theoretical historical paper on stateless peoples and interconnections with transnationalism.
Sponsors: Gerald Levy, Kathryn Raciti, Timothy Sager
Outside Evaluator: Diana Yan, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Michael Thompson, Ryan Strotten and Ruth Stark.

Anna Knecht and Elizabeth Hull.
Plan Summary: A study of violence in adolescence and how it affects the transition into adulthood.

Sponsors: John Sheehy, Gerald Levy

Outside Evaluator: Christopher Lowell, Union Institute and University

Sarah Amatia Horan Schaff
Bachelor of Arts

Writing & SOCIOLOGY/Psychology

Plan Summary: A study of violence in adolescence and how it affects the transition into adulthood.

Project: A paper that explores violence in schools in its social, pedagogical and personal dimensions.

Sponsors: John Sheehy, Gerald Levy

Outside Evaluator: Christopher Lowell, Union Institute and University

Peter Mallory ’76 and his daughter Becca Mallory with their Plan sponsor Tim Little.
Alexandra Spohrer  
Bachelor of Arts  
THEATER  
Plan Summary: An examination of the aspects of cultural semiotics in clothing and the interpretation of aesthetic values through costume in performance.  
Project: A visual book, annotated with critical notes, costume sketches and commentary exploring artistic aims and cultural iconography of costumes employed by designers of selected productions for stage and screen, accompanied by a collection of hand-sewn costume designs that relate to the ideas in the visual book.  
Sponsors: Paul Nelson, Dana Howell  
Outside Evaluator: Edward Lasser, College of the Holy Cross  
John Whelan  
Bachelor of Arts  
MATHEMATICS  
Plan Summary: An analysis of the exercise in Combinatorics, reporting original research in combinatorics in group theory.  
Project: An analysis of the trajectories of mathematics with a focus on group theory and combinatorial problems within groups.  
Sponsors: Lee Hui, Sarah Mott, Brenda Foley, Sue Castriotta  
Outside Evaluator: Adam Franklin-Lyons, University of Massachusetts Amherst  
Amanda Marie Whiting  
Bachelor of Arts  
CLASSICS/ANCIENT HISTORY  
Plan Summary: An exploration of the birth of pastoral poetry and pastoral themes through the study of the Iliad of Theocritus, the Eclogues of Virgil and the poetry of William Butler Yeats.  
Project: A series of essays examining the evolution of pastoral themes in classical authors and their modern reception into the poetry of William Butler Yeats.  
Sponsors: Timothy Little, William Guest  
Outside Evaluator: Sarah Mott, University of Massachusetts Amherst  
Rebecca Williams  
Bachelor of Arts  
MUSIC  
Plan Summary: A study in tonal music and composition as practiced in the 18th century, with an emphasis on the keyboard works of J.S. Bach.  
Project: A paper analyzing and discussing the last part inventories of S. Bach, culminating in a series of original two-part inventions in Bach’s style.  
Sponsors: Stanley Charkey  
Outside Evaluator: Hugh Kielan, Brattleboro Music Center  
Dawn Taylor Willmert  
Bachelor of Arts  
PHILOSOPHY  
Plan Summary: A study of the cultivation of freedom, singularity and ethics in Kierkegaard and Nietzsche.  
Project: A study of the trajectories of political theory and feminist art.  
Sponsors: Meg Matt, Brenda Foley, John Willis  
Outside Evaluator: Gail Griffin, Kalamazoo College  
Richard Taylor Scragge  
Bachelor of Arts  
COMPUTER SCIENCE/EDUCATION  
Plan Summary: A study of undergraduate computer science practice and education.  
Project: One paper on computer science curriculum and one on applications of educational theory to computer science pedagogy.  
Sponsors: Jim Mahoney  
Outside Evaluator: Sue Cetrinato, Keene State College  
Ryan Eric Stratton  
Bachelor of Arts  
ECONOMICS & VISUAL ARTS  
Plan Summary: A study of economics with a focus on the creative economy and guitar production in the United States, in historical context, featuring case studies of local independent craftpeople and an exhibition of carved wood sculptures.  
Project: A set of papers on the Arts & Crafts Movement and its American revival, on the organization of production and the role of technology in the U.S. guitar industry, and on the place of craft production in the creative economy.  
Sponsors: James Taylor, Timothy Sager  
Outside Evaluators: Michelle and David Hotzpapel, independent artists  
Sari Brown and her Plan sponsor Amer Latif.
Class notes are listed by year and include both graduates and nongraduates; the latter are listed under the class with which they are associated.

'51
CHARLES STAPLES is "keeping very busy and active at 81 with various volunteer pursuits, travel and cultural events. I hiked in Rocky Mountain National Park in June, and in the Berkshire and White Mountains during the summer. Got to Vermont on Columbus Day weekend and enjoyed Marlboro's Family Day and The Putney School's 75th anniversary. In November we flew to Zagreb for a Croatia visit and cruise on the Dalmatian coast."

‘59
BARBARA and BRUCE COLE are "now enjoying working on the Marlboro Town Hogback property recently conserved with the help of the Vermont Land Trust and the efforts of the Hogback Mountain Conservation Association and many others. It was fun clearing the old overgrown 'Meadow' ski trail for cross-country skiing, hiking and snowshoeing. Both well, and kids fine." The Coles were featured in a Brattleboro Reformer article, "Labors of Love," in March.

‘60
"I retired from fulltime professoring at the adult degree program of Norwich University (and other addresses) last January," writes SARAH LORENZ MITCHELL. "Having acquired an Ed. M. from Harvard University in 1976 and a Ph.D. from Union Institute and University in 1986, I was given a B.A. as a goodbye. Lots of fun but not a degree from Marlboro."

‘61
BOB GLEASON is "still working three or four days per week—enjoying lakeside living in summer and Siesta Key in winter. Life is good on the green side of the grass."

‘62
HILLY VAN LOON sent in a wonderfully newsy note, in true Hilly style: "I'm writing this in March on a gray day of mixed precipitation, dashing all hope for an early spring. We should know better by now. We are all fine and have had a good year. PET '63 and I went to Ireland last October with my brothers and their wives for a week. Rented an old cottage in County Clare near Doolin. Gale force winds prevented a trip to the Aran Islands, but we wandered the Burren, the shores of Galway Bay, and the little towns near our cottage, and we stayed up 'til all hours at our favorite pub listening to wonderful Irish music. Piet's still puttering around our place in South Newfane, trying to hoe the barn after 30 years of accumulating stuff. DAVE ROSS '88, who has been doing all renovations to our place over the last 20-plus years, spent the fall propping up our barn that was listing dangerously to the south. There is no way it would have survived this winter otherwise. Piet is also volunteering at the hospital and is into his third decade as a representative for Newfane on the Windham Regional Planning Commission. Our kids are all in Vermont: Deborah, clinical nurse educator at the Intensive Care Nursery at Dartmouth-Hitchcock, lives with her 6-year-old daughter, Lily, in St. Johnsbury. PIETER '88 and wife RACHEL BOYDEN '79 are empty nesters living in Marlboro. Pieter is a forester for the Vermont Land Trust, and Rachel teaches junior high kids at the Marlboro Elementary School. Their daughter, Amy, is a freshman at Hobart-William Smith, and her son Rory is production manager of BCTV in Brattleboro, which means he practically runs the station. Our youngest, Hannah, who put in her time on the summer work crew and on the watchboard at Marlboro when she was in college, is a paraeducator in the Brattleboro school system and also works at the Brattleboro Food Co-op. Pieter and Hannah are our life support in winter when the roofs need to be shoveled and the paths cleared. I've been a freelance copyeditor since I retired (officially) from Marlboro in 2000, doing most of my work for a publisher in Boston. I also host a writing group that has been meeting weekly in my studio for 15-plus years, a group started by Susan Keese, who used to work at Marlboro. I still sing in the Brattleboro Music Center's chorus (now called the Brattleboro Concert Choir). Except for about 10 years after Piet and I got married, I've been singing with some version of that group since 1959, when I entered Marlboro. I volunteer at Experienced Goods in Brattleboro, a wonderful secondhand shop that benefits Hospice, everyone's favorite place to shop in this grim economy, and I spend as much time in the garden as I can. We see BRUCE and BARBARA COLE '59 and SUMMER '61 and BRIDGET BENNETT '59 once a year at Munson Hicks's Christmas party. We always love hearing news of the legions of Marlboro alumni we both know that span the decades. Ran into ALEX GREENFIELD '97 and PENNY LARSON '97 back in January—a wonderful surprise."

‘67
"Macmillan has confirmed a publishing date for my new book, The Devil’s Prophet, in December 2011," ARTHUR MAGIDA writes. "Already, worldwide Portuguese and Spanish language rights have sold."

‘69
RICHARD COUTANT has been a partner at Salmon & Nostrand in Bellows Falls for almost 25 years. "My work involves boundaries, roads, basements, representing..."
In mid-March, REGGIE BLASZEK became a visiting fellow at the German Historical Institute in Washington, D.C., where she is working on a new history of the area’s bats and Erdkits. Cherie served as the New England Wildflower Society’s first education director, executive director of the Harvard Museums of Natural History and Natural History, and now delights in sharing her experiences and following her muse as a consultant. Since her training, photography has been a passion. Through her lens, she shares many wonderful wild moments for which there are no words.

KEVIN MCCAMANT writes, “Two kids at Marlboro (EMMA starting and IAN soon to finish up) brought me back to the Hill and surroundings. They make me wish I could go back and do it all again, even if it’s not too bad, though it does seem a bit quiet after school breaks, when the kids at all their friends leave. Some folks at LINDY WHITON’s photography show back in March. ANNIE QUEST ‘93, MATT SKOPEL ‘79, RICHARD WITTY, DIANE KAARZ WORTH ‘90. Very cool. What a bunch. We need to hear about those lives outside Detroit. Same three of my original college mates (BARB BRASSOR, NANDA FLEMING and Tom) are now gone. Still doing the forensic psychology thing both privately and for the state of Maryland. Also continue studying jazz guitar and resumed Zen Buddhist practice after a 20-year hiatus.”

LINDY WHITON had a “successful gallery showing of photographs from my 365-day Project of 2010 entitled ‘Edges’ in March. In 2010, knowing that my mother, Jean, would soon die, I decided to intentionally document the year by taking pictures every day. I took over 15,000 photos. Many of them were posted on Flickr and my blog, wholifephotog.com. The show was made up of 50 of these images. A clear message reflected in the pictures was that life wavers together from all of its parts, and for my Marlboro is one of the anchors on the limb. The opening party was wonderful, with many Marlboro alumni in attendance. Now I’m working on a couple of new Projects—this photography thing makes me happy.”

TOM DURGIN’s sudden death. I had not seen him in years, but my husband, Douglas, and our close friend PETE STEWART ‘77 ran into him on a hiking trip in the Pemigewasset Wilderness a few years ago. They spent the evening together around a campfire. I remember Tom as a great person—I miss him a lot. He was wonderful, with big eyes and a personality to match. It was great to see him again, even if it’s not too bad, though it does seem a bit quiet after school breaks, when the kids at all their friends leave. Some folks at LINDY WHITON’s photography show back in March. ANNIE QUEST ‘93, MATT SKOPEL ‘79, RICHARD WITTY, DIANE KAARZ WORTH ‘90. Very cool. What a bunch. We need to hear about those lives outside Detroit. Same three of my original college mates (BARB BRASSOR, NANDA FLEMING and Tom) are now gone. Still doing the forensic psychology thing both privately and for the state of Maryland. Also continue studying jazz guitar and resumed Zen Buddhist practice after a 20-year hiatus.”

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Chris Blackwell '90: Digitizing ancient texts

As a classics student at Marlboro, Chris Blackwell focused on the possibilities for interpreting history using primary sources of ancient literature. Now a grant from the National Science Foundation to analyze some of the oldest written documents in the Western world. The $100,000 grant will give Chris an opportunity to use new digital technology to identify and transcribe the handwriting of scribes from ancient Greeks. “This work is intensely collaborative, and it lends itself ideally to collaboration between middle-aged professor types like me and undergraduates like the brilliant young people I get to teach at Furman,” said Chris. He and his students will focus on two texts purportedly authored by scribes like the sole surviving copy of Aristotle’s treatise on the history and function of the Athenian democracy and the only surviving fragment of a song by the poet Alcman, one of the few pieces of literature in existence from ancient Sparta. “If my collaborators and I never leave our offices again, we have a century of discoveries to be made with our students based merely on the images we now carry around on our iPads.”
Marlboro was one of the fondest times for me and still feeds me with idealism, creativity and joy,” writes HOLDHUSEN, a good writer, musician or artist despite all the effort. Have been through interesting times recently, helping form and...
“It was cool and weird,” said Katherine Partington, who won both the L.A. Movie Award and the Maverick Movie Award for Best Actress based on her role in the made-for-TV movie Overload last year. As her first major role in a feature film, this recognition reflected a great success for her as a new actress. “I worked very hard to give a solid performance, but winning an award for best actress went above and beyond,” she said.

Since graduating with a BA in political science and dance, Katherine has been busy working in New York City at several jobs simultaneously, but primarily as a freelance performance artist for a variety of choreographers, directors and film-makers. “In one week I will work as an intern, hostess, choreographer, dance teacher and performer,” she said.

Katherine is working with Robert Fritz, director of Overload, again this summer on another feature-length film. A Matter of Fact is the story of a recent journalism graduate—played by Katherine—on her first newspaper job in a rural Vermont town and will be filmed in the Brattleboro area. Thrilled about the encouragement from her two awards, Katherine says, “I’m really excited to continue acting in films.”

ERIN PETERS is currently a writer and producer working on a reality TV pilot, Gina, an editor/writer at Colonial Williamsburg and a regional Emmy winner, wrote, “how incredibly odd this is—two people from the same tiny, tiny school in Vermont, both finalists in this contest something like 10 years later. Moreover, Marlboro had no film or screenwriting classes or professors at all when we were both there.”

“Hello,” say WENDY LEVY and RICH BOULET. “It has been a little while since we last sent news. All is well. We are still living in Boston. The girls are now 13 and 11 years old. Carolyn is still working on the register of deeds and doing fiber arts, like spinning. In her free time, Edward is homesteading the girls and is a great deal in his free time.”

PENNY MACARTHUR writes, “Jason MacArthur and I were married in July 2010, and we’re joyfully expecting our first child in January!” [Note: Lauren and Jason, and the rest of the MacArthur clan, welcomed Milo a bit early, on the full moon winter solstice in December.]

“Just wanted to share the news that I got a book deal with Penguin this week,” reports CLAIRE BIDWELL SMITH. “My memoir, Memory, will come out in hardcover, spring of 2012. I really couldn’t be more thrilled.”

“Hello to my Marlboro friends,” says WENDY LEVY. “Email me if you’re coming to the New York City area: cheesesnobwendy@gmail.com. Let’s have tea and catch up.”

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EMILY AMANNA and DAVID HANSON ‘07 run Wild Shepherd Farm near Athens, Vermont. They raise vegetables, herbs and garlic—30,000 heads this year, according to the Blue Hill Peninsula Chamber of Commerce. You heard it here first. Also, her younger sister, Thea, is soon to be a Marlboro graduate, and her even younger sister, Zoba, will attend in the fall. That’s a high concentration of Marlboro news from Blue Hill, Maine.”

TINO RIERRO is “working at the United States Patent and Trademark Office in Alexandria, Virginia. Previously, worked three years as a cross-country adventure tour leader, and then four years as a corporate supervisor. Quit my job, took a couple of months off, doing contract work now, and leaving for Peace Corps service next year. I will send updates. Still have close friends from the Marlboro days, and still struggle when people ask me what I got a degree in. Theater? Philosophy? Psychology? I just say ‘Aesthetics,’ and the subject changes… Has there been a Camaro on campus since mine?”
Mark Gnsler Moves On to Another Flock

Marlboro’s alumni director since 2007, Mark Gnsler ’85 left at the end of June to pursue a wonderful new opportunity. He is off to New York City in the fall to study at General Theological Seminary, an Episcopal divinity school in Chelsea. The program is for a Master of Divinity (M.Div.), the degree most people pursue before becoming a priest in the Episcopal Church.

“If I be to southern Vermont—so close, really—as often as time and schedule allow, and welcome visitors in New York,” said Mark. “I think August will find me on a long bicycle trip. These past four and a half years have been a wonderful time, and I am grateful for my various colleagues—staff, faculty, alumni volunteers and students.”

Mark has accomplished many things during his time here, most notably supporting the establishment of a new alumni council and a revitalized alumni association, helping to create more formal alumni networks for the new career development office and recruiting alumni volunteers for the admissions office.

for cheese and meat, and are planning to expand their herds. After leasing the farm for a number of years, the couple was able to purchase it this spring with help from Vermont Land Trust’s Farmland Access Program, “securing the land as a working farm for generations to come,” according to Emily.

NOAH GAMBICEDIA and Anita Britton became the proud parents of Hunter Griffin Pilaro on September 10, 2010.

SARAH MUTRUX is in Craftsbury Common, Vermont, where she works in Sterling Colleges admissions office and co-manages The Common Place, a nonprofit arts organization whose mission is to “cultivate the creative and literary interests of youth and adults in the Northeast Kingdom while supporting the local economy.” Sarah is also a recent graduate of the Marlboro College Graduate School’s nonprofit management program.

LILLIAN SCHRANK was married to Forbes Graham, “a trumpet player (whom I met playing at Marlboro), on August 30, 2009. Please check out my art at www.LillianHelenGraham.com.”

LISA ORENSTEIN is in the Peace Corps in Ukraine, teaching English as a Foreign Language. Besides the everyday challenges of a classroom of kids with “a lot of energy,” Lisa reports that she has felt very welcome in Kyiv. “Everyone says ‘hi’ on the street, and I am invited to lunch, dinner or tea almost every day.” See a profile of Lisa’s work in Ukraine in the new career development enewsletter, After Marlboro:

www.marlboro.edu/current/career.

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—Geoffrey Hendricks, friend

It was delightful to read about pre-college memories, places, families and happenings in the Winter 2011 Potash Hill. We particularly enjoyed reading about the walks down to Harrisville, where we live. I noticed the page 3 photo of the kids on the Mather porch in 1929, on page 3 of the Winter 2011 Potash Hill. We particularly enjoyed reading about the walks down to Harrisville, where we live. I noticed the page 3 photo of the kids on the Mather porch doesn’t look like Mather, but the building is the splitting image of a well-known Harrisville farmhouse, which is still standing, and hasn’t changed a whole lot (above). In fact, this farmhouse is a half-hour walk from Mather through the woods, on a still-maintained trail that might have been taken by the folks of “Villa Roma” years ago.

—Tristan Roberts ’00

I was perplexed by the photo of “Mather House” in 1929, on page 3 of the Winter 2011 Potash Hill, I think the photo is actually the house at the “Pony Farm,” which is just over the town line in Halifax, near the Moss Hollow Campground. Up until a few years ago the Pony Farm looked just like it did in the photo you published. It was a mysterious, Briggish-type place that I would often walk to from Moss Hollow Road. There were big open fields and trails littered with old farm machinery. It was a stop back in time.

—Alan Dater, neighbor

Letters

THREE-LEGGED ATHLETES

We have only a couple responses to the photo on page 45 of the Winter 2011 issue of Potash Hill, but they eliminate the lost-contact-lens theory. We welcome your responses to this issue’s reminiscence from Shelly Klapar on page 50.

The picture with the mystery athletes is from somewhere in 1980–81. Mark Littlehales and his brother are the left-hand group. David Little and Ed McMullen are the middle group. John Gilliom and Tad Bladomore are the right-hand group. I believe that we are looking at the ground in anticipation of a starter’s signal for a three-legged cross-country marathon to South Newfane and back.

—John Gilliom ’82

We have laughed and laughed over this picture, over the years—we call them baby hippies. My guess is a Spring Rites three-legged race. Hee hee… what fun to see it in clear ink. Since that time he has consumed 24,900 beers. Approximately.

—Megan Littlehales ’82

THE MORE IT CHANGES...

As always, looking at the last issue of Potash Hill (Winter 2011) creates a comforting sense of familiarity. The timelessness of Marlboro is truly remarkable. I graduated in 1984, and still I recognize so many faces and places featured in the magazine—Tim Little, the group of classmates from the late 1970s gathered by Lucy and Holly in the alumni news, etc. That sense of timelessness is magnified when my niece, who is currently attending Marlboro, tells me about her professors and courses, some faculty, some integrity and critical thinking, different millennium. A marvel.

—Lisa Richardson ’84

MUSICAL MARLBORO

I enjoyed reading about Tim Little. I attended Marlboro in the early 1960s, and one of the things I really enjoyed as a student was participating in the chamber music group that at that time was directed by Louis Moye. The group presented concerts not only at the college, but to outside organizations such as the Bristleboro Rotaract. It would be fitting if Tim Little could devote a chapter about music at Marlboro in his book about the history of the college.

—Daniel Moore ’64

VILLA ROMA ERRATA

Larry Cerretani’s “Summertime at Villa Roma,” in the Winter 2011 Potash Hill was fun to read, and brought back memories of summers there in the ’30s, but there are a few things that need correcting and photos that are wrongly labeled. The opening image of “Villa Roma (Mather House) in 1929” (above) is not that. I don’t know where that house is, but all you have to do is look at the roofline, the width of the porch and the windows flanking the central door to see that it is some other house.

The photo on the next page with the two old cars is Mather House, as you can tell by the set-in porch of the el. In the center of that main porch, over the front door, they had a black sign with gold letters that said: “Villa Roma / A. Cerretani.” They fixed the house up a good deal, and inside built at least one large fireplace with round stones. The photograph on page 7, labeled “The Hendricks children” is also not us. I’ll send you pictures of us there in the ’30s (opposite).

We bought our farm in 1931/32 from Henry Hewes (not Hughes), so we arrived only a couple of years after the Cerretanis. As Larry says, they would generally have a lot of guests.

—I remember them making chokecherry wine and being offered some to taste, and we certainly did visit them as neighbors. When Larry says they tore down the barn across the road, improving the view, I think he would have been recalling the tarring down of the barn across the road from our house, where the art studios now are. He would have been a teenager at the time and no doubt helped, leaving a strong impression in his mind.

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—Alan Dater, neighbor

GOING DIGITAL

We no longer wish to receive Potash Hill magazine in the mail. Although we will always be interested in Marlboro and proud of its contribution to our family, we feel it’s wasteful to continue receiving the magazine by mail. You publish a very classy and interesting magazine—we will check you out online.

—Janet and Herman Schnurr, parents of Lise Schnurr ’85, aka Lisa McCormick

If you are with the Schnurrs on this, let us know that you would rather peruse Potash Hill online. You can find it, in the pdf version we have posted since 2001 and in a new html format, at www.marlboro.edu/news/publications/potash_hill. We welcome your feedback. –ed.
Blanche Honegger Moyse

Blanche was a founding member of Marlboro College’s music faculty, with her husband Louis Moyse, and co-founder of three of the most widely respected institutions in the region—the Marlboro Music School and Festival, the Brattleboro Music Center and the New England Bach Festival. Hilly van Loo ’62 shares this special remembrance of Blanche, who died in February at the age of 101.

While Blanche’s reputation as an interpreter of the choral music of Bach was world renowned, it was her gift as a teacher and her generosity as a member of the Marlboro College community that is cherished by legions of alumni who sang in the college chorus, studied with her, and enjoyed the warm hospitality of the Moyse family in their West Brattleboro home, where cheese fondue was always on the menu.

John Lehman-Haupt ’71, who studied harmony, solfège and guitar with Blanche, called her “a force of nature.” Students in her solfège class had what John describes as “gauzy expectations that were quickly put to rest by a blast of her Old World rigor.… I never had a harmony tutorial with her from which I didn’t emerge feeling more alive than when I had entered her studio.” Malcolm (“Ory”) Wright ’62 said she will never forget Blanche playing her violin to illustrate passages in a Bach sonata, and David Decker ’60, who sang tenor in Blanche’s chorus for years, credits her with providing the foundation of his music education. Tim Little ’65 said Blanche prided herself on being able to teach anyone to sing. “There was one student whom she kept after all semester, patiently trying to move him by half steps up to a sharp or down to a flat from his drone note, to no avail. But she never gave up.”

My first vivid memory of Blanche go back 52 years, when I was a brand new transfer student and joined the weekly chorus rehearsals in Louis’ music studio (now a Apple Tree). We were a community chorus, largely singers that included faculty member Dick Judi, faculty wives Cynthia Boylan and Margaret MacARTHUR, Blanche’s mother-in-law, a scattering of veteran students and a few of us intrepid new students. We sat in a curve of creaky wooden chairs, and in the late-afternoon light that streamed in the southwest windows, began work on the first Bach cantatas I had ever sung, “Wachet Auf” and “Christ Lag in Todesbanden,” which we would later perform at the Retreat in Brattleboro.

Louis Moyse always accompanied us on the piano, a stump of an unlit cigar clenched between his front teeth. He and Blanche kept up a running commentary, largely in French. Blanche, whose keen ear could pinpoint a wayward pitch in a nanosecond, took us through our pieces, occasionally stopping to ask pairs of us to sing a passage to isolate the pitch—terrifying moments. On Sunday evenings, when we were working on a large piece, we rehearsed with what Blanche called “the downtown chorus,” local Brattleboro singers who made up what would become the Brattleboro Community Chorus. Those concerts involved a full orchestra of musicians from the Marlboro Music Festival, something I will never forget. The long, late-night rehearsals were more fun to me than the concerts themselves, which only proved Blanche’s philosophy. “We do concerts so we can rehearse.” It was pure serendipity that brought Blanche and her family to tiny Marlboro College in the hills of Vermont. The gifts she brought and shared not only affected the ethos of the college but profoundly enriched the lives of her students. We will never forget her.

Winifred Clark ’51

One of the college’s pioneering women, “Winnie” Clark passed away at the age of 97 on Valentine’s Day, in Brattleboro. Born in the Bay Area, where John entered his father’s architectural practice and Mary settled down to raise five children. A scholar of science, mathematics and art, Winnie was a devoted support to her wife, Hope, who died in 2005. A member of the First Congregational Church in West Brattleboro for 73 years, Winnie was a volunteer and supporter of a number of charitable causes in the area, most notably Brattleboro’s Habitat for Humanity Projects.

In Memoriam

Mary Piper Bolles, former trustee

A longtime trustee of Marlboro College and mother of graduate David Bolles ’65, Mary Piper Bolles died in late-November. Mary was born in Potsdam, New York, in 1922, the eldest daughter of Marie and William Thomas Piper, founder of Piper Aviation, and was raised in Bradford, Pennsylvania.

In 1931, Mary entered Radcliffe College, where she met her husband, architect and art gallery owner John Savage Bolles. Prior to graduation, Mary left Cambridge for Paris, where she pursued her love of art and sculpture, and went on to attend Harvard. She married John in 1940, and they had five children. Mary was a devoted mother, making sure her children had the best education possible. She was a devoted support to her husband, Hopie, who died in 2006. After Hopie’s death, Mary continued to be active in the community, serving on several boards and supporting a number of charitable causes.

As her children left home, Mary began to pursue her interest in fine art and sculpture, and worked with children with learning disabilities. She actively supported and served on the boards of several organizations, including Marlboro College from 1978 to 2005.

“Mary had a deep love for her family and her community,” said former trustee Mary White. “She was a devoted support to her husband, Hopie, who died in 2006. After Hopie’s death, Mary continued to be active in the community, serving on several boards and supporting a number of charitable causes.”

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Thomas Maclean Griffin, former trustee

A trustee from 1987 to 1995, Thomas Maclean Griffin died in November 2010 in Swampscott, Massachusetts. He was 88 years old. Born in Lake Placid, New York, Mac was raised in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He attended Harvard College and ultimately graduated from Harvard Law School, though his studies were interrupted by World War II, when he served as a young officer in the Navy. Following law school, Mac married Hope Wissell of Salem, Massachusetts, where the couple settled to raise their family of four children. Mac practiced law, primarily as the general counsel of what was then known as the First National Bank of Boston. His interests, though, were wide and varied.

From the beginning, Mac was known to be a gregarious and engaging friend to all. He had a remarkable capacity to make connections with people whenever he went. Most importantly, in the last decade of his life, he was a devoted support to his wife, Hope, who died in 2006. After Hopie’s death, Mary continued to be active in the community, serving on several boards and supporting a number of charitable causes.

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William P. Toomey ’53
Bill Toomey died in April at the age of 81. He was born in North Adams, Massachusetts, and served on the Korean peninsula with the army’s 7th Infantry Division, which was charged with overseeing the Japanese surrender. In 1949 he enrolled at Marlboro on the G.I. Bill, graduating with a degree in sociology.

“He was always proud of having gone to Marlboro, and his experiences there influenced his whole life,” said Bill’s son Dan Toomey ’79. Bill worked for a short period as a carpenter in North Adams before beginning his teaching career in Roadboro, Vermont. Bill then earned a master’s degree in education from North Adams State College, teaching first at Brayton School and later for many years at Graylock Elementary School, as well as serving as assistant principal at both. An active athlete, he coached football and baseball and was an early member of the ski patrol at Dutch Hill in Heartwellville, Vermont.

Josiah (J.K.) Adams ’67
Josiah Adams died in April, at the end of a brave battle with cancer. J.K. was born in San Francisco, but after World War II his family moved to the East Coast, where he and his siblings were raised. He was a skilled pianist and organist, and involved in choral singing, pursuing these interests while at Marlboro College. In later years he also became an accomplished graphic artist, but he discovered that teaching gave fullest expression to his talents. He taught for eight years at St. John’s Episcopal School in Puerto Cortes, Honduras, and then for many years at the Elian School in Poland Spring, Maine. Among the courses he taught were physics, chemistry, organic chemistry, astronomy, history of music and philosophy, and he played important roles in designing the curriculum and in college advising. He taught with intense discipline, organization, enthusiasm and deep knowledge. J.K. was the father of Marlboro alumna Oona Adams ’94.

Thomas V. Durgin ’79
Tom Durgin died unexpectedly in March at his home in Thetford, Vermont. He was 57. A native of Maine, Tom studied biology, forestry, photography and psychology at Marlboro, completing his Plan on the symptoms and etiology of autism. Outside of his academic pursuits, Tom was known for helping design the infamous “road rallies” that were part of Fall and Spring Rites in the late 1970s. Directly following college, Tom worked with aboriginal children and for the educational software division of Houghton Mifflin. He then went on to a varied career in writing, editing and publishing for Human Capital Institute, working on journals such as Behind the Times, It’s Classified and Cheap Skiing Guide, and for SnoCountry.org. Tom was an avid outdoorsman and enjoyed hiking, skiing, kayaking and sailing on the Maine coast. He was also interested in history, gardening, food and collecting treasures.

Jeanne Risica ’83
Jeanne Risica died on December 31, 2010, in Brooklyn, New York, where she had made her home for a number of years. Raised in Rhode Island, Jeanne came to Marlboro to study art, and completed a Plan in painting and Italian, studying with Frank Stout at Casa Campardi in Italy, where the college ran a program. Following Marlboro, Jeanne studied at the Art Students League in New York and spent the rest of her life as an artist. Her paintings were exhibited widely, from South Korea, Venezuela, Brussels and Italy to the northeast United States, frequently and most recently at the Dillon Gallery in New York City. Jeanne was also instrumental in tending the Red Gate Community Garden in Brooklyn, a task she was dedicated to for the past 10 years and that earned her the moniker “mother of the garden.”

Marcus Israel, former student
We received word that Marcus Israel died on July 3, 2010, in New York. A musician and “free spirit,” Marcus attended Marlboro with the class of ’93.

Philipp Naegle
Longtime college neighbor and participant in the Marlboro Music School and Festival, violist Philipp Naegle died in January at the age of 83. Philipp first came to Marlboro in 1950, when he was invited to play chamber music with violinist Adolf Busch, flutist Marcel Moyse and pianist Rudolf Serkin in the formative first year of the festival.

He also played for the Cleveland Orchestra, under the distinguished leadership of Georg Säffli, before joining the faculty of Smith College in 1964. Before his retirement from Smith in 2000, Philipp regularly performed with such ensembles as Music From Marlboro, the Cantillana Piano Quartet and the Vegh String Quartet.
Editor’s Note

“For the many students who do interdisciplinary Plans, it’s the dialogue that’s important,” said theater professor Paul Nelson at an open forum about the recent SymBiotic Art and Science conference (see page 29). Paul explains that whether two disciplines collide or interact may depend as much upon the student as on the different fields involved, but it always creates an interesting dialogue. Ultimately it broadens our lives and has a humancentric impact beyond the studies themselves.

Interdisciplinary exploration is a well-practiced approach at Marlboro, as you can see from many of the Plan of Concentration listed in the commencement section of this issue of Potash Hill. Like all academic endeavors, that work never stops as we explore new and deeper connections between apparently separate perspectives. This issue celebrates Marlboro’s interdisciplinary realism, whether it’s between philosophy and economics in Isaac Lawrence’s article on the Vermont Land Trust, or literature and international development in Rosario de Swanson’s piece on Guinean writers. It also explores new horizons in the SymBiotic Art and Science conference mentioned above and the Embodied Learning Symposium hosted here on campus.

As always, we welcome your comments. How has interdisciplinary study made an impact on your life and career, and what exciting new syntheses are out there to explore? You can find responses to the last issue on page 60.

—Philip Johansson, editor

Marlboro College Mission Statement

The goal of Marlboro College is to teach students to think clearly and to learn independently through engagement in a structured program of liberal studies. Students are expected to develop a command of concise and correct English and to strive for academic excellence informed by intellectual and artistic creativity; they are encouraged to acquire a passion for learning, discerning judgment and a global perspective. The college promotes independence by requiring students to participate in the planning of their own programs of study and to act responsibly within a self-governing community.