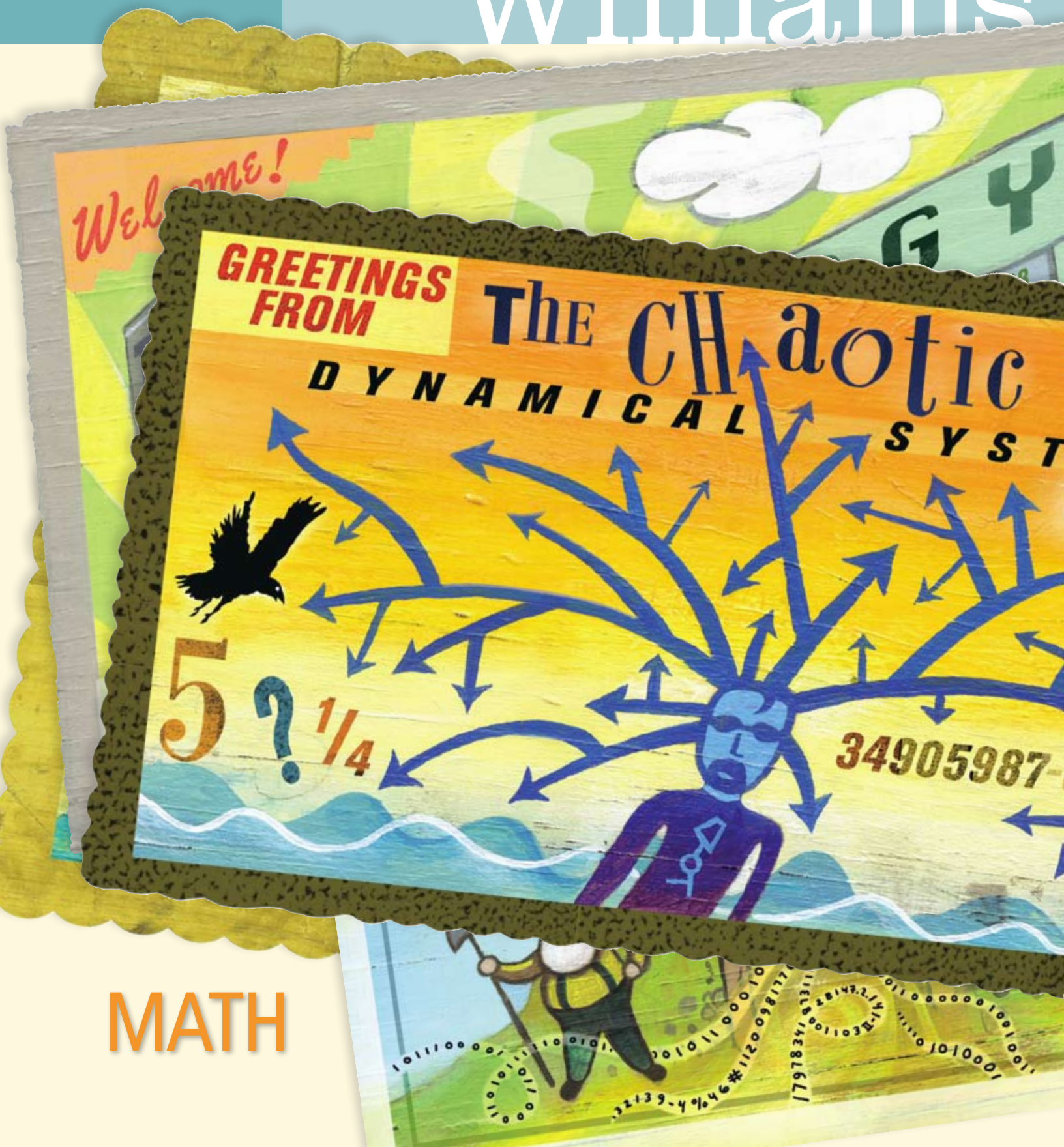
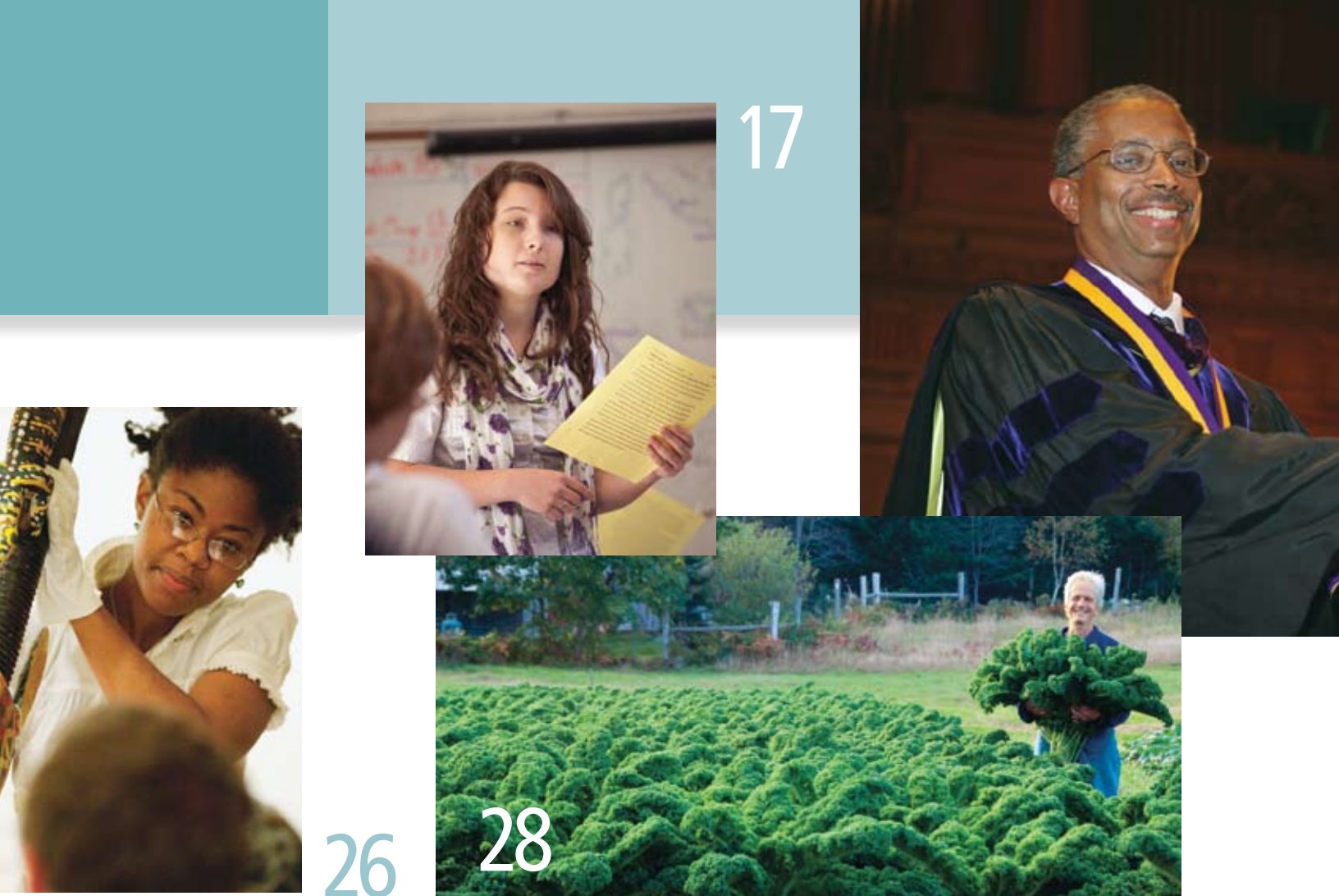


# Williams



MATH



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## ALUMNI REVIEW

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# Williams

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>> Click here for text only

## Lessons of History

by President Adam Falk

Coming freshly, as I have, to Williams, I've sought to learn what I can about the College from its history, an exercise as enjoyable as it is illuminating. Among the many great stories from the College's past, I've been struck by what I see as four lessons, which I expanded on in my Induction Address (<http://bit.ly/FalkInduction>) and which I believe are worth summarizing here.

*Williams always was and will be about what happens on the log.* After a century and a half, James Garfield's description of the ideal college remains our North Star. Everything we do must be aimed at nurturing the magic that happens when dynamic and devoted faculty engage with bright, dedicated students. The tutorial

we enhance the communities, the professions and the world that as alumni they will head out to serve. In the end, the measure of the College's effectiveness is the degree to which our graduates do that, as exemplified by this year's Bicentennial Medal winners, whose talks are cited in our convocation coverage, beginning on page 22.

*Williams would be nothing without its alumni.* This is literally true, since it was its graduates that saved the College from what many considered the deathblow of President Moore's 1821 move, with faculty and students, to the valley east of here. Given the importance of alumni support throughout American higher educa-

tion, this event holds significance well beyond Williamstown. But here more than anywhere, we know the great advantages of having alumni deeply involved with the College. The reputation of the Williams alumni body certainly reaches as far as Baltimore, but I must say that seeing its effects throughout the College's history and experiencing it myself firsthand is truly breathtaking.

*Williams must always adapt.* We're approaching the 50th anniversary of a remarkable string of changes, from the phasing out

of fraternities to the beginning of coeducation and the wonderful diversifying of the College, which has so greatly enhanced the education we offer. These developments are associated with Presidents Sawyer, Chandler and Oakley, but despite their great leadership, these changes couldn't have occurred without the involvement of faculty, staff, students and alumni. One of the healthiest attributes of Williams that I've experienced is the degree to which alumni devotion is fueled by a love not only of the College they knew but of the College they want to see Williams become. This is the healthiest kind of support I can imagine.

Adapting in ways that build on our past and enhance our future has long been what's made Williams great, and I'm excited and humbled to be able to work with all in the College community to continue that great tradition. ■

WE INVEST SUBSTANTIAL  
RESOURCES IN OUR STUDENTS  
WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT  
IN DOING SO WE ENHANCE THE  
COMMUNITIES, THE PROFESSIONS  
AND THE WORLD THAT AS ALUMNI  
THEY WILL HEAD OUT TO SERVE.

ROMAN IWASIWKA

system, much expanded during Morty Schapiro's presidency, may be the most visible manifestation of that ideal, but great teaching and learning take place in all kinds of classes as well as throughout our theaters and studios and across our playing fields. The College seems to know this in its bones, and I've been impressed by the degree to which faculty and staff are instinctively focused on continually improving our students' experiences.

*Williams exists to provide a public good.* At the Haystack Prayer Meeting of 1806, five Williams students dedicated themselves to serving the world in the way they believed best. In doing so they recognized that their time at the College was preparation not just for personal advancement but for service to society. This has long been the highest aspiration of the liberal arts. We invest substantial resources in our students with the understanding that in doing so



## LETTERS

I loved the story about the “G-option” in the September 2010 issue. I entered Williams in ‘62 having been in three high schools in four years. I never took a course in biology. I wanted to fill that gap, but Bio 101 was for the guys going on to be doctors (not me) and was considered very tough in order to persuade those who took the class to consider other options. I wish the G-option had been available then; I would have loved to “play” in that realm for sure.

—Peter Hoyt ‘66, Cincinnati, Ohio

Adoption of a pass/fail option is long overdue, but I question whether it will sufficiently promote academic risk-taking. Will the history major with a B-plus GPA risk a C in chemistry, since the pass option is revoked if the grade is not a B-minus or higher or is more

than two-thirds of a grade below his or her GPA (even if the student is deemed “intellectually present”)? Perhaps not.

—Kevin Caton ‘88, Pittsford, N.Y.

### whither the “g-option”?

It’s hard to conjure the person-hours, the diverse assemblages of IQ points, the meetings to discuss the agenda for the meetings, the hair splitting and the dancing pinhead angels it took to achieve this “G-option.” But the result looks transformational, even alchemical.

Given .67 of this and B-minus of that and once only maybe but not in area of concentration per semester after grades but only if intellectually present—what could be clearer? And the result? Uncomfortable learning without the discomfort! This makes President Sawyer’s advice to freshmen in ‘68 obsolete: “Take a course you think you might fail.” I



*The Williams Alumni Review welcomes letters relating to articles or items that have appeared in recent issues of the magazine. Please e-mail comments to [alumni.review@williams.edu](mailto:alumni.review@williams.edu) or send them to the Alumni Review, P.O. Box 676, Williamstown, MA 01267-0676. Letters may be edited for clarity and space.*

took his advice, met Professor Park and learned more about my capabilities than I did about physics. So press on. Ease the heat on the crucible. No one will notice a change in the metal.

—David Westbrook ‘72, Cambridge, Mass.

## They Said:

Opinions and ideas expressed by members of the Williams community

“We will now be able to provide for the arts, humanities and social sciences the kinds of wonderfully effective teaching and learning spaces that Schow Library affords sciences and math.” —Adam Falk, Williams president, in an Oct. 18 announcement that work will begin anew this spring on the Stetson-Sawyer library. The \$80 million project, placed on hold due to the global financial crisis, is expected to be complete in 2014. For information, visit <http://bit.ly/Stetson-Sawyer>.

“We’re notoriously wimpy, but we wanted to start doing something active. ... We began with planks first, but we decided to pronounce them ‘Plancks’ after Max Planck ... one of the founding fathers of quantum theory.” —Margaret Robinson ‘12, who with three other students last year founded the Physics Exercise Worship Circle, a combination study break/intensive workout session that now draws 20 to 30 students two to three times per week. Record, 11.03.10



## CDE ALUMNI GATHER FOR 50TH

Williams' Center for Development Economics drew some 60 alumni from more than 30 countries for a 50th anniversary celebration in October (see <http://bit.ly/CDE50th> for highlights). More than 1,000 economists have graduated from the one-year master's program and gone on to prominent posts in their home countries.

## BALDERSTON NAMED ALUMNI TRUSTEE

Williams welcomed Thomas M. Balderston '78 to its Board of Trustees in the fall, filling a vacancy left by Frederick M. Lawrence '77, who was named president of Brandeis University.

Balderston is founder of Balderston Capital and has spent 25 years building and managing venture capital portfolios as



Thomas M. Balderston



Frederick M. Lawrence

a general partner, limited partner and angel investor in companies and funds. He currently serves on the boards of Investors' Circle, the Patient Capital Collaborative, the Ben Franklin Technology Center of Southeastern Pennsylvania and

the Shipley School. As a Williams volunteer, he was a member of the Executive Committee of the Society of Alumni from 1996 to 1999, chairman of the Alumni Fund from 2002 to 2005 and an officer of the Class of 1978. He will serve the remainder of Lawrence's term as alumni trustee, which ends in 2012.

Balderston and his wife Betsy (Jeffrey) Balderston '79 have three sons, including Caleb '10, and live in Ardmore, Pa.

## ROUHI TOP TEACHER IN MASSACHUSETTS

Leyla Rouhi was named 2010 Massachusetts Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). She is the College's John B. McCoy and John T. McCoy Professor of Romance Languages.

In addition to Spanish language classes, Rouhi has taught "Spain's fin de siglo and the Crisis of Ideas," "Love in the Spanish Golden Age" and numerous courses on

Cervantes since her arrival at Williams in 1993. Born in Iran, she speaks five languages and has published extensively on Cervantes, contemporary Arabic and Persian fiction, and the cultural and intellectual exchange between Islam and the West during the European Middle Ages.

Rouhi won the Certificate for Excellence in Teaching at Harvard University six times while completing her PhD there, and she also was awarded the Harvard University Travel Study Prize for best teaching fellow in the languages. Williams granted her the Nelson Bushnell, Class of 1920, Faculty Award for excellence in teaching and writing last spring.

In 2010 the Carnegie Foundation and CASE recognized professors of the year in 45 states and the District of Columbia.



KEVIN KENNEDY

Leyla Rouhi

&gt;&gt; Click here for text only

the  
list

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS



KRIS DUFOUR

Mika Brzezinski interviews Joe Scarborough at the '62 Center on election night.

## WILLIAMS GETS TASTE OF MORNING JOE

Mika Brzezinski '89 and Joe Scarborough, co-hosts of MSNBC's *Morning Joe*, spent election night 2010 at Williams, fielding questions from students, faculty and community members who packed the MainStage of the '62 Center for Theatre and Dance.

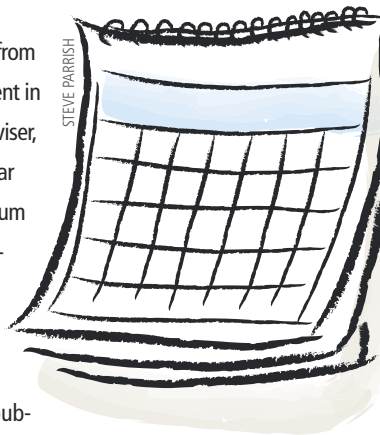
Clips of the event, "Beyond the Midterms: A New Way Forward," were subsequently broadcast on the duo's morning show. They came to the College at the suggestion of Sports Information Director Dick Quinn, who has kept in touch with Brzezinski, a former cross country and track runner and a Bicentennial Medalist.

UNDERGRAD RESEARCH WINS  
PHYSICS PRIZE

Chris Chudzicki '10 has won the LeRoy Apker Award from the American Physical Society for outstanding achievement in physics by an undergraduate. Working with his thesis adviser, physics professor Frederick Strauch, Chudzicki spent a year researching how to "efficiently and faithfully send quantum information in parallel between different parts of a quantum computer," he says.

The work built upon research by Strauch and Bill Wootters, the Barclay Jermain Professor of Natural Philosophy. Chudzicki's research with Wootters was published in the Feb. 18, 2010, *Physical Review Letters*.

continued on page 8



STEVE PARRISH

**Impress your friends! Frighten your loved ones! Annoy your coworkers! Sign up for an electronic subscription to the College Archives' "This Day in Williams History." Among the notable moments of winters past:**

**Jan. 2, 1951** A fire reduces West College to a sagging shell.

**Jan. 5, 1968** The first Winter Study Program begins at Williams.

**Feb. 1, 1820** The Massachusetts Legislature refuses the petition of the President and Trustees to remove Williams College to Northampton.

**Feb. 4, 1802** Mark Hopkins, Williams' fourth president, is born in Stockbridge, Mass.

**Feb. 4, 1940** The Shakespeare first folio (pictured below) is stolen from the Chapin Library.

**Feb. 21, 1938** The College seismograph records a 14-second "earthquake" as the 75-foot brick chimney of the Greylock Hotel falls.

**March 2, 1935** *The Williams Record* reports that Latin will no longer be considered a requirement for admission to the College.

**March 7, 1715** Ephraim Williams Jr., founder of Williams College, is born in Newton, Mass.

**March 8, 1785** The Massachusetts General Court grants the charter to establish the Free School in Williamstown.

**March 17, 1896** Students vote 247 to 42 in favor of inaugurating a campus-wide honor code.

**March 17, 1914** The cane contest is deemed so disorderly and raucous that the president and dean abolish this freshman-sophomore rush.

**March 20, 1896** A portion of the east side of (old) Clark Hall is loosened by rain and tumbles to the ground.

**For more on these events, and to sign up for your dose of Williams history, day by day, visit <http://bit.ly/wmshistory>.**



## THE MUSEUM AS SUBJECT

The Williams College Museum of Art reopens on Feb. 3 after nearly two months of work on 10 redesigned galleries (including “Art Re: Art,” at left). The new exhibitions—featuring prominent works from WCMA’s collection as well as objects on loan from Yale, including sculpture by Brancusi and Giacometti and paintings by Thomas Eakins, Paul Klee and Pablo Picasso—ponder questions about the function and meaning of art across time and cultures.

continued from page 7

A physics and math major from Saratoga Springs, N.Y., Chudzicki won a Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship at Williams in 2009 and is now a PhD student in MIT’s Interdisciplinary Quantum Information Science



Chris Chudzicki

and Engineering Program. He and Williams’ physics department each received \$5,000 as part of the Apker Award, given to only two undergraduates each year—one from a college or university that grants PhDs and one from an institution that does not. Chudzicki joins past Apker Award recipients Nathan Hodas ’04, Charles Doret ’02 and Brian Gerke ’99.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Of the 35,158 alumni Williams has produced since its founding in 1793, 74 percent are still living, according to the College Archives. Based on data collected from the *General Catalogue* (till 1930) and the *Course Catalog*, the number of Ephs receiving diplomas each year has grown from four in the Class of 1795 to 525 in the Class of 2010. (See the full report at <http://bit.ly/allwmsalumni>.)

The College counts 26,169 living alumni as of Dec. 7, 2010, from the oldest Eph on record, James A. Goodwin ’32 (born March 8, 1910), to the youngest, Alex Howard ’10 (born Sept. 7, 1989). That’s a lot of Ephs!

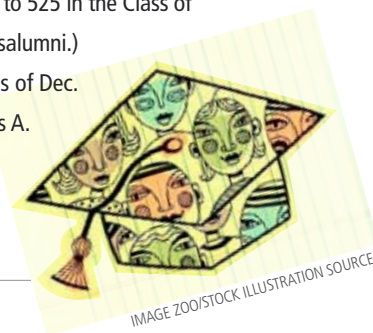


IMAGE ZOO/STOCK ILLUSTRATION SOURCE

## DONOVAN-MOODY AND HERCHEL SMITH FELLOWS NAMED

**Yue-Yi Hwa** ’11, a political economy and Arabic studies major from Malaysia, will spend two years at Oxford studying politics as a Donovan-Moody Fellowship recipient. She is writing a thesis on education policy in Malaysia, for which she received multiple summer research grants. She also served as editor-in-chief of the *Record*.

Five other seniors will spend two years at Emmanuel College, Cambridge University, as Dr. Herchel Smith fellows. **Antoniya Aleksandrova**, a physics and math major from Bulgaria, will study applied mathematics and theoretical physics. The Phi Beta Kappa member is working on a thesis in quantum information theory. **Marissa Kimsey**, an economics and women’s and gender studies major from Illinois, will pursue dual master’s degrees in development

studies and economics. She is Phi Beta Kappa and has received grants to research in Bolivia, Brazil, Mozambique and South Africa. **Zebulon Levine**, a chemistry major from Vermont, is to study chemistry, working with organic synthesis. A wrestler, Levine is also a head of the chemistry student advisory council. **Charles Rousseau**, an English and religion major from Virginia, plans to study criticism and culture. At Williams, he is a member of the Springstreeters and a tutor with the Writing Workshop. And **Jehanne Wyllie**, an English and American studies major who lives in Florida, will study social anthropology and complete course work in English studies. She was a 2010 summer fellow with the Chinese-American Planning Council in NYC and served in AmeriCorps during a gap year.

The students were selected from a pool of 28 fellowship applicants.

For the latest sports news and standings, visit <http://williams.prestosports.com/landing/index>

## ICE HOCKEY VETS LEAD SCORING FEST

With 18 of 19 starters returning from last year, “Any given night, anybody can contribute,” says men’s ice hockey coach Bill Kangas, who’s in his 22nd year at Williams. His statement rang true when the Ephs, in a rare no-penalty game (their first contest on the road), won 6-1 against Babson in November with six different scorers. That win was followed by a 7-1 victory over Southern Maine, again with six different scorers, launching the team to first place in NESCAC standings—and fourth nationally—in early December with a 6-0-1 record.

## WOMEN’S HOOPS CAPITALIZE ON EXPERIENCE

An early *USA Today* poll ranked women’s basketball 13th in the country in December. The Ephs were off to a 7-0 start, propelled by what coach Pat Manning characterizes as “tremendous focus and drive” as well as the experience and depth that come with 12 players fresh from last year’s success on the court. (The Ephs advanced to the Sweet 16 round of the NCAA Tournament.) Led by senior captains Chessie Jackson, Maddie King and Taylor Shea, the team also has an asset in Jill Greenberg ’12, who, in her three years as starting point guard, Manning says, has “grown tremendously and become a floor leader.”

## YOUNG MEN’S B-BALL TEAM OFF TO SOLID START

Men’s basketball coach Mike Maker says his team is “looking to form its own identity” this year, having graduated seven seniors last June. Under the leadership of captains Troy Whittington ’11, Harlan Dodson ’11 and James Wang ’12, three of the team’s four upperclassmen, the Ephs sported an 8-0 record and a second-place ranking in the D3Hoops.com national poll as of early December. Last season, men’s hoops went 30-2 and made it to the national championship game.

## FOOTBALL CELEBRATES FALL FIRSTS

In November, the football team’s newly hired Aaron Kelton became the first Williams coach in any sport to finish a debut season with a perfect record, in his case, 8-0. The Ephs’ seventh undefeated season in 22 years culminated with a victory at Amherst (31-16) on Nov. 13. Kelton was named NESCAC Coach of the Year. Senior Pat Moffitt, who started as quarterback for the Ephs 24 times over three seasons, was named New England Football Writers Div. II/III Player of the Year, having previously been named First Team All-NESCAC and NESCAC Offensive Player of the Year. He and 13 other teammates were named to the 2010 All-NESCAC Football Team.



Goalie Ryan Purdy, a NESCAC Player of the Week



Guard, forward and co-captain Taylor Shea



Center and co-captain Troy Whittington

# Making Waves

>> [Click here for text only](#)

**I**n their short time at Williams, swimmers Logan Todhunter '12 (pictured, left) and Caroline Wilson '13 are already causing a stir. Between them they've amassed eight NCAA titles and set a total of 23 College, NESCAC and national records in individual events. They've also been part of five record-breaking teams. But ask them about their Williams experience thus far, and they're just as likely to talk about life out of the water. Here, in their own words, is what keeps them afloat.

**“**I grew up in Ithaca, N.Y., surrounded by beautiful countryside, parents who are academic veterinarians, younger siblings and lots of noisy dogs. I was a swimmer in high school, part of a very good, close-knit team with an experienced, dedicated coach. I anticipated going to a Div. I school to swim competitively.

During the summer of my senior year, I qualified for a big, long course meet in Hawaii with junior athletes from the East and West Coasts. But at every training session I was the one at the end of the line, struggling to keep up with everyone else. The setting was friendly, but intense and competitive. I realized that I did not want to be part of this type of atmosphere for the next four years of my life.

## LOGAN TODHUNTER '12

I started looking at Div. III schools and went on three recruiting trips, one of which was to Williams. The camaraderie of the team, the friendly atmosphere, the strength and energy of our coach, the academic rigor and the nurturing environment made me certain Williams would be a good fit.

My time in the water has made me realize the value of time management and the significance of working hard in everything you do. The available help, academic resources and approachability of professors make it possible to succeed both in the pool and in the classroom. The support and camaraderie of the team is also very important. We are a family; we listen to each other, support one another, celebrate the successes and deal with the failures together. We go out of our way to be sure each one of us has the opportunity to participate and realize our potential.

I am also a junior advisor. My 20 freshmen are a wonderful mix of people with talent in the arts, athletics and academics. Being their mentor and a friend is similar to the role I play on the swim team. The entry is a support system in which everyone is looking out for one another and at the same time having a lot of fun along the way.”

**“**This past summer, at a swim meet in California, I was Skype-ing with Cody, one of my best friends since my first year at Williams. My roommate at the meet, a swimmer at the University of Florida, commented that Cody didn't look like a swimmer. ‘Oh, he doesn't swim, he plays hockey,’ I said. To which my roommate asked, ‘Wait, how do you know him?’

The reason I love swimming at Williams is that I can do more than just swim. From November until spring break, I get the full college sports experience: swimming two-a-days, competing at a high level and improving my times—all as part of a great team. I love every part of it, but what makes the swimming even better is knowing that, before and after the season, I can pursue other interests and focus on things outside of the water.

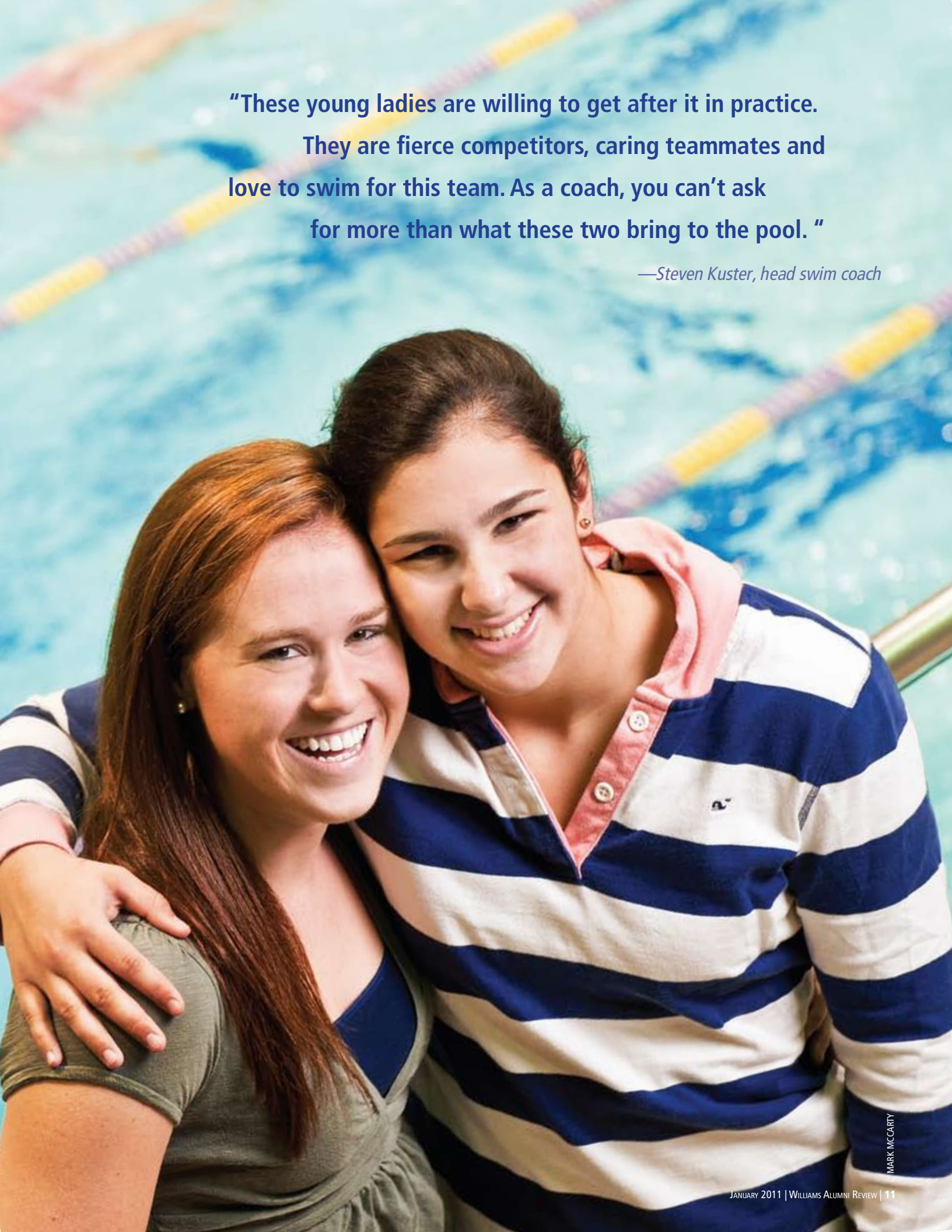
Williams has way too much to offer to be confined to the pool all year long. After going on a WOOLF trip during First Days, I applied to become a WOOLF leader last spring. The training trip and WOOLF trip I led last fall were even more fun than my freshman trip. I also started

## CAROLINE WILSON '13

playing club water polo, taking guitar lessons and serving as the Baxter fellow of my floor in the

dorm. Each of these experiences has allowed me to meet incredible people I would not have met without the balanced experience that Williams offers.

Don't get me wrong—the swimmers are some of my best friends, and I know we will still be best friends long after our days of competitive swimming have ended. But it's nice to spend time away from discussions on relay splits, practices and goggle tans. The entry system allowed me to make incredible friends that I was able to come home to every day. College is about branching out, experiencing new things and meeting new people. All I know is that I only have four years here, and I'm going to make sure not to waste one minute.” ■

A photograph of two young women smiling and posing by a swimming pool. The woman on the left has long brown hair and is wearing a green top. The woman on the right has dark hair pulled back and is wearing a blue and white striped polo shirt. They are both smiling warmly at the camera. In the background, the blue water of the pool and yellow lane lines are visible.

**"These young ladies are willing to get after it in practice.  
They are fierce competitors, caring teammates and  
love to swim for this team. As a coach, you can't ask  
for more than what these two bring to the pool. "**

*—Steven Kuster, head swim coach*

# fun, Seriously

Why so many  
Williams students  
major in mathematics.

>> [Click here for text only](#)

**Back in the late 1980s, a few young mathematicians** in Bronfman Science Center indulged in a little magical thinking.

The mission of the math department had long been to identify and educate the most talented students, which meant the College graduated about a dozen math majors each year. But new department chair Frank Morgan and some of his colleagues contemplated a more inclusive view of the discipline they variously describe as “beautiful,” “pleasurable” and “creative.” “Everybody deserves a chance to do this,” Morgan says. “It’s like music—people should have a chance to enjoy math.”

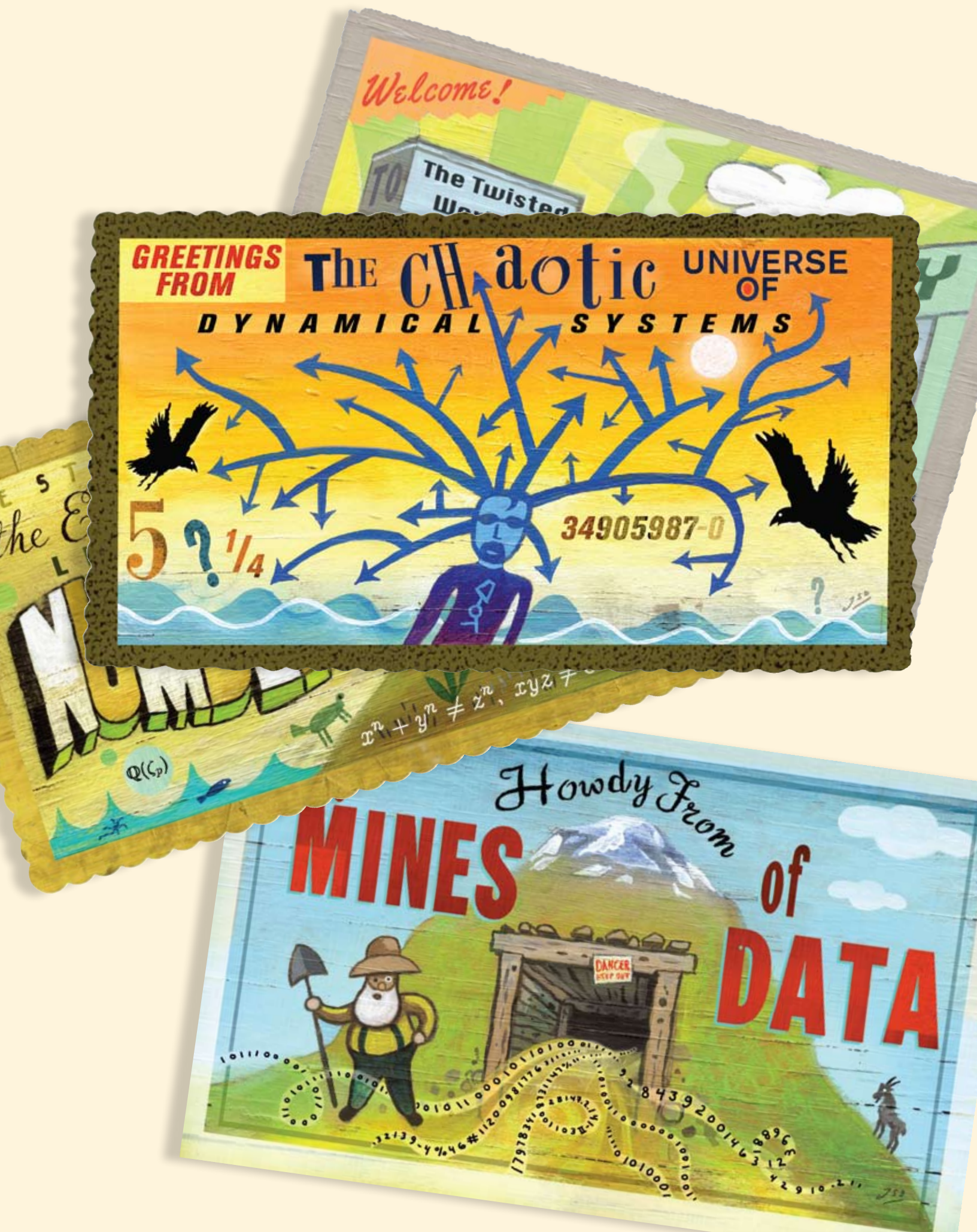
Today the reconstituted math department (since 1999 it has been Mathematics & Statistics) graduates five times as many majors, about 60 each June, a third of them women. More than half of all Williams undergraduates complete multivariable calculus. Most impressive of all, 12 percent of the College’s graduates major in mathematics at a time when, according to the American Mathematical Society, the national average hovers around 1 percent. Indeed, something magical happened.



The transformation began with the curriculum. The old, intensive two-semester calculus was scrapped. Described by some as Darwinian, this rigorous point of entry to college math had been regarded as a means of identifying the strongest students. A new three-semester calculus sequence took its place and, in the words of professor Ollie Beaver, another agent of departmental change, “The phrase came about that we were a ‘kinder, gentler math department.’”

The department’s most engaging professors were assigned to teach calculus, seeking to make the experience welcoming rather than a freshman slog. As a result, calculus came to serve as a funnel rather than a filter. The best students were still pushed aggressively forward, but a larger universe of others, having found calc surprisingly enjoyable, took a second and a third math course. Often an inadvertent momentum gathered, as Hugh Howards ’92 explains.





“I went through about nine majors before picking math,” Howards remembers. “But the department was so much fun I kept coming back. They asked questions to which no one knew the answers, but they made you understand the questions. And they built this amazing community of faculty and students.”

The social aspect helped draw in, and hook, many students like Howards, now an associate professor of mathematics at Wake Forest University. The department began sponsoring ice cream socials during fall registration, welcoming not only students who are comfortable living and breathing equations but also those who found the subject humiliating in high school. Now there are monthly math dinners and regular math snacks in the Math/Stat library in Bronfman. (With faculty offices opening onto the stacks and tables, there is a constant flow of students and faculty working, studying and chatting.)

During the academic year there are typically three talks per week by faculty and students. Every math major is required to give a 35- to 40-minute colloquium; last year, the topics ranged from quadratic reciprocity and Bertrand’s paradox to poker and “Controlling the Chaos in Your Heart.” Virtually every student on campus has a friend who gives a talk, so most undergraduates, math students or not, attend one at some point.

“When you get something like this started,” Morgan says, “people no longer feel like they’re venturing into some strange, abnormal territory when they take math.”



Mathematics may seem a serious matter, but at Williams a little laughter has been known to produce a little more mathematical learning.

An early arrival in the wave of new faculty was Tom Garrity. It’s been said that he’s one of those teachers that alumni will remember at their 50th reunions, as he’s been known to teach an entire class without speaking, relying on just hand signals and board scratchings. Once he hopped on one foot for the full class hour. His antic edge makes his demanding courses popular—and the math more memorable. (Garrity also runs the College’s Project for Effective Teaching, a resource for new faculty in all disciplines to orient them to the teaching ethos at Williams.)

There’s also Sir Randolph Bacon III, the imaginary alter ego of professor Colin Adams. One of Adams’ research interests is knot theory.

(A mathematician’s knots, though made of a closed loop, are akin to shoelace knots.) Dressed in yachting cap and ascot, the British adventurer and bon vivant addresses the topic “Blown Away: What Knot to Do When Sailing.” Adams takes another character on the road: Mel Slugbate, a sleazy real estate agent who handles property transactions in hyperbolic space. “I can tweak them to fit various groups,” Adams says, “but my goal is always to keep my audience long enough that they see how beautiful mathematics is.”

Professor Ed Burger’s past experience in stand-up comedy and writing jokes for Jay Leno helps light up his classroom. “Nothing is beneath me,” he says. “I’ll stoop to any level to engage my students.” Once he persuaded then-president Morty Schapiro to emerge on cue from a storage room just off Wege Auditorium, to the amazement—and amusement—of his calc class. Another time, a uniformed cop made a prearranged appearance immediately after Burger opened a beer on the podium as part of a volumetric calculation involving fluid flow. Burger was led away in handcuffs. “My students aren’t going to leave Williams remembering the quadratic formula,” he says. “Especially in the lower courses, I want them to take something away that stays with them—imaginative ways of looking at the world and practical methods to create new ideas and solutions.”

Chris Jones ’88, math department chair at the Horace Mann School in Riverdale, N.Y., was on hand for the changes at Williams and took with him a teaching style influenced by his professors. “They had no problem being wacky, loose. They gave me a sense that you don’t have to subjugate your personality to be a teacher. Life is fun.”

The world beyond Williamstown is well aware of what’s happening. Ann Watkins, former president of the Mathematical Association of America and professor at California State University, Northridge, reports that when Williams faculty talk at national meetings, seats are hard to find. “It seems like a miracle,” Watkins says, “that the audience can learn so much mathematics, often at the cutting edge of research, while laughing so hard.”



Has the occasional hilarity and constant congeniality led to a dumbing down of the discipline? For some, that was a worry, but there’s much evidence to the contrary.

For more than 20 years, Williams has been home to an undergraduate summer research

program known as SMALL (an acronym for the names of the professors who initiated it in 1988). The consensus used to be that undergraduates couldn't do research; today SMALL is one of the largest of the many National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduates in the country, underwritten in part by NSF grants. Roughly a third of the students are Ephs. Directed by individual faculty members, they work in small groups to investigate open math problems. Its alumni have published papers in the same math journals as their professors.

And those professors have won enough teaching awards to fill a trophy case. The Mathematical Association of America, the largest professional society for mathematicians, has given its Haimo Award for distinguished teaching to four Williams professors (Garrity, Burger, Adams and Morgan). No other institution has been honored with more than two. Burger and Adams each won Baylor University's Robert Foster Cherry Award for Great Teachers, regarded as the premier honor for teaching excellence in any discipline. Beaver received

the Hay Award from the Association for Women in Mathematics, and Beaver and Burger both have occupied the prestigious Gaudino Scholar post at Williams. Satyan Devadoss won the Mathematics Association of America Alder Award for young teachers. The list goes on.

When it comes to hiring and tenure decisions, the department expects that new faculty too will demonstrate a commitment to research and teaching. The result has produced what Wake Forest



## BEYOND CALCULUS

No one denies the debts to Babbage, Euclid, Archimedes and the rest—courses in the *College Bulletin* still include multiple forms of calculus, geometry and algebra, as well as number theory, probability and topology. But typically there are less-traditional offerings, too:

- **"Mathematical Politics: Voting, Power, and Conflict."**

Allison Pacelli brings quantitative analysis to social issues ranging from the 2000 election recount to the division of marital assets.

- **"The Art of Mathematical Thinking: An Introduction to the Beauty and Power of Mathematical Ideas."** Ed Burger examines the roles of the imagination and creativity in solving mathematical and non-mathematical problems.

- **"Protecting Information: Applications of Abstract Algebra and Quantum Physics."** In a course taught with physicist Bill Wootters, Susan Loepp looks at classical cryptography and error correction, a critical technique in telecommunications and computer science.

- **"Computational Statistics and Data Mining."** The raw material is huge data sets—collected by credit card banks, the NSA, pharmaceutical researchers—and statistics professor Dick De Veaux shows his students how to find "small, important needles in haystacks."

Meanwhile, during Winter Study, mathematicians tend to "go wild and crazy," says Colin Adams. Among the classes taught:

- **"Mathematics of the Rubik's Cube"** with Mihai Stoiciu
- **"Displaying Multivariate Data"** with Bernhard Klingenberg
- **"The Art and Science of Baking"** with Allison Pacelli
- **"Contemporary Movie Criticism"** with Carsten Botts
- **"Introductory Photography: People and Places"** with Cesar Silva
- **"Modern Dance"** with Dick De Veaux



Professor Howards says is “unquestionably the best teacher-scholar math department in the country.”

Take statistics, a key component of the department that will soon welcome a fourth professor to its ranks. When Dick De Veaux was hired in 1994, he brought a passion for his subject and continues to make a convincing case for its importance. “We have lots of data in the 21st century,” he says, “but we don’t have information. And the main goal of statistics is to turn that data into useful information. That’s what we’re teaching.” Statistics attracts high enrollments—more than 60 percent of Williams students take the introductory class alone—and it arms graduates with an essential interpretive tool for a data-intensive world.

Things continue to evolve at Math & Stats. Young faculty members like Devadoss bring new enthusiasm and talents. A gifted draftsman, Devadoss uses drawings to convey complicated ideas. “Instead of talking about equations,” he says, “I can show them a picture. My great dream is to bring art and math together in a way that offends neither field.” Statistician Bernhard Klingenberg teaches a course in biostatistics that looks at the analysis of data from clinical trials and other biological and medical research.

As professor Susan Loepp says, “All the faculty bring something different. We worry when we’re hiring that we’re not hiring clones of ourselves, that everyone brings something new.”



So what does a math major do after Williams? About 1 in 10 attend graduate school in the

discipline. Bruce Palka, now a program director at the NSF, used to recruit students from Williams for the graduate school at University of Texas, Austin, where he remains a member of the emeritus faculty. “As undergraduates, Williams students do very impressive presentations at math meetings,” he says, “and as graduates they move through programs easily.”

Another subset of departing seniors heads off to pursue graduate work in the sciences; still another group enrolls in medical or veterinary schools. The rest—nearly two thirds of mathematicians major in another discipline—make their way into fields common to the rest of Williams’ undergraduate population: education, law, business.

After double-majoring in math and English, Bethany McLean ’92 took a job at Goldman Sachs. Two years later, she decided to deploy her writing skills and moved to business journalism at *Fortune*. There she wrote the first skeptical story in a national magazine about Enron, long before there was any inkling the company would implode. Now a contributing editor at *Vanity Fair* and the author of two books, she says math made it possible. “I’m not afraid to tackle quantitative things,” she says. “Solving a math proof isn’t that different from writing an article—it’s an argument, an analytical frame.”

At bottom, a math degree from Williams has come to mean more than the mastery of purely mathematical skills. “Majoring in math makes you very quantitative, comfortable with numbers, very logical, so you can follow an argument very cleanly,” says Adams. “And you learn to be a creative problem solver. Those attributes will give you an advantage in almost anything you pursue.”

Consider math and psychology major Jonathan Lovett ’04, who now works on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C., as a presidential speechwriter. “Speechwriting is about telling a story and making a case as simply and elegantly as possible,” he writes from the White House, where he helps make President Obama’s case to the public. “And that is the skill you develop when studying math. Gaining insight into difficult concepts by challenging assumptions, thinking critically, pushing yourself to be thorough and precise—that’s what math was about for me.” ■

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Writer and historian Hugh Howard is completing a new book, *Mr. and Mrs. Madison’s War* (Bloomsbury Press, 2011).

# Teach. *Write.* Learn.

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BY ALISON BENJAMIN

PHOTOS BY MARK McCARTY

Williams students help Mount Greylock high schoolers become better writers while getting invaluable experience in the classroom.



**N**aomi LaChance was feeling overwhelmed. For weeks the 10th grader had been gathering information for a term paper she was writing about the Nigerian film industry. Now she was having trouble translating the facts into something cohesive.

Help came via e-mail—pages and pages of e-mails, in fact—from David Blitzer '10, a Williams senior last year who was working with LaChance's English class at Mount Greylock Regional High School in Williamstown. Under the direction of LaChance's teacher, Blitzer spent several hours per week in the classroom and countless hours on his own helping the high school students hone their writing skills.

"I would e-mail David drafts of my work, and he would get back to me with pages of critiques and questions," LaChance says. "He was awesome. He helped me to select my words and my ideas carefully. I am a stronger writer today, and I know that's because of him."

Meanwhile, as one of 10 Williams writing fellows working in the high school last year, Blitzer gained the confidence and experience he needed for his next step after graduation—serving as a full-time tutor with the highly successful MATCH Charter Public School in Boston. "At Mount Greylock," he says, "I had moments where I really began to see myself as an effective teacher. That confidence has been a great thing to draw upon at MATCH."

The successful collaboration between LaChance and Blitzer is one of dozens that have developed out of the Williams College Writing Fellows Program, an initiative of the Williams Center at Mount Greylock. Now in its third year, the center was created to “maximize the academic value the College can provide Mount Greylock” in a host of formal and informal ways—providing Williams tutors for homework help, professors to assist with curriculum and professional development, and access to campus science labs and libraries, to name just a few.

The writing fellows program is perhaps the most ambitious of these projects. Three years ago, the high school instituted a writing-intensive English class for all ninth-grade students, tripling the number of papers they would be assigned. The Williams Center put out a call for College students—eight were needed that first year—to pitch in during and outside of class, offering grammar and vocabulary help and generally providing encouragement to the high schoolers.

“We visited faculty at Harvard, at Brown,” says Liz Colpoys Costley ’81, a former English teacher and co-founder of the writing fellows program. “We visited other high schools in New England that had writing programs. We kept expecting that someone, somewhere, had done this already. But we couldn’t find any examples of what we wanted to do: place undergraduates from a variety of majors into high school classrooms on a long-term basis to assist them with writing skills. In the end, we had to create this program from scratch.”

The task was daunting—finding the right students; matching their skill sets, personalities and schedules to the right classes; figuring out how to transport them to a high school four miles away. Meanwhile, the English teachers had to be brought on board and assured that the extra effort of having a fellow in the classroom was worth it.

“It’s hard to let someone into your classroom at first,” says Kellie Houle, a ninth-grade English teacher who’s been at Mount Greylock for four years. “Even when you support the program

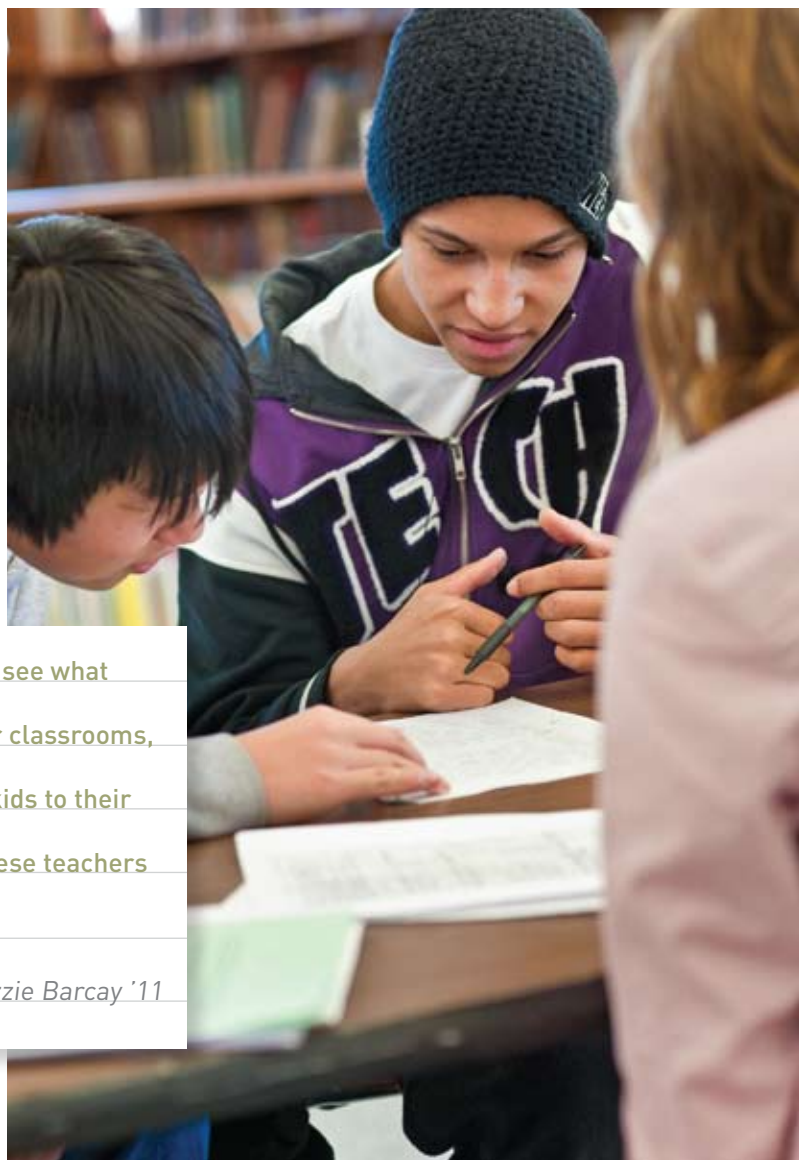
intellectually, you can’t help but feel a little unsure of the whole thing.”

But as the first year of the writing fellows program unfolded, Houle says she and others realized their concerns “were completely unfounded.” “The fellows I’ve worked with have been incredible,” she says. “They are always willing to jump into whatever we are doing that day, and they have an amazing rapport with the kids.”

The program has since grown to include all eighth-, ninth- and 10th-grade classes, requiring a total of 17 writing fellows selected from a pool of around 30 candidates. The Williams students who participate, mostly English majors (though many double major in other subjects, including astrophysics, biology, economics and psychology), already have their writing chops. The challenge for them is figuring out how best to meet the needs of the 15 to 17 students in their classes.

Zina Ward ’12, an economics and philosophy major who participated in the program last year, says that for many of the high school students she encountered, “written expression does not come naturally.”

“Learning how to organize their thoughts and structure a paper is as difficult as memorizing spelling and punctuation



“As an aspiring teacher, it’s been amazing to see what Mrs. Houle and the other teachers do in their classrooms, how effective they are. Before you can push kids to their next level, you have to earn their respect. These teachers really do that, and I really admire them.”

—writing fellow Lizzie Barcay ’11



Williams writing fellow Eliza Foster '12 (pictured at far right on this page and on facing page) helps 10th-graders at Mount Greylock revise essays about *Of Mice and Men*.

conventions,” she adds. “This presented a challenge to me, as a teacher, to find ways to make explicit the rules I have unconsciously followed since middle school.”

Although there’s no single formula for success, flexibility is key. One week, a fellow might spend time in the classroom working one-on-one with a struggling student. The next, he or she might perform Shakespeare for the class, bringing to life roles like Iago or Desdemona. Then he or she might draft on the spot a persuasive essay as a model for students or weave together a random assortment of vocabulary words into a single, impromptu tale. The fellows also provide critiques of papers via telephone and e-mail after class hours.

As they gain more experience, the Williams students learn what works—and what doesn’t. “When I first began the program, I would comment quickly on a draft—noting egregious errors ... (despite the fact that I thought I was being very sensitive and diplomatic)—subconsciously mimicking professors’ critiques of my own work,” says Katie White ’11, a comparative literature major who graduated from Mount Greylock herself. “Having to sit down and explain my comments to a wide-eyed 10th grader, however, forced me to edit drafts in a productive way ... focusing on *trends* of errors they made ... and simply ‘noting’ them, along with a suggestion or two for improvement, instead of marking each mistake they made.”

For their part, the high school students appreciate the help—and many are inspired to work harder on their writing. “It’s nice to have someone who’s a little more of a peer,” says LaChance, now a high school junior, of the fellows. “They’re also writing papers, so they know exactly what you’re going through.”

“A college student can motivate teenagers in a unique way,”

adds Mary Freeman ’11, a second-year writing fellow who is majoring in history. “We can identify with them because we’re still students. We’re also often tired. We’re pushing ourselves. And we’re learning and growing, too.”

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**S**o why would a Williams student—already dizzyingly busy with classes, extracurricular activities, sports and a social life—take on the additional work of serving as a writing fellow for an entire school year?

For many, the work lines up nicely with their career plans. Although the College doesn’t offer a major or concentration in teaching, it’s one of the most common career paths for Williams students, particularly in the first several years after graduation. Nearly 20 percent of the Class of 2010 planned to enter the field of education, according to the annual senior survey.

In addition to getting recommendations from the teachers they work with and from Williams Center staff, fellows get invaluable time in the classroom that complements their coursework and other opportunities available through the College’s Program in Teaching.

“Thinking deeply about teaching and actually teaching go hand in hand,” says Williams psychology professor Susan Engel, director of the Program in Teaching and author of numerous articles and op-ed pieces about the state of education. “The writing fellows program is a wonderful example of how well this can work.

“If you want to learn how to teach, or understand the educational system, nothing can compare to the experience of teaching high school students,” Engel adds. “When our Williams students



Williams writing fellow Lorraine Schmitt '13 helps ninth-graders compare and contrast two autobiographical essays (this page, center) and reads a piece of her own writing (opposite).

work in the high school, they have a chance to make mistakes, overcome obstacles, devise new ways to convey an idea or elicit deeper thinking from a student, and figure out how to get students to engage with the material through the give and take of the teacher-student relationship.”

For Lizzie Barcay '11, who's now in her third year as a writing fellow, working in a ninth-grade English class has helped her cement her career plans. “I always thought I might want to teach at the high school level,” says the English and psychology major, who expects to attend graduate school in psychology after teaching for a few years. “The writing fellows program totally confirmed that desire. I love it. I just want to be in the classroom as much as possible.”

Barcay is currently involved in an independent study project with Engel, comparing the progress of Mount Greylock students who work with writing fellows to that of a control group from another high school.

“I do expect that the data will show that the program improves their skills,” Barcay says. “However ... a one-year study probably can't measure the non-academic value of those personal relationships, for example.”

Those relationships are just as important to the students and teachers involved as the writing lessons imparted, participants say.

“I formed a real bond and friendship with the students,” says Joe Mastracchio '10, who spent his junior and senior years as a writing fellow. “Every single interaction I had with a student was different. Writing was a chance for them to express their individuality, to give voice to something they cared about, to allow their

“He helped me with research techniques and with selecting my arguments and my words carefully. But more important, he pushed me to ask questions. .... I learned how to change a summary into real analysis.”

—11th grader Katie Swoap on working

with writing fellow David Blitzer '10

style and their personalities to shine through.”

Drew Gibson, a ninth-grade English teacher for whom Mastracchio worked, says his students made more of an effort “out of admiration for Joe.”

“There was a generalized uplift in the classroom from having an ‘older brother/sister’ come to visit each week,” Gibson says. “This morale booster was a real thing that emanated from my students. I clearly felt it, and it was very sweet.”

Also difficult to quantify is the boost teachers get from having a writing fellow in the classroom. “Any time I look at my teaching through someone else's eyes, I become better at what I do,” Houle says. “Simply being open to someone else's perspective helps me grow.”

At a time when class sizes are increasing, school funding is shrinking and demand for improving critical skills such as writing remains high, the writing fellows program offers an elegant solution to what many experts agree should be a labor-intensive endeavor. Lucy Calkins '73, founding director of The Reading and Writing Project at Columbia Teachers College and a champion of the workshop approach to teaching writing, maintains

that children need to learn the process of drafting ideas, sharing, revising, editing and publishing, regularly consulting with each other and their teachers.

“A talented, creative Williams student can be an excellent writing coach,” says Calkins. “A fellow can be both mentor and peer, helping the high school students to envision themselves as writers. At the same time, he or she can be exposed to and part of a successful model for teaching writing.”

That definitely was the case for Blitzer, who now works one-on-one with underserved inner-city students at MATCH Charter Public School, where 99 percent of graduates have been accepted at four-year colleges. “The Writing Fellows program was really important to me,” he says. “I came to Williams hoping to grow as a thinker, to grow as a person and to gain a stronger sense of purpose. I think I accomplished those things, and being a writing fellow was a big part of why.” ■

*Alison Benjamin is a freelance writer living in Williamstown. She is co-author of The Cleaner Plate Club: Raising Healthy Eaters One Meal at a Time (Storey Publishing, January 2011). For more on the Williams Center at Mount Greylock, visit <http://bit.ly/WilliamsCenter>.*

## ON WRITING WELL

Some of this year’s writing fellows share what they’ve learned—and what they hope to impart to Mount Greylock students—from their Williams professors.

“The fact that my professors—many of whom are among the people I respect most in the world—are reading my writing forces me to take pride in every sentence. If people of their brilliance are actually going to take the time to read what I have to say, the least I can do is say it well. To let myself down is to let them down, and, no matter how late it gets in the library, I really cannot stand to do that.”

—Emily Hertz ’14, undeclared major,  
who’s working with eighth graders

“Professor Shawn Rosenheim’s ‘American Renaissance Literature’ class demonstrates the power of the written word to transform the way one views the world. This profound medium can help one to change one’s self, one’s society and the world for the better.”

—Matt Sullivan ’11, English and psychology major,  
who’s working with eighth graders



“Cassandra Cleghorn’s ‘Creative Nonfiction Personal Essay’ class was a phenomenal opportunity to learn how to write about my experiences in a creative and interesting way.”

—Lizzie Barcay ’11, English and psychology major,  
who’s working with ninth graders for the third year

“My history professors at Williams have challenged my writing abilities and thinking skills more than I could have imagined. Writing in history, whether it is a research paper or a short essay, requires a fine balance of flowing prose and concise arguments. Learning to write this way was difficult for me at first, but in doing so I have learned that sometimes I don’t really know what my argument is until I start writing.”

—Eliza Foster ’12, history major,  
who’s working with 10th graders

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# Stories We Tell About Who We Are



PHOTOS BY ROMAN IWASIWKA

In addition to honoring the accomplishments of the Class of 2011 and alumni Bicentennial Medalists, this year's Convocation featured the induction of Adam F. Falk as Williams' 17th president. "We learn a lot about ourselves and our communities through the stories we tell about who we are," Falk said during his remarks. "These stories are important not because they represent the only true history, but because in returning to them we are choosing what we wish to reaffirm in our identity."

The following pages offer only a glimpse of the three-day celebration. The rest can be found online at <http://alumni.williams.edu/2010bicentennialmedalists> and <http://president.williams.edu/>.

**W**e love the Williams that we know and have known, but we will love even more the Williams that we create. Let us join together, now and in the years to come, to bring that Williams forth.

—Adam F. Falk, 17th president of Williams College,  
in his induction remarks





This page, counterclockwise from above: Bicentennial Medalists Daniel Kleppner '53 and William E. Spriggs '77, and history professor Eiko Maruko Siniawer '97

Liberal arts ultimately should teach you to appreciate that there are many different ways of arriving at truth. ... One would have to celebrate diversity because you also begin to understand that different folks from different backgrounds will bring different things to the College ... that also represent excellence in the search for truth. ... I look at those who have won Bicentennial Medals ahead of me, and they're my cohorts. And I'm very happy to see the people who are celebrated. ... It's people who are making a real contribution. It's a lesson that's being sent to the students about what Williams wants them to see as the value of a Williams education. ... It's important to have these pieces of affirmation for students so they see that the diversity actually is celebrated ... and that it's important to the College that people of many different fields make many different contributions.

—Bicentennial Medalist William E. Spriggs '77, assistant secretary for policy at the U.S. Department of Labor, on leave as chair of Howard University's economics department

In President Falk the faculty have and recognize someone who not just understands what animates our work, but who embodies and supports that which we value.

—Eiko Maruko Siniawer '97, associate professor of history



I had a tutor who was a young physicist ... working in a new area of physics called atomic beams. He told me about the possibility that you might be able to use this technique to make an atomic clock which was so accurate that you could see the effect of gravity on time. ... I'm not talking about the fact that a grandfather clock will run slower if you take it up a mountain because gravity is less. I'm talking about the fact that time itself is different in different gravitational fields. I joined the experimental group of Norman Ramsey. And he had an idea for a new type of atomic clock ... the hydrogen maser. ... Eventually we made the maser ... and it is the basis of a much better type of atomic clock. ... One of the things we had not anticipated when we started out on this line of research was that anything useful would come out of it. Our interest was in Einstein's gravitational theory, his general theory of relativity. And a theory that is more remote from everyday activities and the uses of mankind would be difficult to name. Nonetheless, out of that something very practical did come, which is the global positioning system. ... So here is this huge payoff from something which was totally useless.

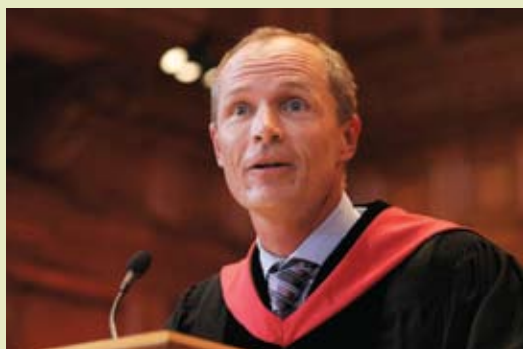
—Bicentennial Medalist Daniel Kleppner '53, MIT's Lester Wolfe Professor of Physics, emeritus, and co-director of the MIT-Harvard Center for Ultracold Atoms

Your passion for teaching and learning; your exceptional ability to listen, collaborate, and synthesize; your commitment to inclusion; your courage to take a calculated risk; and your long record of accomplishment all promise a good match for Williams—a powerful alignment of person, place and purpose.

—Gregory M. Avis '80, chairman of the Board of Trustees, prior to conferring the College charter on President Falk

My first day was so eye-opening for me doing this work. I saw ... drugs and alcohol abuse. Teen pregnancy. Undereducation. School truancy. Domestic violence. Random violence. ... At the same time I saw firsthand what makes a Boys and Girls Club so unique and so powerful. ... It's the sense of hope, opportunity and the sense of community it provides for every single kid who comes in the door—black, white, Latino, Latina, Asian, physically or mentally challenged ... every kid is treated the same. And the reason the clubs work so well and provide this open opportunity is through ... human relationships that really have sustained all of us since the day we set foot on the earth and ... have made the Boys and Girls Clubs such a viable part of this country for 150 years.

—Bicentennial Medalist Joshua M. Kraft '89, president and CEO of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston



Clockwise from top left: Board of Trustees Chair Gregory M. Avis '80, Bicentennial Medalist Joshua M. Kraft '89 and Society of Alumni President Christopher F. Giglio '89

Consider a word like nature. To what does it refer? Trees and sky? Lions? Wolves? Bats? What about dragons and unicorns? "Well, they aren't part of nature," you say. "They only exist in the imagination." Is the human imagination a part of nature? What about cities and computers? "No, they're man-made." Well what about a vegetable garden? Is that man-made? Does nature itself have any environment? ... In other words, is there anything not contained in nature? If there is nothing that isn't nature, then how can we identify what it is as different from something else? ... These are not easy questions to resolve ... but they do illustrate that we could talk about nature for some time before we realize that we each might be talking about something quite different. ... I don't know what you know, and I don't know what you don't know. ... It seems like such an obvious fact that we can't be aware of what we're not aware of.

—Bicentennial Medalist William H. Eddy Jr. '49, wildlife conservationist, reading from his book *The Other Side of the World: Essays and Stories on Mind and Nature*





Counterclockwise from above: Bicenennial Medalists William H. Eddy Jr. '49 and Camille L. Utterback '92, and College Council co-presidents Emanuel S. Yekutieli '11 and Ifiok C. Inyang '11



Williams has a rich history of students getting involved. Look around you. There are women in this room. Students. We don't live in fraternities anymore. Students. Some of you were junior advisors, studied abroad, served on student-faculty committees. Students. Students have shaped this campus into what it is today. And Williams has let them.

—Emanuel S. Yekutieli '11, College Council co-president

We are captivated by your energy [President Falk], as well as by your interest in embracing Williams traditions while searching for new and innovative ways to provide students with the finest liberal arts education in the world.

—Christopher F. Giglio '89, president of the Society of Alumni

President Falk, we are excited that you will be leading this fine institution for years to come, and we hope that you see students as your greatest allies. So if you are good to us, we will be good to you—nine times out of 10. At the end of the day, we eat here, we sleep here, we grow here, we mature here, and even though we only spend four years here, our experience after we leave will forever become part of our lifelong narrative.

—Ifiok C. Inyang '11, College Council co-president

If there's a theme to my work or a metaphor it's ... helping people consider how a small gesture that they do in the world ripples out and continues to have influence. ... The way that you encounter [my art] is you have to start doing things to see what happens and then testing your actions. ... Asking, "What happens if I try this, what happens if I try that?" is a really important position to put people in and something we don't ask enough as adults in our culture, to think about how we're part of this larger system. ... Another over-arching theme ... is helping people think about our physical selves and how critical that self is to how we move and interact with each other. ... When I came to Williams I ... thought I would probably be a biology major. I did a lot of classes in the environmental science concentration because I was really interested in systems and how geology and chemistry and biology and meteorology and people's use of spaces all worked together to create our environment around us and how we imagine ourselves interacting with that nature, however we define it. But the art classes I was taking were actually what really challenged me the most.

—Bicenennial Medalist Camille L. Utterback '92, MacArthur Fellow and pioneering artist and programmer in the field of interactive installation

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Out-of-the-box thinking was instilled in me as a kid growing up in Miami, Fla. I was in a “gifted” elementary school class that allowed the students to play with Legos, write stories and engage in brainstorming exercises. I never quite learned all the state capitals, but I learned to generate 20 different uses for a sheet of lined paper. This passion for looking for unexpected connections continued in college, where I managed to study “the image of the black” in just about every art history class I took, including writing papers on the representation of blacks in ancient Greek art and Venetian painting of the 16th century. My dissertation on visual images and propaganda generated by the American Colonization Society, a white-run organization dedicated to encouraging African-Americans to move “back to Africa” in the 19th century, shuffled together two distinct decks of cards—the literature on early Liberian history and that on 19th century American art. Sometimes I worried that the work was not all that “innovative.” Yet I was willing to see connections that others had ignored or were unable to see.

treasures.” For example, I’m including the Robison Family Silhouette by an anonymous 19th century artist in the reinstallation of the American art galleries. More than a quaint relic of early American visual culture, this little silhouette is an artifact of the democratization of portraiture. I also like it for its connections to contemporary art; it’s precisely the source material that informed Kara Walker’s large-scale wall murals. One of the first major publications on Kara Walker was published by the museum.

We’re also gaining a deeper understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of our collection. In the American art reinstallation, we’re exploring the influence of Mexican muralists on American artists in the 1930s and ‘40s (the brainchild of graduate art history student Allison Pappas, Class of 2011). Surprisingly, we have a number of works by social realist artists from Mexico, including Diego Rivera, Ignacio Aguirre and Miguel Covarrubias. Acquisitions of key African-American artists can enrich the story of cross-cultural, cross-border exchange. Well-known artist Elizabeth Catlett moved to Mexico in

## MAKING CREATIVE CONNECTIONS

Mellon Curatorial Fellow Dalila Scruggs explores both her own identity and that of the College museum.

Forging creative links between disparate objects and ideas is crucial to the project of reinstalling the permanent collection in Williams’ museum. I am working with curatorial and education staff on two reinstallations. The first, “Object of Art,” exposes the museum as an institution that transforms “stuff” (found objects, archeological ruins, painted pictures) into art with a capital “A.” The second reinstallation re-envision the museum’s presentation of American art, exploring the social and stylistic influences that create and transcend the physical geopolitical borders and socially constructed boundaries that shape the U.S.

In both cases, integrating African and African-American art into the exhibition narrative is one of my most important directives. Too often African and African-American visual production are seen as isolated endeavors, hermetically sealed from the rest of art history. Museums tend to display art according to national school or chronology, but we’re seeking thematic continuities across time and cultures, so that an ancient Etruscan vase can be positioned next to a 20th century Bakota reliquary.

The project has given us an opportunity to rediscover the museum’s collection, including objects we’ve been calling “forgotten

the 1940s and never lived in the U.S. again. She worked under the tutelage of some of the Mexican artists represented in our collection, including Ignacio Aguirre. I want to help people see African-American art as part of American art and African-American artists as creative agents actively engaged in global artistic exchanges.

Having familiarized myself with the African art collection, I would love for the museum to acquire Islamic art from sub-Saharan Africa. One of my undergraduate professors from Cornell, Salah Hassan, used to call Islam the “first wave of colonialism” in Africa. This framing of Islam in Africa de-centers European colonialism as the key influx of outside influence and power. Instead, through Islamic art in Africa we have to recognize the cross-cultural contact between various ethnicities within Africa as well as long-standing trade routes and political alliances that link Africa with other parts of the globe.

Ultimately, I would like to think that my role as Mellon Curatorial Fellow is not just about my identity as an African-American woman, nor simply about my academic focus on African-American art. Rather, I hope the “diversity” I bring to the museum is the creative synergy of bridging disciplinary divides to interpret art as a site of cross-cultural contact, stylistic influence and intellectual exchange. ■

DALILA SCRUGGS IS HALFWAY THROUGH A THREE-YEAR TERM AS THE MUSEUM'S MELLON CURATORIAL FELLOW FOR DIVERSITY IN THE ARTS. SHE'LL BE TEACHING "FROM SLAVE QUILTS TO POST-BLACK CANVASES" IN THE SPRING.



# FERTILE GROUND

by Ellie Winninghoff '75

>> [Click here for text only](#)

If I had studied Ag in college, they would have convinced me that what I do every day is impossible," says vegetable farmer, educator, researcher and author Eliot Coleman '61. Best known for growing vegetables year-round in unheated greenhouses in northern Maine, Coleman has been called America's most innovative small farmer. Not only is he reinventing the harvest, he's helping to turn the economics of small farming upside down.

The story began when Coleman read Helen and Scott Nearing's *Living the Good Life*, the best-selling classic of the '60s credited with spawning the era's homesteading movement. "I thought they were crazy," he recalls. "They didn't eat peas in the winter because peas didn't grow in the winter. I thought: What's wrong with the freezer?"

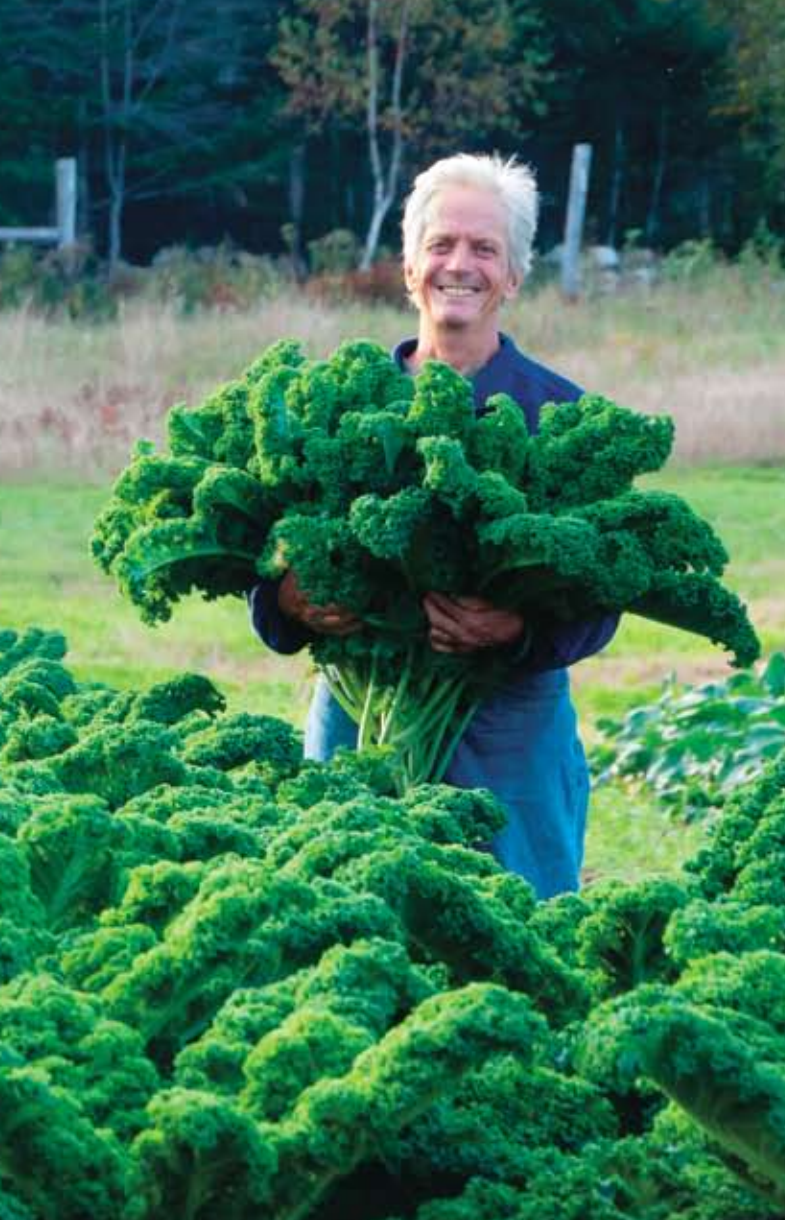
But Coleman, a second-generation Eph who majored in Spanish literature because he spent his summers managing a ski lodge in Chile, was attracted by the Nearings' independence and ability to survive against all odds. When he read that a teaspoon of soil contained a million organisms, he was so intrigued that he

dropped his usual summer plan of mountaineering to try organic farming. When the old-timers using chemical fertilizers began asking how he was able to grow certain vegetables, he realized that organic growing was probably easier.

"It turned out that organic farming was so simple," he says. "I'm not buying anything. The world's best fertilizer is compost, which you can make for free, from waste products, in your own backyard."

A year later, Coleman quit his college teaching job and headed to Harborside, Maine, where the Nearings sold him and his wife, Barbara Damrosch, 40 wooded acres for \$33 per acre, the same price they had paid for it 20 years before. He chopped down trees, removed stumps and built a one-room house for \$700. In 1970, a *Wall Street Journal* article featured the couple growing 80 percent of their own food and living on \$2,000 per year.

Coleman loved talking to his new neighbor and mentor. "It was like college all over again," he says. "Here was a man who had debated Norman Thomas, survived a trial by the U.S.



LYNN KARLIN

government in 1917 for writing an anti-war pamphlet and run for the Senate in New York City on the Communist party ticket. Man, this was pretty good if you liked ideas, and I loved ideas!"

In 1974, Nearing offered to pay Coleman's way to the second European organic farming conference. It was a turning point. Although there were no models for small farming in the U.S., the small farming tradition never died in Europe. There, among other things, Coleman visited the farm of Louis Savier.

"It wasn't until I stood in Savier's garden that I realized how well it could be done," he writes in *The Winter Harvest Handbook* (2009), his third landmark book about organic growing and the four-season harvest. "Quality was everywhere: the organized layout, the tidy, closely spaced rows, the ranks of cold frames and hotbeds, the dark chocolate-colored soil and, most especially, the crops glowing with health."

On another trip abroad Coleman saw his first mobile greenhouse, a concept he now calls the "best new (or actually rediscovered) gardening idea of the 21st century."

Rather than growing summer vegetables like tomatoes in the winter in a heated greenhouse, the notion is to grow winter vegetables such as spinach and carrots in the same ground he uses in the summer. The issue is light, not temperature. Since there is less light in winter, the vegetables simply take longer to grow. It's less about *growing* food than *harvesting* food year-round. The goal is to eat fresh produce throughout the year.

"It's a different arrangement of time and a different appreciation of quality food," he says. "We've managed to turn winter from deprivation to celebration."

Although Coleman is a market grower, his Four Season Farm in Harborside is also experimental. Early on, he explored questions such as why beets grow better in soil tilled with seaweed while cabbage thrives in soil tilled with autumn leaves. (He sent soil samples to a lab at the University of Maine to find out what the differences are.) He has also dreamt up new tools—better hoes, small electric tillers, tools for working the soil at various depths, different ways to put crops in the ground, alternative transplant systems. He has given the ideas away, just to get them out there. "I am using techniques now that I didn't even dream of 20 years ago," he says. "I am succeeding at things I failed at 10 years ago."

In these ways, Coleman is helping make the small organic farm a viable enterprise—the first step, he says, to changing the world. "It is very difficult to control people who can create products without purchasing inputs from the system," he says. "Fertile soil has the power to make the small farm far more independent of purchased inputs and even more independent of the corporate world." ■

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Looking for books, CDs and DVDs by Williams alumni and faculty? Visit <http://ephbookshelf.williams.edu/>. To have your recent work listed, please send information and cover images to [alumni.review@williams.edu](mailto:alumni.review@williams.edu) or mail a copy to the *Alumni Review*, P.O. Box 676, Williamstown, MA 01267-0676.

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## In Praise of Memory

by Robert H. Bell

My beloved colleague Clara Claiborne Park lived in Williamstown since 1951 with her husband David. They raised four children, and Clara began teaching at the fledgling Berkshire Community College. In 1967 she published *The Siege: A Family's Journey into the World of an Autistic Child*. One of the most poignant, compelling memoirs in English, *The Siege* changed the discourse about autism. In 1999 a sequel was named best feature essay by the American Society of Magazine Editors and became another book, *Exiting Nirvana*.

In 1976 Clara received an honorary degree from Williams. Privately thanking President Chandler, she noted that if she was so all-fired wonderful, what she really needed was a job at Williams. She eventually became the College's first senior lecturer. I'd see her heading for class rapt in thought or ardently reciting passages. She had reams of poetry by heart. Delivering a faculty lecture "In Praise of Memory," she chanted lines learned as a child. Her lecture became a revival meeting as voices responded, chanting as one. She had rare powers.

She was also a real stickler for getting it right, from the names of the Greek Muses to correct grammar. When her teenage daughter described something as "very unique," Clara was aghast: "Katie, how could you grow up in this household and say such a thing!" It wasn't a rhetorical question. Clara's elegant language inspired students and readers; Freeman Dyson and Yuri Manin quote her.

The Park home was a center of community and conversation. Sunday suppers might include a Nobel laureate or Bertrand Russell's daughter or Howard Nemerov as well as former students and new colleagues. There was more good talk and magnanimous hospitality with the Parks on Block Island. As David says, "There was never the question of what we would talk about next." Some "very unique" word might evoke Milton's Eden, Homer's Troy or Joyce's Dublin. "With thee conversing I forget all time."

A sublime spirit, Clara was actively solicitous and compassionate. Marcia Johnston Wood '79 recalls that when her brother died suddenly, Clara wrote "with an understanding of all the force of the emotional devastation." Clara titled one book *You Are Not Alone*. She wrote countless op-ed pieces and letters to the editor. Her book of literary criticism, *Rejoining the Common Reader*, reflects on teaching

at BCC, where a perplexed student asked:

"Mrs. Park, we've read what Homer says about the afterlife, and what Plato says, and now we're reading what Dante says, and they're all different. Mrs. Park, which of them is true?"

Characteristically, Clara used this "simple" question to interrogate herself. How, she asked, would we teach literature if we were in fact convinced that what we were doing could make a person different? No wonder Mrs. Park touched and moved so many. She maintained that literature provides tools for living. She was surely the last English professor, save one, to describe Shakespearean characters as noble or wicked. Before Google, Clara called me with an inquiry: Did Derrida have children? How *could* he have, she wondered; she disbelieved in the exhilaration of nihilism. She cherished the Greek *arête*, the "possession of the beautiful" that resonates in Dante's tribute to his mentor: "You taught me how man makes himself eternal . . . and while I live, the gratitude I owe will speak."

Clara's great theme is love—what we love, why and how. *The Siege* ends with these words: "But we cannot sift experience and take only the part that does not hurt us. Let me say simply and straight out that simple knowledge the whole world knows. I breathe like everyone else my century's thin, faithless air, and I do not want to be sentimental. But the blackest sentimentality of all is that . . . which will not recognize the good it has been given to understand because it is too simple. So, then: this experience we did not choose, which we would have given anything to avoid, has made us different, has made us better. Through it we have learned the lesson that no one studies willingly, the hard, slow lesson of Sophocles and Shakespeare—that one grows by suffering. . . . If today I were given the choice, to accept the experience, with everything it entails, or to refuse the bitter largesse, I would have to stretch out my hands—because out of it has come, for all of us, an unimagined life. And I will not change the last word of the story. It is still love." ■



Park (at Keats' grave in Rome) died July 3, 2010.

Robert H. Bell is the Frederick Latimer Wells Professor of English.

# Lifelong Learning for the Williams Family

## TRAVEL-STUDY FOR 2011-12

**MYSTERIES OF THE MEKONG (March 16-29)** Experience Cambodia and Vietnam as you travel from Angkor Wat to Saigon, including six days aboard the new river ship *La Marguerite*, with Sam Crane, the Fred Greene Third Century Professor of Political Science. (WAIT LIST)

**GUATEMALA'S CULTURAL LAYERS (March 21-31)** Tour a living museum linking ancient Mayan civilization with colorful, contemporary Indian society under the guidance of anthropology professor Antonia Foias, who is familiar with key archeological sites such as Tikal.

**THE NEPALI NEW YEAR (April 10-21)** Witness the Buddhist celebrations and cultures unfolding before awesome Himalayan vistas with Kathmandu resident John Child '77. Add a safari in Chitwan National Park.

**DALMATIAN COAST FROM VENICE (June 20-28)** Sail across the Adriatic, calling on historic ports including Dubrovnik, Split, Korcula, Hvar and Pula, with John Hyde '52, the Brown Professor of History, emeritus.

**THE RHINE PLUS SWISS RAILROADS (June 21-July 1)** Cruise the Rhine from Amsterdam to Basel, where trains move you through the Alps. Former Williams philosophy professor Dan O'Connor offers insight into Cologne, Koblenz, Heidelberg and Strasbourg.

**A SWISS FAMILY ADVENTURE (June 27-July 5)** Travel with children and grandchildren from an Interlaken hotel base to Bern, Thun, Grindelwald, Lucerne and mountain villages via cog railroad, lake steamers, cable car and coach with geosciences chair Paul Karabinos.

**THE COLORADO ROCKIES (July 9-15)** Join Bud Wobus, the Edna McConnell Clark Professor of Geology, on this open-air adventure commemorating the 30th anniversary of Williams' first-ever alumni travel-study trip.

**LANDS OF GODS AND HEROES (July 26-Aug. 6)** Stimulate the imaginations of children and grandchildren with the mythology and art of ancient Greece and Rome on a cruise with art professor Liz McGowan.

**AN ALASKAN SAFARI (July 29-Aug. 5)** Observe whales, bears and other wildlife at close quarters on a safari by sea aboard a nimble, 36-passenger vessel that cruises the calm inlets and fjords of the Inside Passage and visits glaciers. Led by Hank Art, the Rosenburg Professor of Environmental Studies and Biology.

**CHICAGO'S ART AND ARCHITECTURE (Aug. 16-21)** Get an insider's view of this colorful metropolis, noting the ground-breaking architecture of Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright plus the fine collection at the Art Institute, led by Sam Edgerton, the Amos Lawrence Professor of Art, emeritus.

**FALL FOLIAGE JAZZ CRUISE (Sept. 17-24)** Bid farewell to the Williams Reunion Jazz Band's cruising days on a *Jewel of the Seas* trip starting in Boston and stopping in Portland, Bar Harbor, St. John and Halifax, then returning to Boston.

**TUSCANY FROM CORTONA AND FLORENCE (Oct. 11-20)** Sample the communities of Assisi in Perugia and Pienza in Siena from bases in Cortona and Florence, with Italian history expert Werner Gundersheimer, recipient of a Williams honorary degree in 1989 and a former visiting professor at Williams.

**THE INSIDER'S JAPAN (Oct. 12-24)** Engage in the local life of Tokyo and Kyoto and head off the beaten path to Takayama and Kanazawa, with visits to Nara and Mount Fuji, in the company of Peter Frost '58, former Williams history professor and director of Williams-in-Kyoto.

**TANZANIA'S GREAT MIGRATIONS (Jan. 18-30, 2012)** Visit Arusha National Park, the Serengeti, Olduvai Gorge and the Ngorongoro Crater for the great migrations. Led by Hank Art, the Rosenburg Professor of Environmental Studies and Biology. Optional climb of Mount Kilimanjaro.

**LIBYA WAS TRIPOLITANIA (March 20-April 1, 2012)** Unravel the fascinating history of what was once a major Roman colony, including visits to four World Heritage sites such as Leptis Magna, with history professor Magnus Bernhardtsson.

**HOLLAND'S FAMOUS FLORIADE (April 10-20, 2012)** Cruise the waterways of Holland and Belgium at the peak of the floral season, enhanced by the once-a-decade Floriade display. Zirka Filipczak, the J. Kirk T. Varnedoe '67 Professor of Art, discusses the fine museum art of the Low Countries.

Also under consideration for 2012 are trips to Patagonia, The Levant, Sicily, India, Russia, Ecuador, baseball cities and Irish golf courses. Consult the travel-study website at <http://alumni.williams.edu/alumnitravelstudy>. Or contact Travel-Study Coordinator Bob Behr '55 at 413.597.4011 or [rbehr@williams.edu](mailto:rbehr@williams.edu). Electronic and paper brochures are available.

### REPLENISHING THE CURIOUS MIND

A well-educated person seeks opportunities to learn throughout a lifetime. Williams facilitates lifelong learning for Ephs on campus, at home and around the world. Programs that engage the intellect, enrich the spirit and create ways to enhance good fellowship are open to all alumni, their children, spouses and partners, parents, grandparents, widows and friends of Williams.



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# Williams

To see more of the "I Am Williams" project, visit [www.williams.edu/home/iam](http://www.williams.edu/home/iam)

Documenting the many faces of Williams.

I'm the new guy.  
**FATHER** and **HUSBAND**.  
Professional scientist  
and **EDUCATOR**.

Amateur day hiker,  
crossword puzzler  
and chocolate chip cookie baker.

I came to **Williams** to be  
part of a **community**  
and a **mission** I wholly  
**BELIEVE** in.  
**I LOVE IT HERE.**

**ADAM FALK,**  
WILLIAMS PRESIDENT

Photo by Mark McCarty, 5.18.10



My mother and I are **Williams**.  
Her **TEARS** and hard-working  
**SWEAT** have paved the way.  
**MY LOVE** for her has fed the thirst.  
A sweet embrace.  
Your words of **INSPIRATION**.

We are **HERE** from  
beginning till end.  
**THANK YOU** for the  
man and woman  
we are **TODAY**.

**JUAN BAENA '06,**  
DIRECTOR OF  
TECHNOLOGY AND  
AFFINITY PROGRAMS  
AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
OF ALUMNI RELATIONS,  
& **MARIA RESTREPO,**  
DISHWASHER,  
DINING SERVICES

Photo by Mark McCarty, 5.18.10

