“That our acts are essentially optimistic is a central quality of Marlboro College,” says art professor Tim Segar in his feature titled “Outsiders: The Art of Joseph Beuys.” In an excerpt from a talk he gave incoming students last fall, Tim describes the delicate balance between curiosity and skepticism that all inquiring students must navigate. He suggests that Beuys’ enigmatic art exemplifies the transformative possibilities of curiosity, but that skepticism plays a time-honored role in academics as well.

This issue of Potash Hill has many offerings along the spectrum from curiosity to skepticism. Peter Sullivan’s inquiry into the possibilities of recognizing nature’s independent subjectivity is balanced with Robert Cabin’s editorial on “scientizing” public debates. Elizaveta Mitrofanova curiously explores the health benefits of a mysterious mushroom, while President Ellen McCulloch-Lovell expresses skepticism about using college ratings for awarding federal financial aid. You’ll find something for every degree of incredulity in this issue, and hopefully we strike the right balance for your own transformative experience.

I welcome your comments, both curious and skeptical, in response to this issue of Potash Hill. You can read responses to the last issue on page 50.

—Philip Johansson, editor
Editor’s Note

“That our acts are essentially optimistic is a central quality of Marlboro College,” says art professor Tim Segar in his feature titled “ Outsiders: The Art of Joseph Beuys.” In an excerpt from a talk he gave incoming students last fall, Tim describes the delicate balance between curiosity and skepticism that all inquiring students must navigate. He suggests that Beuys’ enigmatic art exemplifies the transformative possibilities of curiosity, but that skepticism plays a time-honored role in academics as well.

This issue of Potash Hill has many offerings along the spectrum from curiosity to skepticism. Peter Sullivan’s inquiry into the possibilities of recognizing nature’s independent subjectivity is balanced with Robert Cabin’s editorial on “scientizing” public debates. Elizaveta Mitrofanova curiously explores the health benefits of a mysterious mushroom, while President Ellen麦Cullough-Lovell expresses skepticism about using college ratings for awarding federal financial aid. You’ll find something for every degree of incredulity in this issue, and hopefully we strike the right balance for your own transformative experience.

I welcome your comments, both curious and skeptical, in response to this issue of Potash Hill. You can read responses to the last issue on page 50.

—Philip Johansson, editor
Potash Hill
The Magazine of Marlboro College

Liberal Arts

Social Sciences
Hearing the Voice of Nature.................................2

Arts
Outsiders: The Art of Joseph Beuys.........................8

Science
Cancer of the Birch Tree..................................12

Humanities
Tale of Two Churches: Conquest and
Reconciliation in Ameca..................................16

Perspective
Science Is Not on Our Side.................................20

Reflection
Code Red for College Ratings.............................22

On & Off the Hill
Kipling Society, New faculty, Big Brothers/Sisters, Carol
Hendrickson, Jim Tober, United Way award, Movies from
Marlboro, Apple daze, Worthy of note..................24

Alumni News

Class Notes..................................................44

Letters to the Editor........................................50

In Memoriam................................................51
Green politics has a history of promoting the needs and rights of the nonhuman world, but has anyone asked nature what it wants? Peter Sullivan goes about finding out how to “live in a living world.”

There is a yearning in green political thinking to hear the voice of nature. In many of the recent sea-changes in green politics, there is a palpable need to recognize the agency of nonhumans, and little means of doing so. As green politics tries to achieve an ecocentric point of view—one where nature’s interest is considered in itself—it faces the challenge of manifesting that point of view on nonhuman terms. According nonhumans their own voice must come from recognizing nature’s independent subjectivity.

The question at hand is not what the interests of nature are. Considerable scholarship has been given over to that question, which essentially cannot have a conclusive answer if nature is indeed given its own voice. Instead, I will discuss some ways we might be able to hear that voice and, more importantly, how we can live with the question of nature’s interests continually open. That question is already at the tip of every environmentalist’s tongue; green politics must ground itself by asking it again and again.

Some have tried to find a way around the question of nature’s voice entirely. Australian ethicist Warwick Fox claims that empathy with the natural world can be achieved by expanding the definition of the self through spiritual practice. Therefore, anyone with a sufficiently open sense of self need not listen to nature but instead simply identify with its interests. So long as we can understand what is good for the environment, the question of hearing it in itself is irrelevant. Fox compares the struggle for the rights of nature to the struggle for the rights of marginalized sexual and racial groups:

The tautological fact that everything I think and do will be thought and done by a male with white skin does not mean that my thoughts and actions need be sexist or racist in the...sense of exhibiting unwarranted differential treatment of other people on the basis of their sex or race—which is the sense that really matters.

Likewise, as long as we are sympathetic to nonhumans, we can act in their interest.
This is not untrue on its face. However, Fox overlooks an important element in other struggles for legitimacy: the element of self-representation. The women’s movement needed a women’s literature, and the legitimization of American black identity has been founded on its retreat and independent formation. In the same way, “what is good for the environment” must be answered, at least in part, by the environment itself. An ecocentrism lacking this element of self-representation merely speaks for a “nature” that is actually removed from nature, much as some American mid-20th-century Marxists spoke on behalf of “the people” while neglecting what the working class itself had to say.

The question “What does the natural environment have to say?” has previously been answered by particular characterizations of the environment: the conservationists’ untamed wilderness, species preservationists’ focus on specific press-friendly animals, the Romantics’ sublime Nature. Today these characterizations are accomplished more hesitantly and partially in nature writing and documentaries, and in the adoption (sometimes appropriation) of a variety of animistic religions. The hesitancy may perhaps result from greater awareness that the very practice is under question. Appropriating any one of these characterizations, these myths of nature, as nature’s one true voice is no better than characterizing nature as devoid of any value beyond being a resource. Ecocentrism demands that we look to the territory, not the map: to characterize the natural environment at all is to objectify it, and even the trendiest, most self-conscious characterization is only another way to assign values to resources. Nature does not need to be “valued” (valuated): it needs to be liberated from its status as a human product and project. Our knowledge of the environment must come from its own accounts and the many ways it reveals itself to us.

“The question therefore changes slightly: “How can we listen when the natural environment speaks?” Derrick Jensen, the environmental activist, critic, and author of A Language Older Than Words, shows that this listening is very important indeed. He proposes an animate world that humans systematically ignore:

As is true for most children, when I was young I heard the world speak. Stars sang. Stones had preferences. Trees had bad days.

Toads held lively discussions, crowed over a good day’s catch. Like static on a radio, schooling and other forms of socialization began to interfere with my perception of the animate world, and for a number of years I almost believed that only humans spoke... This silencing is central to the workings of our culture. The staunch refusal to hear the voices of those we exploit is crucial to our domination of them.

Our ability to commit atrocities against nature is predicated on our ability to silence non-human voices. For Jensen, an environmentalist ethic is waiting for us if we can only listen. He insists that this listening is not at all metaphorical. For means of hearing the environment, he offers anecdotes from his life: stars comforting him as a child, a tree contradicting an opinion he expressed only in a thought, mice demanding he leave a place for them in his home. Once we learn to notice these, our path of action will be clear.

I cannot corroborate these anecdotes myself—I might offer instead a childhood fear of dark closets, a social self-education facilitated by building houses with Legos, and a still-persisting habit of scolding soap-slickened dishes when I fumble and drop them. My world speaks in the mechanics and aesthetics of designed things. When I go into the wilderness I don’t hear voices, I get bored. Those who have heard the wilderness speak to them in words will find their nonhuman ethics there; those who have not must look elsewhere.

Australian ecofeminist Val Plumwood offers us a radically different model of environment-as-agent: also anecdotal, but more easily translated to universals and better connected to everyday life as we understand it. To her, we can access a natural perspective in events that disrupt what she refers to as “the narrative self.” When the narrative thread of identity becomes impossible to sustain, a more basic consciousness, perhaps...
shared with animals who have no evolutionary
need for identity, predominates.

Plumwood encountered this consciousness
while suffering a nearly fatal crocodile attack:
“I glimpsed the world for the first time ‘from
the outside,’ as a world no longer my own, an
unrecognizable bleak landscape composed of
raw necessity, indifferent to my life or death.”
In these extreme moments when we participate
in interactions common to all animals but
that human culture cannot reach, we encounter
something like an authentic commonality
with these animals. These encounters, she
suggests, can tell us how to live in a world
with animals (and in which we are ourselves
animals). Coming away from her own encounter
of nearly being eaten, she is able to suggest a
universal judgment about the rights of animals:
“Reflection has persuaded me that not just
humans but any creature can make the...
claim to be more than just food. We are edi-
ble, but we are also much more than edible.”

Despite the unlikelihood of your average
ecocentrist being attacked by a crocodile,
Plumwood’s view is actually more realistic
about our prospects for understanding the
natural environment on its own terms. Insofar
as we understand the nonhuman as something
foundational to culture, which is in turn
covered up by culture, the natural is already
 tacitly present but can only be brought to
the foreground in the most extreme traumatic
breaches of culture. This suggests a sort of
prophetic source for nature’s voice. But we
should not let others’ prophecies strictly
determine our own ideas. The importance
of hearing the environment speak, we should
remind ourselves, is not to find the correct ways
to characterize (and thereby objectify) it, but
to hear its own accounts and accord to them
legitimacy in themselves.

As green political rhetoric shifts focus to
large-scale crises (such as climate change and
peak oil) instead of specific grievances as in
the species-conservation efforts of the 1990s,
it faces the challenge of motivating people
at a personal level. Reports of the ongoing
apocalypse ask us to gaze with fear upon
exponential curves and charts of changing sea
ice albedos. Understandably, few feel up to
the challenge of saving humanity or the earth.
The individual connection to nature—the
personal grounding of environmentalism—
has nearly disappeared from this rhetoric.
Hearing the voice of nature can help environ-
mentalists reestablish our connection to the
more-than-human world.

While Derrick Jensen tells us that
nonhumans have a voice, and that listening
to it is the ground of an environmental ethic,
Val Plumwood tells us that hearing that
voice comes only on occasion, and usually
on occasions somewhat removed from our
everyday lives. Yet, to even begin to act on
behalf of nonhuman nature or to respond to
its needs, we must have means of interrogating,
controlling, and re-forming the places we
live and the ways we support ourselves—
our material interventions in the world. Until
then, the voice of nature may only be heard
by the few die-hard ecocentrists dedicated
enough to listen to trees and stones or consort
with crocodiles.

Defining a practical land ethic

“The growing drive to change our relationship with the nonhuman
environment is wrought with internal conflict and debate about which
tactics are the most ethical and whether those are the most efficient,”
said senior Ayla Mullen. She is doing her Plan of Concentration in
environmental political thought and ceramics, specifically looking for
solutions to actualizing a new environmental ethic that includes the rights of nonhumans. Drawing from the work of
Aldo Leopold, John Locke, Val Plumwood, Hannah Arendt, and Wendell Berry, Ayla is charting a more comprehensive
approach. “When these authors are brought to conversation with each other, they propose what I see as a compelling
normative argument for a practical land ethic—based in both a critical understanding of one’s interdependence with the
ecological community and a vital, embodied, action-based relation to the land.”
At student orientation last August, art professor Tim Segar welcomed new students on behalf of the faculty with an informal talk about the nature of skepticism, doubt, and the character of a welcoming solution. In this excerpt, Tim continues...

Does the notion of “welcome” to an institution like Marlboro contain the familiar game of insiders beckoning to outsiders, challenging new students to join them, to separate themselves—
to change their stripes? At a gathering of alumni this summer, I heard this very suspicion when I asked a group of former students how they had responded to their first few days on campus. The problem, they said, was how to overcome just this kind of skepticism and doubt, how to make the transition from outsider to insider without losing their judgment. Put another way, they found it hard, at first, to stay curious.

The flow from outsider to insider status may just be the way of the world. In his seminal essay “The Theory—Death of the Avant Garde,” Paul Mann argues that the inevitable path of innovative outsiders, beckoned or not, is from the margins toward the center of culture. Paradoxically, it is their very challenge of the center that makes them eligible, eventually, for inclusion there. Think of all the people who were once dismissed as nuts whose works now occupy the canons of music, art, science, and literature. Socrates, Galileo, Jung, Picasso, Stravinsky, The Clash. There are many examples of artists I could focus on, but I will share one.

Joseph Beuys was a German artist who lived from 1921 to 1986. His performance called How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare was made in 1965, when he was almost entirely unknown. Visitors could view Beuys through a window, where they found him sitting and cradling a dead hare in his arms. The artist’s face was covered in honey and gold leaf, and his boot was weighed down with an iron slab. He mumbled barely audible noises into the ear of the inert animal, as well as explanations of his drawings hanging behind them. This action, both strangely hilarious and moving, puts us in mind of the impossibility of teaching, the skepticism of listeners, indeed the deaf ears of most of those we ask to listen. It speaks to the difficulty of making one’s work known in the world and the possibility of an unexpected transcendence of these limits.

Beuys called pieces like these “actions.” A later example was I Like America and America Likes Me. In May 1974, Beuys flew to New York City and was taken to a room in a gallery on West Broadway, the site of the performance. He was transported by ambulance, lying on a stretcher and wrapped in felt. For three days, the artist shared the room with a wild coyote. The artist hugged him and returned to the airport in an ambulance, leaving without having set foot on American soil. As Beuys later explained: “I wanted to isolate myself, insulate myself, see nothing of America other than the coyote.” A bit of context to remember is that the Vietnam War was in its last year when this piece was made. President Nixon was on the verge of resigning the presidency, and the international community had been looking askance at the United States for quite some time.

In both works, Beuys is acting on our behalf both humorously—mocking our attempts to interact with the world—and shamanically—conjuring hidden languages with which to cross the boundaries of death, species, language, and cultural divides. Are we meant to trust him? Should we take his play as serious or foolish? Does skepticism take hold? When I first saw these pieces, it did for me.

As a survivor of the Second World War, during which he fought as a pilot, Beuys later created his own account of his experiences that was largely mythical. After a crash, he claimed to have been wrapped in fat and felt and healed of his injuries by a tribe of Tartar nomads. Was this an invention in the service of art? Beuys said he was looking for a way for himself and for Germany to get past the ghosts of the Second World War. He sought a personal, artistic, and political practice that he called Social Sculpture—not all of which was what we might think of as sculpture. He made drawings, installations, machines, and three-dimensional forms along with his performative work. He had a deep respect for the symbolic story-telling of tribal people and for what he called “the significant lives of animals.” He was deeply influenced by the teaching of Rudolf Steiner and, like Steiner, he believed in an objective, intellectually comprehensible spiritual world accessible through direct experience.
Yet his was a tenuous position, as many people found his work inscrutable, overblown, offensive, or just silly. Despite growing interest from a group of devoted students, he was fired from his teaching job in Düsseldorf, though he continued to teach in his former classrooms until he was evicted. “Teaching is my greatest work of art,” he said. “The rest is the waste product, a demonstration.” His teaching lives on here and elsewhere in the growing inclusion of the political in the artistic world. A phrase of his that I still use in drawing class today goes, “Drawing is thinking; thinking is form.” Beuys labored in opposition to much of the skeptical art world, and he died a controversial, almost cult figure assailed by critics and artists alike. Since his death, his reputation has grown immensely, and he has come to be deeply revered by posterity.

Like many artists before and since, Beuys exemplifies a victory of action and curiosity over doubt and indifference, but also embodies the possibility of acting in more than one realm. He combined theater, art, politics, and anthropology. There are many ways of knowing, and the work of the faculty and students of Marlboro represents a wide range of these modes. Many students find inventive ways of combining these in interdisciplinary work. One reason I chose Beuys is that his breadth of action reflects a way to learn. I can’t expect all Marlboro students to include art in their studies here, though I hope I am forgiven for trying. I can expect all of them to find many avenues past their doubt.

That our acts are essentially optimistic is a central quality of Marlboro College. There is no real reason for us to expect that our work will succeed, affect others, or spread, especially when we are ourselves full of doubt. Is there a chance that we can explain pictures to a dead hare? How do we maintain optimism and curiosity and also employ our skepticism and doubt? Can we resist the pull of center and be both an insider and an outsider? Over their four years at Marlboro, students present work that asks similar questions, no matter whether they are working with equations or essays, ecology or economics.

The progression from outside to inside has sped up in recent years to light speed, due, I think, to the rapid spread of information and to a cultural appetite for newness that is insatiable. But for new students at Marlboro, the restraint they may feel is not just a question of how to hang on to their closely held perspectives, experiences, feelings, beliefs, and desires—what, in some cases at least, they will hear called subjectivity. It is also a question of how to measure those things against the invitation they are receiving daily to join something other than that, something that has momentum and energy, rights and wrongs of its own. My advice to students is to keep their suspicion. Be skeptical—it has an honorable place in the history of thought—just don’t let it overwhelm curiosity. The experience of students here at Marlboro gives us ample evidence of the transformation this will invite.

Performing presence and absence

“I would consider my work to be ‘performance to camera,’ in that I use photography and video as a tool to document live performances that are done in private for the camera,” said senior Hannah Cummins. “These images are then presented, or videos are installed.” She is working on a Plan of Concentration in art, specifically performance art, photography, and video dealing with notions of presence and absence, family, memory, time, and place. Hannah began her time at Marlboro delving deep to sociology, especially feminism, queer theory, and race/class/gender studies, and she is applying all of these foundations to her artwork. “My hope is to create work that is not only personally pertinent, but also politically conscious and engaged.” She is interested in education and is interning at the In-Sight Photography Project, in Brattleboro.
Cancer of the Birch Tree

by Elzaveta Mitrofanova

Liza Mitrofanova explores the natural history and hopeful future of a fungus with roots in her Siberian homeland.

I am walking through a forest. It’s an old forest—the ease with which I walk through the pines and birches and firs tells me so. As the sun settles lower on the horizon, a vague notion of home nags at my mind, but I delay my return to sit down and break bread with a tall white birch. Leaning back, I contemplate the delicate, paper bark of the tree before me. It pulls me to my feet, and I realize that with some effort I can reach it. The growth is cool to the touch, and the texture not unpleasant: a marriage of earth and wood. I pull it off, and it is surprisingly light, with a scent that is earthy with a hint of sandalwood. I found chaga.

This was not my first encounter with chaga, but it was my first harvest. As a Siberian, I spent my childhood in a land of thin birches, which reached infinitely toward the sun. Yet the indigenous traditions of Siberia are far removed from everyday life in Novosibirsk, Russia’s third-largest city. Chaga is the hidden detail of the landscape of my childhood that took me 20 years to find across the world in southern Vermont.

The summer preceding my first discovery, an herbalist introduced the mushroom to me during a permaculture workshop. She emerged from a walk in the woods carrying a piece of what looked like charred wood. Being an herbalist, she not only recognized the fungus for its worth, but in the coming days processed it into a lavish chocolate-infused chai that we all shared at our potluck-style supper. The entire experience piqued my curiosity in the way that only tasting a neglected part can, and chaga nestled itself in the back of my mind in a branching mycelial mass that would eventually have to burst.

*Inonotus obliquus*, chaga’s proper name, means “fibrous ear” on the “side.” Yet despite this delightfully anthropomorphic approach to nomenclature, the available body of scientific knowledge about *I. obliquus* remains scant. Information as seemingly basic as its lifecycle and reproductive patterns must be inferred from its taxonomic classification. *Inonotus obliquus* belongs to the phylum Basidiomycota, characterized by cylindrical, spore-producing structures called basidia. The organism is further classified into the Hymenochaetales order, distinguished by spore-producing structures called basidia. *Inonotus obliquus* is known for its reproductively one-sided nature, as it only reproduces when it can colonize other trees such as beeches, alders, and elms. The only nutritional needs of this organism are nitrogen and carbon, which it obtains by leeching cellulose and lignin from its host. The ability of white rot fungi to break down lignin is something of a biological miracle, because lignin is among the most recalcitrant compounds produced by living beings. Chaga breaks down the dead tissue in the heartwood of living trees, weakening the tree’s infrastructure, which allows the mycelial mass to burst out from within the tree. This eruption, which is what is most often seen when chaga is found, is not the reproductive structure that most mushrooms are known for. The fruiting body shoots forth only every five to ten years, and forms only after the host tree has died, making an encounter quite unlikely.

Contrasting chaga’s parasitic relationship with birches, there is the equally one-sided relationship between humans and chaga. The native people of Siberia, Finland, and the Baltic region have been using chaga for ages as a medicinal substance. As far back as the 16th century, the Khanty people, residing along the banks of Siberia’s Ob River, used chaga to treat a number of ailments. In a brief article titled “Fungi in Khanty Folk Medicine,” published in 1989, Marat Saar describes several preparations of chaga, including a bodily rinse and a tea, used to treat worms, liver disease, heart disease, gastrointestinal issues, ulcers, and even cancers and tuberculosis. Yet the people who first discovered and developed a deep interaction with this fungus are largely invisible to the modern world, and the continued dismissal of their traditions and role in history will result in an irreplaceable loss of traditional knowledge.

My mother, a microbiologist who spent her years at Novosibirsk State University, confirmed my suspicions that chaga’s medicinal
uses are not widely known in Russian society. To find out whether she is familiar with chaga’s traditional uses, I asked her what she knew about the mushroom. “I tried chaga tea once,” she said, “but I didn’t like the taste. I remember during the economic crisis (after the fall of the Soviet Union) there were shortages of tea, so some people brewed chaga. Birches aren’t subject to inflation like bananas, but there’s the thing, so necessary to our motherland, they want bright blue seas and bananas, but there’s the thing, so necessary to man: a black, ugly growth on a little white birch, her disease, her cancer.” There is a sense of painful irony in the collision between one species’ cure and another species’ illness, and Solzhenitsyn brings that tension to the forefront in this chapter.

Past the windowwall where the chaga I harvested lies undisturbed, my window looks into a sea of trees. Beeches, beeches, beeches, a dash of maple, some ash, endless young beeches, and yes, birches. I remember how ominous and mysterious that dark conk seemed, protruding from the white birch that kept me company on that autumn day. Chaga has lost none of its mystery since then, and in fact, it has only brought more: it has come to symbolize a forgotten and overlooked people. The time has come for me to taste the fruits of chance and labor and prepare my own elixir. I hope that, somehow, in going through the same motions that the Khanty did, I will embody the type of understanding that evaded me as I sifted through scientific and anthropological texts. I use a pocketknife to cut a small portion of the chaga into thin shavings, increasing surface area for a more thorough extraction. I think of the inhuman patience of scientists, building an art out of precision to prove to the world that ancient wisdom is still relevant. Mine is a clunky, graceless process done in the stale air of a shared kitchen.

The pot I use is an ancient piece of junk from Siberia, typically used to prepare Turkish coffee. Watching as the chaga shavings trace convection currents in the simmering water, I can’t shake the sensation of cold, twirling anxiety building in my stomach. Will my simple process really make this dark fungus fit for consumption? A steaming cup of chaga tea is poured, and after a brief pause, the hard rim of the mug is at my lips. The taste is surprisingly mild, like watered-down English Breakfast tea with wooden hints of earth. The hot liquid spells relief as it heats my core and stretches through the fibers of my body to arrive in bursts of warmth at my extremities, finally, setting my nervous mind at ease.

Extracting anticancer compounds

Senior Daniel Zagal has been exploring the medicinal properties of plants in the lab, starting with a tutorial last year extracting compounds from hops and testing their anticancer activity. “The results were exciting and positive,” said Daniel. “More than one fraction inhibited the growth of cervical cancer cells and even killed some of them.” He went on to a summer internship at University of Illinois at Chicago, where he helped develop a new method for the isolation of glabridin, a compound found in licorice with promising medicinal properties. His Plan of Concentration involves extracting compounds from stinging nettle, and testing them for anticancer and other pharmacological and biological activities. “Nettle was the first plant to be studied under a microscope, so it appealed to me as an interesting classic in science,” said Daniel.
Tale of Two Churches: Conquest and Reconciliation in Ameca

BY ROSARIO DE SWANSON

In 2012, Spanish professor Rosario de Swanson traveled to Ameca, Mexico, to learn about two of the town’s most important churches and the role of religion in local history.

Ameca is a small, provincial city in the state of Jalisco that is famous for its religious devotion, celebrations, and pilgrimages. It is also the town of my childhood and formative years, where I have cherished memories and strong family ties. In 2012, I returned to Ameca to conduct a long-awaited research project. Although Ameca used to be a small town, today the city has long outgrown its traditional limits, with sprawling neighborhoods swallowing up historic ranches. There is even a university campus in the outskirts, where there used to be a hamlet. But Ameca is still surrounded by its beautiful maize and sugar cane fields, and is still moved by the sounds of the ingenio de azúcar, or sugar mill, and of church bells calling the faithful to mass.

The town has several churches, but the most important are the main city parish dedicated to Saint James, the mighty “Moor slayer” of lore, and the Sanctuary of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. Although the stories of these two figures are shrouded in apocrypha, as a scholar I knew that the value of a cultural artifact is not rooted in the veracity of its icons and stories but in what people believe about them and what their beliefs mean to them. Whereas Saint James has been interpreted as a symbol of Moorish defeat, and by extension of indigenous peoples’ defeat, the Virgin of Guadalupe is more conciliatory. She appeared to an Indian in a miraculous vision, near Mexico City in 1531, and has been interpreted as a symbol to mitigate the violence of the conquest and mediate the cultural and ethnic divides still ongoing today.

My goal while in Ameca was to speak to ordinary Amequenses about the stories surrounding the construction of Saint James Parish and the Sanctuary of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, and see if they followed these very distinct cultural narratives. If they did, it would suggest that the town’s religious built environment also functioned as a cultural map tied to conquest and defeat, and ultimately to power. In Latin America, because of the long shadow of colonization, power is often tied to the arrangement of physical space. For example, Saint James Parish shares the city heart with the town’s official government building, called Palacio de Gobierno, whereas the Sanctuary of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe is located across the river, away from the city center and facing the mountain, in a quarter of Ameca known as la otra banda, where the town’s peasants used to live.

The indigenous inhabitants of this region, the Cacaneces, called the original town Huautlaquil, or Thorny Weeds. Hundreds of years before the Spanish conquest, they founded their town in the skirts of Cuachetepetl, or Eagle Mountain, overlooking the valley. They called their valley Amecatl, meaning where the water runs, after the great river that crisscrosses the region. In 1522, barely a year after the fall of the Aztec city-state of Tenochtitlan, a lone, tattered Spaniard by the name of Juan de Arteaga entered the town in peace. He lived amongst the Cacaneces in relative harmony until his departure six years later, leaving behind a small group of Spaniards that had taken over a large tract of land in the rich river valley.

Shortly thereafter, three friars arrived to Christianize and minister to the indigenous inhabitants, as religion was an important element in the conquest and colonization of the region. The most zealous among them was Fray Antonio de Cuéllar. Fray Cuéllar attempted to persuade the Cacaneces to embrace the Catholic religion, abandon their town on the mountain skirts, and resettle near the river in the new Spanish town they called Santiago de Ameca, in honor of Saint James. By 1540, if not before, the indigenous population began resenting Spanish presence as they were forced to supply free labor for the different Spanish encomiendas, or Indian labor and land grants, given to Spaniards by the crown. These encomiendas functioned as agricultural plantations, and included quotas of forced indigenous labor upon which economic solvency would depend. In July 1541, a friar by the name of Juan Calero was killed, and a month later Fray Antonio de Cuéllar succumbed to Indian arrows. Despite much resistance, the indigenous population became the main labor source, and over time became integrated into colonial and post-independence society, primarily as peasants.

Spanish accounts indicate that as early as 1579 a main wooden structure served as a makeshift chapel dedicated to Saint James, the “Moor slayer.” However, an important point in this narrative is the almost miraculous appearance, sometime in the 17th century, of the crucifixion upon which economic solvency would depend. In July 1541, a friar by the name of Juan Calero was killed, and a month later Fray Antonio de Cuéllar succumbed to Indian arrows. Despite much resistance, the indigenous population became the main labor source, and over time became integrated into colonial and post-independence society, primarily as peasants.

Spanish accounts indicate that as early as 1579 a main wooden structure served as a makeshift chapel dedicated to Saint James, the “Moor slayer.” However, an important point in this narrative is the almost miraculous appearance, sometime in the 17th century, of the crucifixion upon which economic solvency would depend. In July 1541, a friar by the name of Juan Calero was killed, and a month later Fray Antonio de Cuéllar succumbed to Indian arrows. Despite much resistance, the indigenous population became the main labor source, and over time became integrated into colonial and post-independence society, primarily as peasants.

Spanish accounts indicate that as early as 1579 a main wooden structure served as a makeshift chapel dedicated to Saint James, the “Moor slayer.” However, an important point in this narrative is the almost miraculous appearance, sometime in the 17th century, of the crucifixion upon which economic solvency would depend. In July 1541, a friar by the name of Juan Calero was killed, and a month later Fray Antonio de Cuéllar succumbed to Indian arrows. Despite much resistance, the indigenous population became the main labor source, and over time became integrated into colonial and post-independence society, primarily as peasants.

Spanish accounts indicate that as early as 1579 a main wooden structure served as a makeshift chapel dedicated to Saint James, the “Moor slayer.” However, an important point in this narrative is the almost miraculous appearance, sometime in the 17th century, of the crucifixion upon which economic solvency would depend. In July 1541, a friar by the name of Juan Calero was killed, and a month later Fray Antonio de Cuéllar succumbed to Indian arrows. Despite much resistance, the indigenous population became the main labor source, and over time became integrated into colonial and post-independence society, primarily as peasants.

Spanish accounts indicate that as early as 1579 a main wooden structure served as a makeshift chapel dedicated to Saint James, the “Moor slayer.” However, an important point in this narrative is the almost miraculous appearance, sometime in the 17th century, of the crucifixion upon which economic solvency would depend. In July 1541, a friar by the name of Juan Calero was killed, and a month later Fray Antonio de Cuéllar succumbed to Indian arrows. Despite much resistance, the indigenous population became the main labor source, and over time became integrated into colonial and post-independence society, primarily as peasants.

Spanish accounts indicate that as early as 1579 a main wooden structure served as a makeshift chapel dedicated to Saint James, the “Moor slayer.” However, an important point in this narrative is the almost miraculous appearance, sometime in the 17th century, of the crucifixion upon which economic solvency would depend. In July 1541, a friar by the name of Juan Calero was killed, and a month later Fray Antonio de Cuéllar succumbed to Indian arrows. Despite much resistance, the indigenous population became the main labor source, and over time became integrated into colonial and post-independence society, primarily as peasants.

Spanish accounts indicate that as early as 1579 a main wooden structure served as a makeshift chapel dedicated to Saint James, the “Moor slayer.” However, an important point in this narrative is the almost miraculous appearance, sometime in the 17th century, of the crucifixion upon which economic solvency would depend. In July 1541, a friar by the name of Juan Calero was killed, and a month later Fray Antonio de Cuéllar succumbed to Indian arrows. Despite much resistance, the indigenous population became the main labor source, and over time became integrated into colonial and post-independence society, primarily as peasants.

Spanish accounts indicate that as early as 1579 a main wooden structure served as a makeshift chapel dedicated to Saint James, the “Moor slayer.” However, an important point in this narrative is the almost miraculous appearance, sometime in the 17th century, of the crucifixion upon which economic solvency would depend. In July 1541, a friar by the name of Juan Calero was killed, and a month later Fray Antonio de Cuéllar succumbed to Indian arrows. Despite much resistance, the indigenous population became the main labor source, and over time became integrated into colonial and post-independence society, primarily as peasants.
the priest decided to name the church El Señor Grande de Ameca. However, the church archives fall silent on details of the further construction of the parish until 1722, when there begin detailed monetary expenditures due to its construction, which continue up to the time of its completion in 1770. By then the devotion to the Christ of El Señor Grande de Ameca had grown considerably.

By contrast, the construction of the Sanctuary of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe across the river began much later, well after independence from Spain. The sanctuary was initiated thanks to a petition made to the main parish priest by a lay brother, Leocadio Briceño, in 1873. It is important to note that Briceño was of mixed indigenous and European ancestry and that at this point, 50 years or so after independence from Spain, such people could not become full priests or even enter the church’s hierarchy, although they could serve as work and as lay brothers. Given his mixed ancestry, it is hardly surprising that el leguito Leocadio Briceño, as the records identify him, intended to build a church that in some way validated and recognized the indigenous roots shared by the town’s peasants, who had become its main labor pool. It is also not surprising that Briceño’s initial request met with ferocious resistance from the main parish, as it challenged the old parish’s religious authority and meant a great loss of tithe levied from the parishioners.

The license to build Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe was not granted until five years later, in 1878, when Briceño was instructed to collect the property and revenue necessary for such a temple among the possible faithful. After decades in construction, during which masses were already being celebrated, the death of el leguito Leocadio Briceño brought the work to a halt in 1911. Construction began again in 1925 and was interrupted once more by the Cristero Wars, when Catholics rebelled against the anticlerical policies of the Mexican government. The work appears to have continued uninterrupted from 1943 onwards, but the details of its completion are missing from the church’s archive. All this time the Sanctuary of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in la otra banda was a dependency of the main parish. That finally changed in 1970, when Cardinal Don José Salazar López, Archbishop of Guadalajara and a native son of Ameca, responded to the growth of the congregation and its devotion to the virgin by making the Sanctuary of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe independent from the main parish.

Today, although the main parish of El Señor Grande de Ameca is still associated primarily with the town’s elite and the Sanctuary of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe with the town’s peasant roots, it would be difficult to say which of these two churches is more important. The feasts associated with each of them bring extraordinary revenue to the town’s coffers each year. In another surprising turn, a little more than ten years ago, an enterprising young priest raised the town’s inhabitants to remember our origins, and perhaps one day to return. In September 2013, the Christ sculpture embarked on a pilgrimage of its own, visiting Ameca’s hijos ausentes living in the United States and calling on them to demonstrate their faith and pride in being from Ameca. While many Mexicans living in the United States consider the Virgin of Guadalupe a mark of their diasporic identity, for Ameca’s hijos ausentes, affiliation with El Señor Grande de Ameca appears to be an important symbol of their distinct roots within the Mexican community in the United States.

Although today the inhabitants of Ameca regard both churches as their own, the stories encoded within the churches’ histories show that this seemingly peaceful coexistence was not always so. Our town’s geography functioned as a cultural map, where ethnicity and race were ultimately tied to power. As the above stories make clear, religion was intertwined with conquest and colonization, and indigenous resistance was also located within this spiritual and paradoxically violent domain. Nevertheless, for the moment at least, reconciliation seems to have won out, as El Señor Grande de Ameca parish, originally dedicated to Saint James, is now presided over by the image of the virgin and in some way complements her mission. While the Virgin of Guadalupe once mitigated indigenous loss due to colonization, now El Señor Grande de Ameca ministers to Amequenses who have been uprooted by immigration.

Creating national identities in the New World

Mexico’s legacy of colonialism has parallels in the United States, another multietnic nation born out of colonialism and the subject of senior Allen Iano’s Plan of Concentration. “I’ve studied American history obsessively since I was about 4 years old,” said Allen. “I’m fascinated by the connections between intellectual trends and economic/ demographic change.” Allen is exploring the contentious nature of pluralism through examples of “native” attitudes toward others, from loyalists in the American Revolution to urban immigrants at the turn of the century. He is intrigued by the struggle of outside groups to find their niche and by the formation of allegiances for mutual benefit. “My family includes elements from very different backgrounds, and I’ve lived in several different parts of the country, so American history is a way for me to better understand myself.”
always disagreed over how to choose, interpret, or perhaps all of these things at once. This was more or less my philosophy when I set out to save the world as a card-carrying conservation biologist fresh out of graduate school. But I found out the hard way that everyone strongly supports science-based solutions until said science suggests something they don’t like. Even in the rare instances in which I managed to get a group of opposing stakeholders to agree to resolve their differences by deferring to “the science,” they almost always disagreed over how to choose, interpret, and apply this science in the messy real world.

After years of hitting my head against such walls, I discovered that (dub) there are scholars who actually study such things as the role of science in resolving public policy conflicts. From the perspective of the “church of science” that I had been indoctrinated into and once espoused, much of what I learned from talking to these people and reading their work seemed at first almost blasphemous.

For example, Daniel Sarewitz, a DC-based researcher who co-directs Arizona State University’s Consortium for Science, Policy, and Outcomes, has persuasively shown how, contrary to popular belief, “scientizing” conflicts tends to lead to both greater intellectual uncertainty and highlighting the differences between competing perspectives. From the perspective of the “church of science” that I had been indoctrinated into and once espoused, much of what I learned from talking to these people and reading their work seemed at first almost blasphemous.

Similarly, Dan Kahan, a prominent professor of law and psychology at Yale, told me that “in every interesting case of public policy making, the judgment of what is the best available evidence, and what are the implications of this evidence, is a subjective, nonscientific, value-based decision.”

“It’s true that the public doesn’t know the scientific details of divisive issues such as climate change,” he continued, “but it doesn’t follow that the reason they’re divided is because they don’t know the details!” Kahan’s research suggests such conflicts are more a product of our different cultural values and identities than different levels of scientific literacy and education. Perhaps not surprisingly, he found that people with different cultural values strongly disagree about how serious a threat climate change is. Interestingly, however, he also found that members of the public who are the most science literate, and the most proficient at technical reasoning, are also the most culturally polarized.

“It would be a lot more constructive if we could argue about values instead of the facts,” Kahan said, “because then we wouldn’t be calling each other anti-science and stupid.” Sarewitz drew a parallel conclusion: “Somehow we seem to think that the facts make our values stronger, but that’s backwards.” He also pointed out that research has repeatedly demonstrated that institutions that make the most progress resolving conflicts “don’t use science to try to solve political problems, but rather try to solve political problems first, then use science to make progress on implementing agreed-upon policies.”

Yet because we often do in fact mistake political conflicts for technical problems, we often foolishly attempt to resolve such conflicts with science. Moreover, we can’t seem to stop arguing over whose side the God of Science is on and which political party is the most righteous and holy. Thus a never-ending parade of books such as The Republican War on Science, and the recent rejoinder Science Left Behind: Feel-Good Fallacies and the Rise of the Anti-Scientific Left, provide juicy red meat for their respective constituents and brisk sales for their authors. But I say that the notion that science can be on anybody’s side is itself an unscientific fallacy that leads only to ever-more partisanship, polarization, and paralysis.

Americans across the political spectrum love to argue that we should base our policies on the best available scientific evidence: “Science-driven education!” “Science-driven health care reform!” Many also believe, with a fervor that often resembles religious fundamentalism, that “the science” is on their side. The more passionate we are about divisive issues such as climate change, the more likely we are to accuse the other side of being anti-science, stupid, ignorant, corrupt, or perhaps all of these things at once.

“Science-driven education!” “Science-driven health care reform!” Many also believe, with a fervor that often resembles religious fundamentalism, that “the science” is on their side. The more passionate we are about divisive issues such as climate change, the more likely we are to accuse the other side of being anti-science, stupid, ignorant, corrupt, or perhaps all of these things at once.

“Science-driven education!” “Science-driven health care reform!” Many also believe, with a fervor that often resembles religious fundamentalism, that “the science” is on their side. The more passionate we are about divisive issues such as climate change, the more likely we are to accuses the other side of being anti-science, stupid, ignorant, corrupt, or perhaps all of these things at once.

“Science-driven education!” “Science-driven health care reform!” Many also believe, with a fervor that often resembles religious fundamentalism, that “the science” is on their side. The more passionate we are about divisive issues such as climate change, the more likely we are to accuses the other side of being anti-science, stupid, ignorant, corrupt, or perhaps all of these things at once.

“Science-driven education!” “Science-driven health care reform!” Many also believe, with a fervor that often resembles religious fundamentalism, that “the science” is on their side. The more passionate we are about divisive issues such as climate change, the more likely we are to accuses the other side of being anti-science, stupid, ignorant, corrupt, or perhaps all of these things at once.

“Science-driven education!” “Science-driven health care reform!” Many also believe, with a fervor that often resembles religious fundamentalism, that “the science” is on their side. The more passionate we are about divisive issues such as climate change, the more likely we are to accuses the other side of being anti-science, stupid, ignorant, corrupt, or perhaps all of these things at once.

“Science-driven education!” “Science-driven health care reform!” Many also believe, with a fervor that often resembles religious fundamentalism, that “the science” is on their side. The more passionate we are about divisive issues such as climate change, the more likely we are to accuses the other side of being anti-science, stupid, ignorant, corrupt, or perhaps all of these things at once.
Reflected from Page

By Ellen McCulloch-Lovell, president

Reflection

If you have followed the Obama administration’s new higher education rating system, the College Scorecard (www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/higher-education/college-score-card), you’ve noticed how it attempts to measure “the best value for the money.” Marlboro rates pretty well, depending on how you view price and value, but most noticeable are the measures of worth the scorecard misses. As I’ve described elsewhere, the scorecard makes no attempt to demonstrate the value to the individual in terms of intellectual and creative development: the critical thinking, problem solving, clear writing and expression, ability to understand cultural and historical context, and teamwork that serve students so well in a changing society and economy. Despite this omission, the scorecard stakes just got higher.

Over Hendricks Days in October, I participated in a leadership summit in Boston with Dean Nicyper ’77, Marlboro’s first alumnus chairman of the board of trustees, on the cost of attending a college or university. The keynote speaker at the conference, co-sponsored by the Davis Educational Foundation and the New England Board of Higher Education, was Jamienne Studley, the new deputy under secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. She addressed the administration’s determination to publish a 2015 version of the scorecard rating system, which will be used to award federal financial aid to “high performance institutions.” If you’re like me, you should be seeing flashing red lights.

Studley, until recently president of Skidmore College, explained that right now the huge federal investment in student aid—$150 billion—is based on enrollment, not outcomes. Seeking to influence results, the Department of Education is creating a system to compare colleges, based on information available to the federal government. It will measure affordability, access, and outcomes. In this context access is based on the number and success of Pell Grant students, defined as transfer rates, graduation rates, percentage continuing to advanced degrees, and salaries. Studley, who understands the learning objectives of the liberal arts, stated that these factors “will be refined with you,” and that the system may have a “Green, Yellow, and Red” color-coding. I couldn’t help but recall how well that worked out for Homeland Security, and hope that the federal government does not “dumb down” the system purporting to give the public information about college choice.

Let’s examine one aspect of the ratings: salary after graduation. Does this mean that engineering schools, which report some of the highest starting salaries, will get the most federal financial aid? Won’t salary ratings distort the “value” of a college in terms of its own stated outcomes and public policy objectives? As one conference participant pointed out, the country needs more qualified early childhood educators and teachers, and if a college prepares and graduates them, the low salary earned by people in these professions will penalize the institution. It could also discourage the college from accepting more Pell Grant students. What about colleges whose graduates go into AmeriCorps, the Peace Corps, or Teach for America?

Then there’s the story of our own 2009 alumna Katherine Partington, who spoke at our 2013 Convocation (see page 49). Katherine did her Plan in political science and dance with Meg Mott and Kristen Horrigan, then moved to New York City, where she worked in a restaurant, presented her own choreography in various venues, and starred in the indie film Overload, for which she received the Los Angeles Movie Award for best actress. Katherine now has a fulltime job with another alumna, Sara Coffey ’09, as an arts administrator for the Vermont Performance Lab. Would this kind of unmitigated success even be measured by the new scorecard? According to information gathered by the federal government through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Katherine does not even count in our graduation rates because she transferred into Marlboro; only students who choose Marlboro as freshmen and persist to graduation are counted.

Thinking about Marlboro graduates, 77 percent of whom go on to graduate school or professional studies, raised other questions for me. What about those who are working to pay off loans or save for advanced studies before settling into a chosen career? What about the extraordinary number of teachers, artists, and social service workers, whose talents are so needed by society but who are not rewarded with high salaries? Are they, and the ways they developed at Marlboro College, not to be valued? These are the kinds of questions I am asking, and I encourage you to ask some of your own.

As Deputy Under Secretary Studley promised, there were four public hearings on the rating system in November, and the results will be made available at www.ed.gov/college-affordability/ be-part-conversation. There is also an opportunity to comment further, and Marlboro College voices need to be heard. Please send your thoughts to the Department of Education at collegefeedback@ed.gov or to me at president@marlboro.edu.
Kipling Society comes to Marlboro

The audience in Ragle Hall on October 7 could hardly contain their enthusiasm at hearing former library director Sally Andrews describe the contents of a small lockbox forgotten for more than 90 years in the vault of a Brattleboro bank. The box had belonged to Rudyard Kipling, and contained Kipling’s wedding certificate, a will, letters, and other personal items, including one poem never published. For the attendees to a symposium titled “Kipling in America, 1892–1896,” it was like Christmas morning and Thanksgiving dinner all rolled into one.

For the first time in its history, the London-based Kipling Society held a symposium in the United States, and they chose southern Vermont, where Kipling and his family once planned to make their lifelong home. The two-day event was hosted at Marlboro College, which holds a substantial collection of Kipling manuscripts and artifacts, including the mysterious lockbox, and at Naulakha, his historic home in nearby Dummerston.

While Kipling is well known for his stories, poems, and novels based in India, the first ideas for Kim and Just So Stories came to him while he was living in Dummerston. He also wrote some of his most popular books, including the two Jungle Books, a collection of stories called The Day’s Work, and the novel Captains Courageous, during his richly productive stay in Vermont. “Kipling in America” celebrated the author's Vermont years and legacy with a range of distinguished presentations and discussions.

Speakers at the symposium included noted Kipling scholars from both Britain and America. Thomas Pinney, English professor emeritus at Pomona College and editor of the new Cambridge edition of Kipling’s poems, gave the keynote address, titled “What did the neighbors think?” Other speakers included Daniel Karlin of Bristol University, U.C. Knoepflmacher of Princeton, Tricia Lootens of the University of Georgia, Jan Montefiore of the University of Kent, and Kipling scholars from near and far assembled in the reading room of the Rice-Aron Library to ogle at rare manuscripts and artifacts from Marlboro’s Kipling collection.

An unpublished poem scrawled by Rudyard Kipling is one of the many treasures found in a forgotten lockbox and displayed for the symposium in October. Photo by Philip Johansson
Judith Plott of George Washington University. David Richards, editor of the definitive Kipling bibliography, discussed a recently discovered manuscript with writing advice from Kipling to his sister-in-law Josephine.

The eagerly anticipated Marlboro collection included the humorous biography of publisher George Putnam, “Born of poor but most respectable parents,” carefully printed on a single sheet of toilet paper. It also included a little-known but important memoir by Mary Cabot, a local historian and close friend of the Kiplings, who gives a rare and intimate picture of their personal lives and relations.

“This is particularly valuable because they were reclusive,” said Tom Ragle, former president of Marlboro College, who presented the Marlboro Kipling collection along with Andrews and current library director Emily Alling. “They tried to shun the unwanted publicity that seemed to follow them about. By that time Kipling was a major celebrity.”

The second day of the symposium was hosted at Naulakha, which the Kiplings designed and had built for—now beautifully and authentically restored by the Landmark Trust USA. In addition to a tour of Naulakha, participants were treated to a talk by Charles Fish of the Dummerston Historical Society on “Vermont and Vermonters in Kipling’s Day,” as well as readings by Mary Hamer from her novel about Kipling and his sister, Kipling and Trix. Richard Richards, editor of the definitive Kipling bibliography, discussed a recently discovered manuscript with writing advice from Kipling to his sister-in-law Josephine.

The eagerly anticipated Marlboro collection included the humorous biography of publisher George Putnam, “Born of poor but most respectable parents,” carefully printed on a single sheet of toilet paper. It also included a little-known but important memoir by Mary Cabot, a local historian and close friend of the Kiplings, who gives a rare and intimate picture of their personal lives and relations.

“This is particularly valuable because they were reclusive,” said Tom Ragle, former president of Marlboro College, who presented the Marlboro Kipling collection along with Andrews and current library director Emily Alling. “They tried to shun the unwanted publicity that seemed to follow them about. By that time Kipling was a major celebrity.”

The second day of the symposium was hosted at Naulakha, which the Kiplings designed and had built for—now beautifully and authentically restored by the Landmark Trust USA. In addition to a tour of Naulakha, participants were treated to a talk by Charles Fish of the Dummerston Historical Society on “Vermont and Vermonters in Kipling’s Day,” as well as readings by Mary Hamer from her novel about Kipling and his sister, Kipling and Trix.

New faculty member brings activism to anthropology

BY SHANNON HAALAND ’17

“I strongly feel that the experts are everyday people,” said Rebekah Park, who joined Marlboro as professor of anthropology in August. She was referring to her experience working in Washington think tanks, which tended to rely upon “experts.” “I was very concerned that people in Washington were creating policies without having a good understanding of how everyday people thought and approached the same social problem. Rebekah didn’t always want to be an anthropologist. When she was in high school, she wanted to do social policy analysis, and she hasn’t strayed far from that goal. As an anthropologist, she is very interested in exploring social problems and conducting social science research to contribute to solutions. Anthropology has always been a great source of curiosity to Rebekah, and while she enjoyed her high school anthropology course, her interest solidified in the applications of human rights research she encountered at universities.

“Anthropologists attempt to understand social problems from the bottom up,” she said, “meaning they look at everyday people in communities as experts, and they are very committed to that perspective. That’s why I became an anthropologist, because I wanted to have the tools to do social research at that level of social analysis.”

After receiving her undergraduate degree in anthropology at Northwestern, Rebekah got her master’s in applied medical anthropology while a Fulbright scholar at the University of Amsterdam. This led to her co-editing the book Dying and Living Medical Anthropology: Personal Reflections as well as writing related articles on heroin addicts and asylum seekers in Amsterdam. After that she received her doctorate in sociocultural anthropology from UCLA, one of the top programs in the country, taking particular interest in post-conflict areas, transitional justice, and human rights, especially in Latin America.

Rebekah observed fundamentally different paradigms of anthropology studies in Amsterdam versus those at American universities. In American anthropology there tends to be a distinction made between theory and practice, while it is the norm for Dutch anthropologists to seamlessly navigate academia and policy or NGO work without mention of a theory/practice divide. This is where Rebekah’s research interests lie, and it is the approach she plans to use with her students.

“Of course there is room for knowledge for knowledge’s sake, but I want students to know that they are in a privileged position to spend time studying something,” she said. “I want them to understand that perhaps they should think about the end meaning, or product. Especially in the climate we are living in now, I think people have to be articulate as to why a liberal arts education is important, and I think that begins with their own projects.”

Rebekah herself is a case in point, having spent two years in Argentina for her dissertation research, interviewing former political prisoners of the military dictatorship there in the ’70s and ’80s. The Association of Former Political Prisoners of Córdoba, whose members survived abduction, torture, and illegal imprisonment, invited her to work with them to document their memories of the past and to actively participate in their current political organizing activities. Unlike the desaparecidos (the disappeared persons), the former political prisoners, for reasons unknown to them, were made to reappear in legal prisons and survived. Because they were marginalized for having survived, Rebekah was the first scholar to work with an organized group of former political prisoners. She has just...
Shannon Haaland is a freshman at Marlboro College interning as a writer in the marketing and communications department.

Students find big rewards as Big Brothers/Sisters

While Marlboro students spend most of their waking hours with other students, there are a few who are reaching out to include younger people in their circle, for mutual benefit. This year, 15 students have served as Big Brothers and Big Sisters (BBBS), committing for the full academic year to act as mentors to “Littles” at Marlboro Elementary School. Nine of those mentors returned from last year, so are completing their second year of service.

“The Big Brothers Big Sisters program at Marlboro College is a strong example of a community-based, service-learning experience,” said Stefanie Argus, student life coordinator, who spearheaded the program. “Students share the double gifts of time and commitment—sticking to a regular weekly appointment shows dedication.”

Mentors carpool to the elementary school four out of five weekdays to interact with Littles ranging from kindergarteners to seventh graders. They have lunch together, then head outside to build forts in the woods and play soccer, basketball, or foursquare. For quieter activities, Bigs and Littles read together, make friendship bracelets, or do seasonal crafts like gingerbread houses.

In addition to programs sponsored by BBBS of Windham County, such as a fall harvest party, a bowl-a-thon, and a kickball tournament, there are other opportunities for partnership right on the Marlboro campus. These have included a visit to the college farm and greenhouse, in collaboration with the Farm Committee and the farm cottage, and a Mud Run in October to benefit BBBS. On a chilly Saturday morning, 19 hearty participants showed up to run the 1.2-mile trail, with obstacles including a tower climb, inflatable raft traverse, rope spiderwebs, balance beams, and rope slinky over the fire pond. The event raised $198, all of which was donated to BBBS.

“I’ve been lucky to be involved with this opportunity for community collaboration with Marlboro Elementary School, and have personally been seeking other ways to invite additional partnerships between our two schools,” said Stefanie. “Ideally, I would love for college students to continue their matches throughout their time at Marlboro, and I hope that the program does have longevity and sustained interest.”

“I’m extremely impressed by the dedication of our students who participate in the BBBS collaboration,” said Desha Peacock, director of career development. “Beyond building good karma and a résumé, volunteering offers an opportunity to improve the quality of life for others and instills a civic duty in students that hopefully will remain an influence in later life. For students interested in early childhood education, it also provides a unique opportunity to experience an elementary school environment from a different perspective, providing insight into possible career paths.”
Carol Hendrickson retires; Marlboro thinks the world of her

“People are born into worlds already rich with meaning, and grow up learning multiple senses of place,” anthropology professor Carol Hendrickson wrote in Potash Hill (Winter 2010). “When I first started doing anthropology fieldwork in Guatemala, I had a great deal of catch-up work to do to begin to navigate what others already knew about the places all around me.” Carol wasted no time gaining a sense of place at Marlboro when she first joined campus in 1989. She retires this year after 25 years of teaching “the three Rs:” reading, writing, and research in the form of fieldwork, considered the hallmark of anthropology.

Carol came to Marlboro after a year of teaching at Carleton College, with a doctorate from the University of Chicago. She had written her dissertation on women weavers in Guatemala, which resulted in her book Weaving Identities: Construction of Dress and Self in a Highland Guatemala Town (1995), selected by Choice as one of the best new books in anthropology. Like many faculty members, she was drawn to the small size at Marlboro and the ability to work closely with students.

“I guess I couldn't really predict this from the start, but it quickly became clear that I loved doing tutorials,” said Carol. “Moreover, my family is from New England; my undergraduate experience was in New England (Bates); it was like coming home. It was just a really great place.”

According to Carol, the study of anthropology is important “because it teaches us that, culturally speaking, we're not the only game in town.” In the classroom she liked to teach her students how to question assumptions about their own world and also come to understand the culturally speaking, we're not the only game in town.” In the classroom she liked to teach her students how to question assumptions about their own world and also come to understand the empirically conscious.

“Carol brought to her teaching a cultural anthropologist's keen way of observing the universe, finding unexpected connections, and unearthing the everyday lyrical-ness of life,” said Sun Brown '11, who did her Plan of Concentration in religion and anthropology. “Without even meaning to, she was constantly collaborating with her students in their research, as she had an incredible knack for discovering, by chance, articles and ideas and occurrences that connected to their work.”

“I think there is flexibility here for me to really teach anything,” said Carol, who often collaborated with other faculty members in classes. “Anthropology is a subject that people don’t know a lot about, and so particular classes might bring in visual arts students, for example, and then they perhaps end up writing a Plan paper on the subject. Having control over your curriculum is really a plus.”

In addition to teaching popular classes like Ethnobiology, Senses of Place, Anthropology of Art, and Thinking Through the Body, Carol served as dean of faculty during the 1990s and director of world studies in the 2000s. She was a clear choice for the latter, with her international background and fieldwork experience.

“One of the things I really appreciated and made use of at Marlboro, in many ways, was the funding to go abroad,” Carol said. Her first Marlboro course trip was to the Yucatan in 2001, with biologist Bob Engel and ceramicist Michael Boylen and five students, two of whom were in the World Studies Program (Potash Hill, Summer 2001). “That led to other trips such as the one in Vietnam, and co-leading trips to Cuba with Kate Ratcliff.”

As director of world studies she also visited students doing WSP internships and study-abroad programs in Mexico and Spain. “Those were really excellent opportunities because I got the chance to see how those programs worked on the ground.”

Along the way, Carol developed a method of “visual field notes” that has augmented her learning process in the field and has been a key element of her recent academic work. Recent articles on the subject include “Visual field notes: Drawing insights in the Yucatan,” in Visual Anthropology Review (2008), and “Ethno-graphics: Keeping visual field notes in Vietnam,” in Expedition magazine (2010).

“Marlboro has been great in supporting research trips to Guatemala in the past 20 years,” said Carol. “I'm happy that I've kept a modest writing career in addition to the time teaching.”

In 1999 Carol was awarded a coveted Fulbright-Hays faculty research grant for her work in Guatemala. In 2002 she came out with Tecpán Guatemala: A Modern Maya Town in Global and Local Context, co-written with Edward Fischer, currently being translated for publication in Spanish.

“Carol managed to stay well abreast of the anthropological world at large from Potash Hill, which itself can be challenging,” said Jeff. “More than this, however, she continued to do fieldwork, which is not only extremely commendable, but also rare among sociocultural anthropologists, many of whom are content to write a dissertation and then surround themselves with the world of theory.”

Photo courtesy of Carol Hendrickson

Above: Carol Hendrickson holds court in an anthropology class in the late 1990s.

Photo courtesy of Carol Hendrickson

Above: Carol visits the family she lived with in 1980 and 1981, when she first did fieldwork in Tecpán, Guatemala.
Jim Tober explores economics of retirement

“It was a simpler time in many respects, but I knew I wanted to come to a place like Marlboro even though I had never heard of Marlboro,” said economics professor Jim Tober, who joined the faculty in 1973. He described coming “somewhat accidentally,” sending an introductory letter before the college had even advertised the position. But it is no accident that Jim has stayed with Marlboro for 42 years, and made lasting contributions as a social sciences teacher, administrator, and mainstay of both environmental studies and the World Studies Program.

In fact, Carol is looking forward to doing more fieldwork in her retirement, visiting field sites at new times of year, reviewing her decades of notes and experimenting with new writing styles. She said that the challenge will be to keep up the energy and get projects done, but nobody else seems to doubt her ability to do that. As recently as November, she traveled to Chicago for the American Anthropological Association meeting to give two talks. One of them, called “Che's Socks,” was about clothing and other relics of the Cuban Revolution, based on her many class trips to Cuba, and the other was about her visual field notes.

“One part of Marlboro that I have appreciated is my colleagues, and some students have become colleagues as well,” she said. “While they aren’t always in my disciplinary area, our conversations have been very important and pushed my work in new directions.” For example, for an article she’s writing on experiential learning in Vietnam, she asked Tessa Walker ’07 to send her some of her journal pages from their trip there together. “It’s great to keep up the conversations, and to hear what work they are doing, what graduate programs they are in.” Tessa is currently doing research on skateboarding as a mode of transportation for her master’s thesis project in urban studies at Portland State University, Oregon.

Sari said, “Carol worked endlessly to accompany her students in their passions, but she never seemed burdened by it; she seemed to really derive satisfaction from it.” Supported by an Aron Grant, Carol traveled to Bolivia with Sari, and collaborated with her on experimental, sensory-based ethnographic fieldwork. “Throughout the whole process, her humble but incredibly cultured way of observing people and environments became a model not only of doing anthropology but of living in community that I will carry with me for the rest of my life.”

Jim Tober makes his mark in the classroom in the 1970s.

Opposite: Jim Tober makes his mark in the classroom in the 1970s.

Above: An excerpt from Carol’s visual field notes, this one from a visit to Vietnam. Photo by William Strauss
Eminently level-headed and comfortable in the role of administrator, Jim has held several administrative posts at Marlboro, starting with his very first year. He and his wife, Felicia, needed a place to stay, so they were offered an apartment in Random North if he served as dean of students, which he did for two years along with his teaching position. He also did a couple of terms as dean of faculty for a total of seven years, including two years during the crucial transition between presidents Paul LeBlanc and Ellen McCallum-Lovell. Jim also served as the director of world studies in the early years of that signature program, and again in 1998–2000. “The World Studies Program was the impetus for several research trips, notably to look at wildlife management in Namibia and study the nonprofit sector in Bangladesh, that enlarged my global perspective and informed my teaching.”

But Jim still considers himself primarily a North Americanist when it comes to economics. His second book, Wildlife and the Public Interest: Nonprofit Organizations and Federal Wildlife Policy (1989), was based on his research on wildlife policy in the U.S. during a sabbatical year residency at the Yale Program on Nonprofit Organizations. This affiliation led to his teaching emphasis on the nonprofit sector, which has encouraged several undergraduate students to pursue Marlboro’s graduate and professional program on managing mission-driven organizations.

Over the years, Jim organized his teaching around two broad fields of inquiry, the analysis and comparison of economic systems and the history and development of public policy and collective decision-making, especially as related to the natural environment. He has always struggled with the orthodoxy within the discipline, and with the need to balance mainstream paradigms. “While few students arrive at Marlboro knowing that they want to study economics, many discover what the discipline offers once they are here, and this has provided Jim with opportunities to mentor and support them in exploring alternative—and often more useful and interesting—paradigms.” While few students arrive at Marlboro knowing that they want to study economics, many discover what the discipline offers once they are here, and this has provided Jim with opportunities to mentor and support them in exploring alternative—and often more useful and interesting—paradigms. “Economics is known as the ‘dismal science,’ and I must admit I was hesitant to dive into the subject when I started thinking about Plan,” said Kelsa. “Jim is an expert at that. Some of my favorite hours at Marlboro were spent debating the fine points of economic development with Jim. He taught me how to peel away the layers of an issue, and showed me how in each hard question lies yet another one.”

Jim is characteristically enigmatic about his retirement plans, although they will certainly include lots of gardening, traveling, writing, and, a recent fascination, ceramics. How he will focus his continued academic interests, or his quirky hobby of collecting panther TV lamps, there’s no knowing. But his legacy of inspired teaching will be remembered at Marlboro for some time.

“Great teachers don’t only teach you a subject matter; they teach you how to learn,” said Kelsa. “Jim is an expert at that. Some of my favorite hours at Marlboro were spent debating the fine points of economic development with Jim. He taught me how to peel away the layers of an issue, and showed me how in each hard question lies yet another one.”

Jim is characteristically enigmatic about his retirement plans, although they will certainly include lots of gardening, traveling, writing, and, a recent fascination, ceramics. How he will focus his continued academic interests, or his quirky hobby of collecting panther TV lamps, there’s no knowing. But his legacy of inspired teaching will be remembered at Marlboro for some time.

“Great teachers don’t only teach you a subject matter; they teach you how to learn,” said Kelsa. “Jim is an expert at that. Some of my favorite hours at Marlboro were spent debating the fine points of economic development with Jim. He taught me how to peel away the layers of an issue, and showed me how in each hard question lies yet another one.”
Movies from Marlboro launches new season

Following on the success of the first Movies from Marlboro film intensive in spring 2012, film professor Jay Craven is again assembling a team of 30 college students and 20 professionals this spring semester to produce a feature film. This year the hands-on film practicum will shoot a film based on Pierre et Jean, Guy de Maupassant’s 1887 novel of family, class, legacy, and self-discovery.

The last Movies From Marlboro production, Northern Borders, premiered to a sell-out crowd at Brattleboro’s Latchis Theatre last April, launching a 100-town tour of New England. The film, based on Howard Frank Mosher’s novel by the same name, stars Academy Award-nominated actors Bruce Dern and Geneviève Bujold.

“We plan to keep it on the road through 2014, with additional play through Netflix, cable, and streaming,” said Jay. “Northern Borders grew out of my long experience working with young filmmakers and my years of producing and releasing ‘north country’ pictures produced on significantly larger budgets. Building on these experiences, and by using recent developments in independent film production and distribution, I believe that Movies from Marlboro will help chart a new course for how independent films get made and distributed.”

Maupassant’s shortest novel, called a “masterly little novel” by Henry James, Pierre et Jean is widely credited with changing the genre of narrative fiction. The book introduces intense psychological complexity into its story of a family brought to the breaking point by startling revelations of legacy and legitimacy. While the novel was set in Normandy, the film adaptation will be set in 19th-century Nantucket, after the demise of the whaling industry and before the rise of tourism on the island.

The Movies from Marlboro program starts with an expedition to the Sundance Film Festival, followed by seven weeks of study, training, and pre-production work on the Marlboro campus. These include core courses in screenwriting and directing, film studies, and French literature. Participants will then move on to Nantucket Island for seven weeks of pre-production and production that will fully immerse students in the culture and practice of an ambitious film shoot.

“We continue to be inspired by John Dewey’s call for ‘intensive learning that enlarges meaning through the shared experience of joint action,’” said Jay. “Organized as the equivalent to a semester abroad, Movies from Marlboro combines the best of liberal arts education, professional preparation, and cultural immersion.”

Apple daze: Some reflections from freshman Shannon Haaland on the annual tradition known as Apple Days, which mysteriously lasts only one day.

It’s a Wednesday morning in the Marlboro dining hall, and everything would appear normal, except for the row of apple cider cartons placed by the register and a tray of apples with sticks in them, ready to be dipped in caramel. Travis Wilmot, a senior, sits back in a wooden dining hall chair and grumbles to me about his lack of knowledge on the names of apples, something he feels is crucial for an inhabitant of Vermont to know.

Outside, the yellow beech trees and the reds of maples stand out against the pale, cloudy sky. Students stand around an apple press, taking turns pulling a crank in order to make more apple cider. It takes roughly 36 apples to make just one gallon of apple cider, we find.

Apple trees are a part of Marlboro. The trees are left over from when Marlboro was a collective of two farms. Today they still produce thick harvests of apple on campus each autumn. Slipping on fallen fruit while running late to class is bound to happen at least once, and serves almost as a rite of passage. Students can be seen encircling trees, pointing out which apple looks the most delicious, and then proceeding on a hunt to capture it.

Eating apples is not only an enjoyable tradition, but one that can aid students on their paths of academia. Apples contain boron, which is responsible for the plants’ germination, and can also stimulate the brain and help increase mental alertness. Apple Days is a day to celebrate the campus residents, student and fruit alike, and the reminiscences of fall.
Worthy of note

“I had the high honor of serving my country and working as an intern in the American Embassy in Berlin, where I had access to the world of diplomats,” said junior Max Barkdale (below). Max worked in public affairs, giving tours to German school groups, writing “extremely unique” memos, and organizing events, including the visit of President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle. His internship relates directly to his course of study at Marlboro in international relations. “This year I’m taking a class on American foreign policy, which I now have the honor of saying I have seen firsthand.”

“I am in Spain, specifically Granada, studying the influences of Islam in Europe, so the Alhambra was fascinating to me,” wrote junior Amelia Brown (above) in her blog last semester. She traveled to Spain and Morocco through Central College Abroad, with a side trip to Germany to visit relatives. Despite some transportation snafus and other challenges, Amelia has gained valuable experiences and perspectives for her course of study at Marlboro. “How often will I have the chance to live in Europe, to travel through Spain? It’s an adventure, and I am glad I came on it, no matter the challenges it has presented.”

“I am really enjoying every moment here,” said Abdelhamid Isem (above), the Fulbright Arabic Fellow on campus for the 2013-14 academic year. “I am surprised at how fast students learn Arabic; they’re really very motivated.” Abdel, who is from Morocco, received his B.A. in English studies from Ibn Zohr University, and has taught English for the past six years at the Hassan II High School, in Casablanca. He was a great addition to the soccer team, and organized a Moroccan cultural festival in November, including tea, food, and a fashion show. “I am very fortunate that I was placed in Marlboro,” said Abdel. “It is heaven on earth. I love everyone here.”

In June, Spanish language and literature professor Rosario de Swanson presented a paper in Portugal, at the Universidad Fernando Pessoa. Her paper was part of a symposium on Mexican literature organized by CIESAL, the European Council for Social Research on Latin America. Titled “National Dytopia,” Rosario’s talk centered on the dramatic poems of Mexican feminist Rosario Castellanos.

“I am very pleased with the new open source library catalog software that we use, all of which have saved the college gobs of money,” said Elliot Anders (below), web developer. Marlboro is also among the first colleges to use software called CUFTS and Godot, and last October Elliot and Amber Hunt (Potash Hill, Summer 2013) were invited to a Koha conference in Reno, Nevada, to share their experiences. They were also able to connect with people they had been collaborating with for the past three years. “Our talk was an attempt to excite users of Koha to try out CUFTS and Godot, to hopefully grow the user base and interest some developers in contributing to its development. The greater the number of libraries using it, the more bugs will be reported and special features requested.”

“For more information, see: Max Barkdale youtu.be/21Q2q9hMWqY

Sean Barkdale africanwomenincinema.blogspot.com/2013/08/sean-barkdale-discusses-his-research.html

Martinina Lantin www.crimsonlaurelgallery.com/shop/op-shop

Or for the most up-to-date scoop, see: Potash Hill cosmo.marlboro.edu/potashphill

Facebook www.facebook.com/marlborocolle

Youtube www.youtube.com/user/marlborocolle

Twitter www.twitter.com/marlborocolle

Philosophy professor William Edgell gave a series of invited talks this fall, including two in Oregon in October. He spoke at Oregon State and at Multnomah College, in Portland, about contemporary themes at the intersections of Buddhism and ecology. He also moderated two sessions at the International Association for Environmental Philosophy, in Eugene, for which he serves on the executive committee. In September he appeared at Salisbury University, where he presented two talks, one on Buddhist sand mandalas and one titled “Global Climate Change, Social Justice, and Buddhist Ethics.” He also gave a talk at Susquehanna University, in central Pennsylvania, together with one of his professors, on categories of religion and philosophy in non-Western thought.

“Koha is just one open source library catalog software that we use, all of which have saved the college gobs of money,” said Elliot Anders (below), web developer. Marlboro is also among the first colleges to use software called CUFTS and Godot, and last October Elliot and Amber Hunt (Potash Hill, Summer 2013) were invited to a Koha conference in Reno, Nevada, to share their experiences. They were also able to connect with people they had been collaborating with for the past three years. “Our talk was an attempt to excite users of Koha to try out CUFTS and Godot, to hopefully grow the user base and interest some developers in contributing to its development. The greater the number of libraries using it, the more bugs will be reported and special features requested.”

“In October, Beverly Burkett (above) was a featured speaker at the international KOTESOL (Korean Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) conference in Seoul, South Korea. The degree chair for Marlboro’s master’s program in TESOL, Bever gave a presentation titled “Developing a Personal Theory of Teaching Practice: The Role of Reflection.” “The conference theme, Exploring the Road Less Traveled. From Practice to Theory, really resonated with me because it aligned with our approach here at Marlboro,” said Bern. “We begin with experience and a focus on our practice and theorize from that. Of course, the title brought to mind Robert Frost’s poem ‘The Road Not Taken,’ and, given his connection to the founding of Marlboro, that was an added attraction.”

In October, Beverly Burkett (above) was a featured speaker at the international KOTESOL (Korean Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) conference in Seoul, South Korea. The degree chair for Marlboro’s master’s program in TESOL, Bever gave a presentation titled “Developing a Personal Theory of Teaching Practice: The Role of Reflection.” “The conference theme, Exploring the Road Less Traveled. From Practice to Theory, really resonated with me because it aligned with our approach here at Marlboro,” said Bern. “We begin with experience and a focus on our practice and theorize from that. Of course, the title brought to mind Robert Frost’s poem ‘The Road Not Taken,’ and, given his connection to the founding of Marlboro, that was an added attraction.”

“Marlboro’s a very interesting place,” said Sean Harrigan (below), Marlboro’s Classics Fellow for the academic year. “My classes are fun, and I enjoy the way tutorials bring me into contact with things I wouldn’t necessarily be reading or thinking about if left to my own devices.” Sean completed his doctorate degree in classics from Yale in May, and has taught both Greek and Latin. His research focus is on the poetry of Archilochus, specifically how it was performed. “The fact that our texts survive as ink on paper obscures the amazing reality that what we tend to call poetry is almost always better thought of as song. I’m especially interested in songs that were performed as part of religious ceremonies, where the words may tell us something about the rituals in which people were taking part.”

For more information, see: Max Barkdale youtu.be/21Q2q9hMWqY

Boukary Sawadogo africanwomenincinema.blogspot.com/2013/08/boukary-sawadogo-discusses-his-research.html

Martinina Lantin www.crimsonlaurelgallery.com/shop/op-shop

Or for the most up-to-date scoop, see: Potash Hill cosmo.marlboro.edu/potashphill

Facebook www.facebook.com/marlborocolle

Youtube www.youtube.com/user/marlborocolle

Twitter www.twitter.com/marlborocolle
Class notes are listed by year and include both graduates and nongraduates; the latter are listed under the class with which they are associated.

‘49
THOMAS DOWNS writes, “Just turned 90. Still playing golf and drinking beer.”

‘59
“Same house in Wilmington for 73 years,” wrote BRUCE AND BARBARA COLE. “Life is still good. Kids and grandkids thriving and scattered around the country. Higher education is evolving rapidly—1959 seems far away, but values remain on the Hill.”

‘63

‘76
SCOTT HOUSMAN writes, “Thanks so much for posting the notice about the Whistman School in the most recent issue of Potash Hill. It makes me chuckle to see how clearly my career has come full circle back to my time at Marlboro. It feels as though everything I’ve ever done was in preparation for this endeavor, and I’ve never felt more connected to purpose my entire life. Somewhere in the workshops of the great beyond, Gil Taylor must be taking great delight in this. In a very real way it all started with him, down there in the Perrine Building, up on top of Potash Hill. I’m very grateful for all of that.”

‘79
The forthcoming edition of The Robert Frost Review will be publishing DAN TOOMEY’S article titled “Believing In: Robert Frost, Walter Hendricks, and the Creation of Marlboro College.” He says, “It’s a blinding of the two Frost pieces I wrote some years ago for Potash Hill, but recutablen for people perhaps more familiar with Frost and less familiar with Marlboro. It was peer-reviewed of course, and so I’m particularly pleased that Frost’s connection to Marlboro College is now (and will be in the future) better understood by both biographers and literary critics.”

‘82
“Having served a year as the temporary spiritual leader of the Brattleboro Area Jewish Community, I have now signed a contract to be a permanent spiritual leader (at least for the next two years),” writes KATE JUDD. “My cantorial orientation date looks like June of 2015. It’s been a year of much transition. My mother died in September 2012, and our house in Marlboro has been sold.”

‘83
XENIA WILLIAMS writes, “I’m spending the summer getting rid of most of my possessions and selling my house, in order to relocate in the fall to California for a new career as a grandma. My very cute and smart grandson, Calyin, is 6 years old.”

Rachel Eugster ’77: Picture-book mommy

When Rachel Eugster’s son Samuel was in kindergarten, she invented all sorts of strategies to help make the transition of dropping him off easier. But he came up with the ultimate strategy when he expressed his wish that she were tiny enough to keep in his pocket.

“That is where the book begins, as I immediately knew one would,” said Rachel, referring to her picture book released this fall by Tundra Books/Random House. “The Pocket Mommy is a fantasy, if there is such a subgenre among picture books. It could even be viewed as a cautionary tale: ‘be careful what you wish for.’”

Rachel is a writer and editor who has contributed to many magazines and newspapers, including Walking, New Age Journal, Continental, and The Ottawa Citizen. She also wrote a series of books for children on food and nutrition, published by Franklin Watts.

“I do have a particular soft spot for some pieces I wrote for YES!, a science magazine for children, on topics including the reawakening of Mount St. Helens, how horses communicate with each other, and a mysterious episode of exploding toads in Germany.”

In addition to her writing, Rachel is active in the performing arts as an actor and music director. She is a member of an independent theater company in Ottawa called Bear & Co., and as the vocalist in a musical group called Dragon’s Tea Trio.

Meanwhile, her son Samuel, the inspiration for The Pocket Mommy, is now a junior at the University of Toronto.

“I don’t drop him off daily at school anymore.”

When Samuel was in kindergarten, she invented all sorts of strategies to help make the transition of dropping him off easier. But he came up with the ultimate strategy when he expressed his wish that she were tiny enough to keep in his pocket.

“That is where the book begins, as I immediately knew one would,” said Rachel, referring to her picture book released this fall by Tundra Books/Random House. “The Pocket Mommy is a fantasy, if there is such a subgenre among picture books. It could even be viewed as a cautionary tale: ‘be careful what you wish for.’”

Rachel is a writer and editor who has contributed to many magazines and newspapers, including Walking, New Age Journal, Continental, and The Ottawa Citizen. She also wrote a series of books for children on food and nutrition, published by Franklin Watts.

“I do have a particular soft spot for some pieces I wrote for YES!, a science magazine for children, on topics including the reawakening of Mount St. Helens, how horses communicate with each other, and a mysterious episode of exploding toads in Germany.”

In addition to her writing, Rachel is active in the performing arts as an actor and music director. She is a member of an independent theater company in Ottawa called Bear & Co., and as the vocalist in a musical group called Dragon’s Tea Trio.

Meanwhile, her son Samuel, the inspiration for The Pocket Mommy, is now a junior at the University of Toronto.

“I don’t drop him off daily at school anymore.”

Rachel Eugster ’77: Picture-book mommy

When Rachel Eugster’s son Samuel was in kindergarten, she invented all sorts of strategies to help make the transition of dropping him off easier. But he came up with the ultimate strategy when he expressed his wish that she were tiny enough to keep in his pocket.

“That is where the book begins, as I immediately knew one would,” said Rachel, referring to her picture book released this fall by Tundra Books/Random House. “The Pocket Mommy is a fantasy, if there is such a subgenre among picture books. It could even be viewed as a cautionary tale: ‘be careful what you wish for.’”

Rachel is a writer and editor who has contributed to many magazines and newspapers, including Walking, New Age Journal, Continental, and The Ottawa Citizen. She also wrote a series of books for children on food and nutrition, published by Franklin Watts.

“I do have a particular soft spot for some pieces I wrote for YES!, a science magazine for children, on topics including the reawakening of Mount St. Helens, how horses communicate with each other, and a mysterious episode of exploding toads in Germany.”

In addition to her writing, Rachel is active in the performing arts as an actor and music director. She is a member of an independent theater company in Ottawa called Bear & Co., and as the vocalist in a musical group called Dragon’s Tea Trio.

Meanwhile, her son Samuel, the inspiration for The Pocket Mommy, is now a junior at the University of Toronto.

“I don’t drop him off daily at school anymore.”

Rachel Eugster ’77: Picture-book mommy

When Rachel Eugster’s son Samuel was in kindergarten, she invented all sorts of strategies to help make the transition of dropping him off easier. But he came up with the ultimate strategy when he expressed his wish that she were tiny enough to keep in his pocket.

“That is where the book begins, as I immediately knew one would,” said Rachel, referring to her picture book released this fall by Tundra Books/Random House. “The Pocket Mommy is a fantasy, if there is such a subgenre among picture books. It could even be viewed as a cautionary tale: ‘be careful what you wish for.’”

Rachel is a writer and editor who has contributed to many magazines and newspapers, including Walking, New Age Journal, Continental, and The Ottawa Citizen. She also wrote a series of books for children on food and nutrition, published by Franklin Watts.

“I do have a particular soft spot for some pieces I wrote for YES!, a science magazine for children, on topics including the reawakening of Mount St. Helens, how horses communicate with each other, and a mysterious episode of exploding toads in Germany.”

In addition to her writing, Rachel is active in the performing arts as an actor and music director. She is a member of an independent theater company in Ottawa called Bear & Co., and as the vocalist in a musical group called Dragon’s Tea Trio.

Meanwhile, her son Samuel, the inspiration for The Pocket Mommy, is now a junior at the University of Toronto.

“I don’t drop him off daily at school anymore.”
**'95**

“I am thrilled to share that I have finally graduated from medical school, only about 20 years after I first got the idea while at Marlboro,” writes LAURA STURGILL.

“My husband, William, and my two daugh-

ters, Clara (11) and Rory (9), and I are in the process of packing up, selling our little house in Marlboro, and moving to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where I will begin my three-year residency in family medicine.”


**'96**

PARRISH KNIGHT writes, “Still in the Metro DC area, living a pretty quiet and uneventful single life as a computer desktop support technician. I’ve been with a few differ-

ent agencies in a few different capacities, but the most awesome of which was as the Apple engineer for the NASA Headquarters build-

ings. That was like being in a dream world. I was very
depressed when I got laid off from there due to budget cuts, but my current position, as the help desk lead with the National Geocentric Survey, is a better place for me to be for various reasons, so I try to keep things in perspective.”

“Big news right now is that I’m finally

finishing my bachelor’s degree. I’m doing the distance-learning thing at Thomas Edison State College, a school that specializes in helping older students in circumstances like mine. If all goes according to plan, I’ll probably have my degree in April of 2014.

“My other big news is that I’m taking a two-week vacation in Ireland, which will be over by the time you read this. This has been a big dream of mine for many years, so I’m really looking forward to it. Would be happy to hear from anyone at all… look me up on Facebook, or drop me a line at parrish.knight@gmail.com.”

Natalie Fishman writes of her son ELI FISMAN, “Eli’s son, Collin, is growing by leaps and bounds. He’s already 7 months old.”


**'97**

DENI BECHARD released a new book in October called Empty Hands, Open Arms: The Race to Save Rombo in the Congo and Make Conservation Work, published by Milkweed Editions and distributed by Publishers Group West. Find the video trailer at milkweed.org/shop/product/329/

empty-hands-open-arms.

Currently a psychiatrist working at the Brattleboro Retreat, NELS KLOSTER has helped launch a series of talk shows on mental health for airing at BCTV. “The first season, we focused on awareness of various mental health conditions and seeking help,” said Nels. “This season, we want to extend into more interesting territory and so are addressing facets of recovery. For example, last week we had a guest expert so we could
discuss active engagement in living with illness. Tonight we are going to address spirituality. Next week we will again have a guest from the Women’s Freedom Center, to
discuss domestic violence. I think it is safe to say this has become my most time-consuming hobby. It is certainly a very enjoyable way of performing a public service.”


**'01**

DAVID WHITAKER writes, “Ann Marie and I had our first son, Aun, in 2010. In the second season, Rowan, joined us in 2012. Big love to the whole Marlboro community.”

KRISTINE LEMAY CROTO published her first book, The Lure Dance of Caryln Maury, through KDP on Amazon: www.amazon.com/Lure-Dance-Caryln-

Murphy-ebook/dp/B00DX53H8I/.


**'02**

KATE MULLER’s work was part of a
group show at the Cameo Club of New York, from September 14 to November 2, called “Swerve and Fracture,” the show featured ten artists, including Kate, whose video and photography craft a fantasy-tinged image of life with her husband in western Massachusetts and with her sister and mutual parents in rural Maine: www.cameraclubny.

org/show_swerveandfracture2013.html/.


**'06**

TYLER MARTIN received his MLS from the University of Pittsburgh and currently works for a private company in Massachusetts that provides information services. He supports a team of librarians who design and develop catalogs and institutional repositories. “Outside of work, I maintain a strong interest in film and a previously uncharacteristic passion for lounging at the beach,” writes Tyler.

MATT LYNCH writes, “I have been travelling in Turkey this summer, first on a tour of spiritual sites and then amidst the protests in Taksim Square. I’d love to share a photograph or two from my experiences there with the Marlboro community at prostrip.blogspot.com.”


**'07**

SONIA LOWE received her MAT in history from Salem State and is currently the lead history teacher at an urban middle school in the Boston area. She is also finishing her certification to teach English as a sec-

ond language. Outside of work, Sonia loves going to new places (most recently China and Puerto Rico) and eating new things (most recently whale sushi and mozzarella). I’m taking a break from their time at Marlboro College, Sonia and TYLER.


**'09**

After four years at The Huffington Post, MICHAEL MACHER is now the associate publisher at The Aol, an online independent publishing platform. One of Michael’s other projects is producing a web-
document for the television named ARC, alongside videographer PATRICK KENNEDY and former student and web-short director JOHN THORSON.

JOHN “SPIKE” CARTER has introduced white-water rafting into the curriculum at The Sharon Academy, where he works, with the help of RANDY KAGGS ’94. Marlboro director of outdoor programs.

Spike says, “We have several students this year who are kinetic learners who are also interested in environmental studies. We also have a river outside our front door that we wanted to take more advantage of. It’s a common misconception that small schools can’t compete with large schools when it comes to offering students opportunities. In fact, we can offer experiences that are resourceful and creative, putting together these types of opportunities that step outside of the traditional classroom.”

**KEARA CASTALDO** has been working in Manhattan as a litigation assistant at an intellectual property law firm, but this year started at the Jenea Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. There will be receiving her master’s of public policy with a concentration in media literacy.


**'06**

KRISTINE LEMA\Y CRITO

Elena Schaf-Brandes ’78 and daughter

Olivea Schad ‘14 put their heads together with theater professor Brenda Foley to discuss a spring class trip to Berlin to explore collaborative performance. Elena has had a rich career in musical theater in Switzerland and Germany, and is currently teaching vocalists on the faculty at the Universität der Künstler Berlin.


**'07**

JOHN THORSON.

**'09**

Elena Schaf-Brandes ’78 and daughter

Olivea Schad ‘14 put their heads together with theater professor Brenda Foley to discuss a spring class trip to Berlin to explore collaborative performance. Elena has had a rich career in musical theater in Switzerland and Germany, and is currently teaching vocalists on the faculty at the Universität der Künstler Berlin.


**MARTIN ‘06** were married last July in a small secular outdoor ceremony. They had their honeymoons in Iceland and continue to call Salem, Massachusetts, home.

LILLIAN GRAHAM writes, “On October 14, 2013, I gave birth to a beautiful baby boy, Silas Chase Graham. He has been a little constant joy in my life, bringing new inspiration to my life and art.”


**'09**

MARTIN ‘06 were married last July in a small secular outdoor ceremony. They had their honeymoons in Iceland and continue to call Salem, Massachusetts, home.

LILLIAN GRAHAM writes, “On October 14, 2013, I gave birth to a beautiful baby boy, Silas Chase Graham. He has been a little constant joy in my life, bringing new inspiration to my life and art.”


**AKER CASTALDO** has been working in Manhattan as a litigation assistant at an intellectual property law firm, but this year started at the Jenea Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. There will be receiving her master’s of public policy with a concentration in media literacy.
Sean Cole ’93: Revisiting Walt Whitman

Sean Cole has been working in public radio since 1997. He’s produced and reported stories for This American Life, RadioLab, Marketplace, and WNYC’s Inside Out Documentaries. But when Studio 360 asked him to produce a show on Walt Whitman’s Leaves of Grass for their “American Icons” series, Sean knew this story would be particularly special to him: the book had been an integral part of his Plan of Concentration. “All these years later, here I was delving into the same copy that I read in my cabin down the road from campus,” said Sean.

Sean visited the campus for the first time in six years to record himself taking his Plan off the shelf and reading parts of it out loud. While he was doing that, his former Plan sponsor and literature professor T. Wilson snuck into the reading room and surprised him.

“My three-hour interview with T. was like the ultimate tutorial: limitless time, no imminent writing deadline hanging over my head, and nothing to grade at the end of it.” His editor liked the rapport between Sean and T. so much that he suggested they work together. “I thought it could be on Plan for my entire life. For better and for worse, I got it.”

His editor liked the rapport between Sean and T. so much that he suggested their interaction should be the beginning of the piece.

“I remember telling Randy George ’93, back when we were at Marlboro together, that I wished I could be on Plan for my entire life. For better and for worse, I got it. I work crazily long hours trying to explain something that, often, I’m deeply interested in.”

Hear Sean’s story at www.studio360.org/story/american-icons-leaves-grass.

Kenny Card ’10 and Alecia Boopp ’13 both joined the admissions team this year, sharing their passion about Marlboro with prospective students both on campus and on the road.

COOKIE HARRIST writes: “I am being published in a New England dance journal called Kneibago very soon. The article is based on my Plan research. Very exciting stuff!”

REBECCA GILDEA has a research position in the faculty and academic development office at Appalachian State University. “I am still an undergraduate student to become a certified music therapist and come out on the other side with a master’s degree as well. I’m really happy so far with the area (so many mountains!) and the general atmosphere.

MIKE ULLEN writes, “I am at Roskilde Højskole on Flensborg Fjord in Denmark, where I have been a student since August. Before the weather turned cold and rainy (it rains a lot, and when it isn’t raining it is often grey) I got to kayak around the fjord with a few Danes, a Hungarian, and a German–lots of fun, except for the capturing practice in the cold and salty North Sea. I have learned a bit of Danish, gone on long walks in the Danish countryside (even in the rain), and spoken at length with my fellow students about the good and the bad of our respective countries. I’m not certain what is next, but I plan to stay here for a while longer.”

The way you think and engage with the world is exactly what VPL needs.”

An article in the November 3 Ralfant Herald follows MORGAN INGALLS’ work with the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife and New York Department of Environmental Conservation to monitor little brown bats at Mount Aeolus Cave.

“A few years ago, MORGAN INGALLS ’09 and Katherine Partington ’09 became assisting students in setting up an on-campus food pantry. Living in a small community and loving life. In addition, TRISTAN STAMM and I will have our work shown in an art exhibit at Space Gallery, along with seven other Maines-based artists, starting on November 9 and running until December 19.

"After graduating in May, I moved to the Greater Boston area," NIKKI HALG writes. "I now hold two paid internships. One is an events internship with the Boston Athenaeum, a prestigious membership library. The other is a public relations/marketing internship with Primary Care Progress, a nonprofit advocating for better training for and incentive to become primary care doctors. Within the next three years, I hope to receive an MLS from Simmons College.”

Jesse Nisser, a professor at Marlboro, announced that his book of poems, Take This Song: Poems in Pursuit of Meaning, was published by Small Press. Jesse will be at Amazon, Take This Song is published under Tom’s mysterious pen name, Lee Bramble, “a retired academic” and “general practitioner of English poetry from the 16th into the 20th century,” according to the cover.

Katherine Partington ’09

Katherine Partington was delighted to welcome this year’s new students to Marlboro, at Convocation in September, with tales of her own promising trajectory. She is currently artist residency coordinator at Vermont Performance Lab, a laboratory for creative research and community engagement founded and directed by fellow alumna Sara Coffey ’00. Here is a short excerpt from Katherine’s remarks:

I graduated at a very difficult time, when job prospects were bleak. My fellow graduates and I were pretty nervous—we didn’t know if we would find work or what Marlboro College had given us exactly. We wondered, “How will my education here transfer into the world? How will I make money?”

Well, now that it is four years later, it is my pleasure to let you know that what you learn at Marlboro College does translate into the pragmatic world, it does lead to a paying job, and it is more than likely that this paying job will be in a field that you are passionate about. I know this may sound like a lie, but actually this has been my experience, and it is an experience that I know many other Marlboro College graduates share. I met Sara Coffey when I was a student and we began a conversation about dance that has continued to this day. When she hired me full time, Sara said (and I quote) “Katherine, I hired you because you went to Marlboro College. The way you think and engage with the world is exactly what VPL needs.”

During Family Day in October, Aaron Kischik ’02 joined political theory professor Meg Mott for a session on “Property Rights in the Age of Surveillance.” Other alumni on hand to present were Rebecca Mallory ’11, Teta Hildson ’87, Kent Coffey ’10, Scott Karlowski ’83, Morgan Ingalls ’09, Becky Catellani ’04, Libby Garofalo ’04, and Jay Snyder ’04. Wendy M. Levy ’97, cheese lady extraordinaire and owner of the Brattleboro Cheese Shop, invited participants to sample some of Vermont’s finest.

Sophia Cleavey is a performance artist based in New York City, and did a month-long residency at the Shandaken Project as one of their 2013 artists-in-residence.

An article in the November 3 Ralfant Herald follows MORGAN INGALLS’ work with the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife and New York Department of Environmental Conservation to monitor little brown bats at Mount Aeolus Cave.

Morgan, a graduate student in the resource management and conservation program at Antioch University New England, plans to place radio transponders on 500 bats and track their movements over the winter.

Ryan Stratton is one of the featured VISTA members in the latest edition of Vermont Youth Tomorrow’s VISTA Voices: www.vyta.org/vistasources/doc/vyst Voices_summer_2013.

Brandon Willits launched a new nonprofit and website called Words After War (wordsafterwar.org), devoted to providing veterans with literary programs that allow them to share their stories. “I saw a need in the veteran service space for a nonprofit focused less on the therapy value of writing and more on the artistic value of writing,” he says in a recent article (newsrelive.com/whenscomeshome/writingthere/). “It’s less about how writing makes me feel better and more that it makes me a better human being.” In October, Words After War ran an essay contest to sponsor one veteran in the Brattleboro Literary Festival workshop by veteran writer David Abrams.

Potash Hill welcomes your letters, submissions of poetry and fiction, and queries for feature articles. Address them to Editor, Potash Hill P.O. Box A, Marlboro Vermont, 05344 or email them to pjohansson@marlboro.edu
PRESIDENTIAL AND OTHER PRIZE

I have just finished the summer edition. First class! I especially enjoyed—it can even separate anything—the pieces on Robert MacArthur and Paul Nelson, but the poetry was good too, along with everything else.

—Tom Ragle, former president

So glad to see Potash Hill online. And very glad to see your name as editor, Philip!

—Margie Serkin, friend and neighbor

I think Potash Hill is one of the finest alumni/school-related mags out there, and I see several. I don’t know how you can get more alumni to write in about their lives—most grads or even nonseniors have nothing but fond memories of the place and their friends there; many lifelong as in my case. Still a great magazine.

—Gail Henry ’72

I appreciated receiving the summer issue of Potash Hill at home and enjoyed the stories a lot, especially the one about Robert MacArthur. Thanks for all of your hard work.

—Amir Latif, faculty member

Congratulations on the new issue! I always enjoy seeing Potash Hill in my mailbox. I’d love to contribute something at some point.

—Matt Lynch ’06

POTASH HILL

As I page through Potash Hill (Summer 2013), I am struck by the wonderful diversity of expression of our shared Marlboro values. Ghostly forces, the origins of genocide, and bicycle repair workshops...everywhere there is creativity. Rebecca Bartlet’s comment that Marlboro alumni are “not very affluent and with a wide streak of anti-materialism” just made me grin.

At a recent international conference of pediatric ophthalmologists, I presented a poster regarding medical mission work in the West Indies. Volunteer work cures the soul of many self-inflicted ills. It restores us each to a global human perspective. While it takes from us materially, it gives something entirely more valuable. I thank you Marlboro, for I am most proud to be a member of our small but mighty tribe, a tribe who give of ourselves, and who (you, Rebecca) do share a wide streak of anti-materialism.

—Ingrid Costain ’82

POETIC JUSTICE

I am writing to thank you for the generous (and gorgeous) inclusion of my poems in the Summer 2013 Potash Hill (Your Battened Name)—surprising and beautiful to me.

Surprising because I did not imagine that the poems would appear like this, and beautiful because of your photograph, Dianna. A perfect image for where I live—actually and spiritually.

The whole magazine is beautiful, of course. It is always, and I am deeply grateful for the care you have shown me and my work. Good to read of Sophia's new book as well (and of the others). I am among the many fans of Potash Hill and continue to admire its written and visual elegance.

—Kimberly Cloutier Green ’78

Special Section: SMALL BUT MIGHTY TRIBE

Congratulations on the new issue!

—Kimberly Cloutier Green ’78

SMALL BUT MIGHTY TRIBE

As I page through Potash Hill (Summer 2013), I am struck by the wonderful diversity of expression of our shared Marlboro values. Ghostly forces, the origins of genocide, and bicycle repair workshops...everywhere there is creativity. Rebecca Bartlet’s comment that Marlboro alumni are “not very affluent and with a wide streak of anti-materialism” just made me grin.

At a recent international conference of pediatric ophthalmologists, I presented a poster regarding medical mission work in the West Indies. Volunteer work cures the soul of many self-inflicted ills. It restores us each to a global human perspective. While it takes from us materially, it gives something entirely more valuable. I thank you Marlboro, for I am most proud to be a member of our small but mighty tribe, a tribe who give of ourselves, and who (you, Rebecca) do share a wide streak of anti-materialism.

—Ingrid Costain ’82

POETIC JUSTICE

I am writing to thank you for the generous (and gorgeous) inclusion of my poems in the Summer 2013 Potash Hill (Your Battened Name)—surprising and beautiful to me.

Surprising because I did not imagine that the poems would appear like this, and beautiful because of your photograph, Dianna. A perfect image for where I live—actually and spiritually.

The whole magazine is beautiful, of course. It is always, and I am deeply grateful for the care you have shown me and my work. Good to read of Sophia’s new book as well (and of the others). I am among the many fans of Potash Hill and continue to admire its written and visual elegance.

—Kimberly Cloutier Green ’78
Glenn Pike
Glenn J. Pike, formerly of Wilmington, died in August at the Vermont Veterans Home, surrounded by his family. Glenn worked at Marlboro as the outdoor maintenance staff person from 1971 to 1988. “He was a one-of-a-kind sort of person, and an important part of a Marlboro education for many of us, perhaps especially those of us who worked on his crews,” said Dan Toomey ’79. Glenn graduated from Wilmington High School, and served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He worked at Dunham’s Shoe Factory and Emerson’s Furniture, in Brattleboro, before joining the staff at Marlboro. “He made many friends among his work-study students, and could always be counted upon to come up with rational solutions to most problems,” said retired history professor Tim Little. Glenn enjoyed the outdoors and loved hunting and fishing, hiking Haystack Mountain, and time spent with family and friends. He is survived by his two children, five grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Franklin Reeve
Author, scholar, neighbor, and friend to Marlboro College, Franklin Reeve died in June, at the age of 84, after a long illness. Franklin was the husband of retired faculty member Laura Stevenson, had served as outside examiner on many Plans of Concentration, and taught a course called The Artist and the Revolution in spring 1999. Franklin lived in Wilmington since 1995, and for a number of years he commuted twice weekly from Vermont to Wesleyan University, where he taught. Franklin published more than 30 books, including translations of Russian authors, as well as 10 books of poetry. He gave several readings of his work at Marlboro over the years. “In a final sense,” he wrote in an essay, “all writing, all painting, all music, and all art are only efforts to get closer to defining the one, ultimate place where we suppose we’ll know exactly who we are.” Besides Laura, Franklin’s survivors include four children by previous marriages, a brother and sister, and 18 grandchildren.
Randy Knaggs ’94, director of the Outdoor Program, cuts a hole in the frozen fire pond in preparation for a "polar dip" event last winter.

Photo by Devlo Media