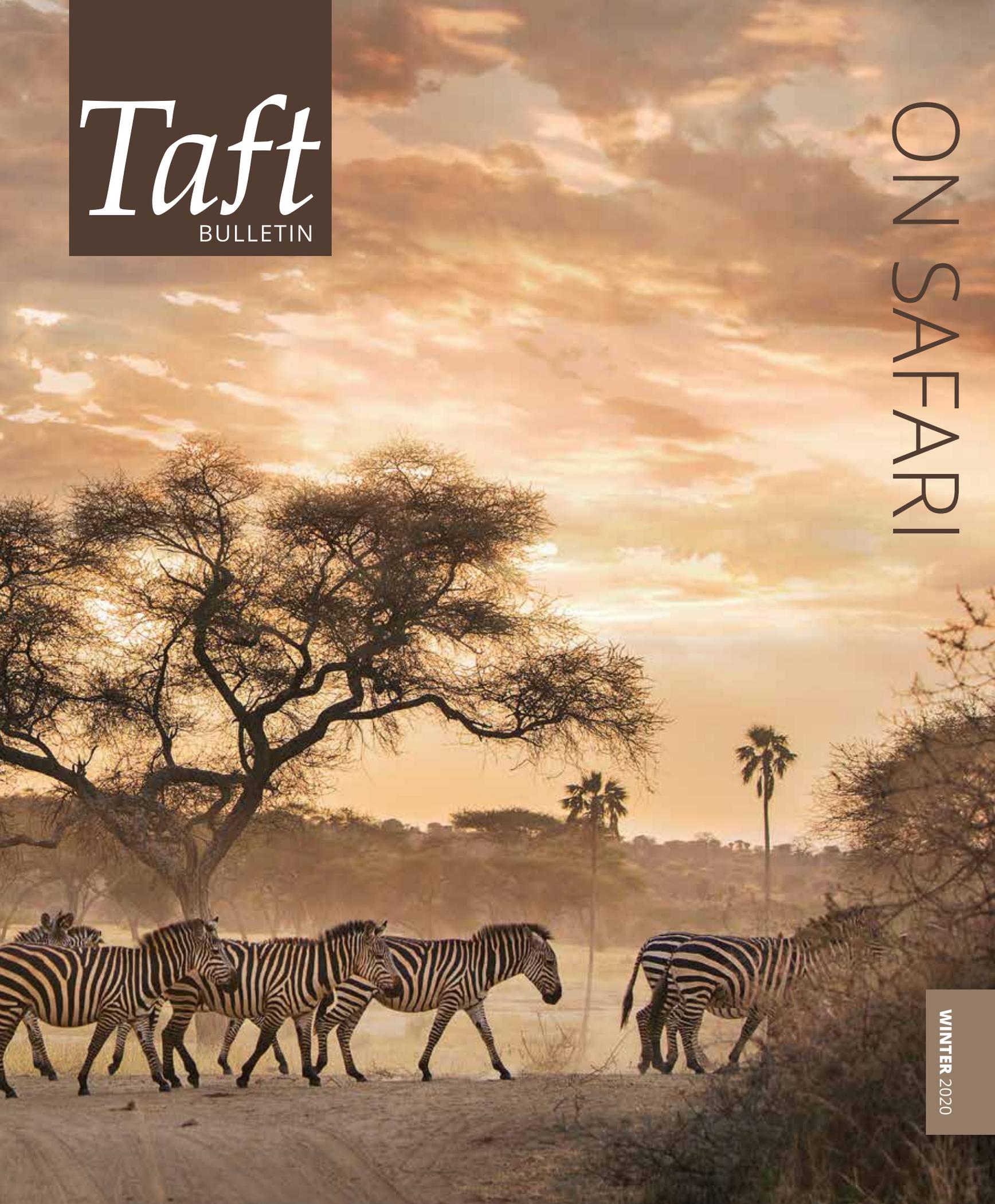


Taft
BULLETIN

ON SAFARI



WINTER 2020

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during a performance
of *Mamma Mia!*

EXIT

WINTER 2020
Volume 90, Number 1

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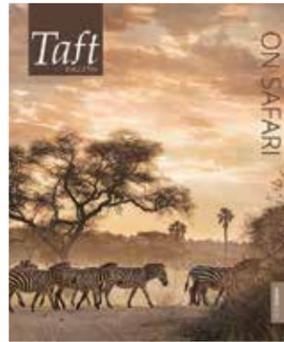
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COMMENTS? TELL US!
We'd love to hear what you think about the stories in this *Bulletin*. We may edit your letters for length, clarity, and content, but please write.

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ON THE COVER
Zebras at dusk in the wilderness of Tarangire National Park in Tanzania during a walking safari with Mark Thornton ('91) Safaris. Read more in the feature on page 54 of this issue. SWEN IMAGERY

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On MAIN HALL

A WORD FROM HEADMASTER WILLY MACMULLEN '78



THIS IS AN ABRIDGED VERSION OF A RECENT TALK GIVEN TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY BY THE HEADMASTER.

School Meeting: On Bingham, Speakers, and Community

At Commencement last May, I spoke of two classes: the Class of 1969 and the Class of 2019, and how they shared a lot in common, coming of age as they did in times of great political, social, cultural upheaval. History does not repeat itself, but it rhymes; and that had me reading *Papyrus*

articles from 1969, looking for echoes. And one thing I found, not unlike today, was that there were a lot of really interesting outside speakers that year. Speakers on this Bingham stage have always been central to a Taft education, but knowing the history and philosophy behind the program is important.

In 1969, there were no School Meetings. The tradition then was of Vespers, the gathering of the school at 6:10 four nights a week before sit-down dinner. That's a lot of Vespers talks in a given year, and those members of the Class of 1969 heard a remarkable range of voices at this incredibly complex moment in our history—a moment much like today. When I skimmed the *Papyrus* editions, it seemed that every week or two students heard from really interesting, inspiring, informative—and even controversial—voices. I'm sure some talks were better than others; but the simple, profound act of listening actively and respectfully was part of the Taft education. Sitting in the audience, you learned things, you were challenged to understand different points of view, you developed your own thinking, you were inspired into action.

“The goal is to hear from speakers with diverse views, backgrounds, and experiences who will *inform, challenge, and inspire....* They will inspire us by elevating our sense of power, responsibility, and possibility.”



“But we are also brought together, and strengthened as a school, when we are invited to the table of disagreement and tasked to listen and asked to speak.”

What's the philosophy of the program? It's a good question. I'll suggest five principles upon which the School Meeting speaker program rests.

First, speakers in Bingham, internal and external, are viewed not as an “extra” but instead as *central to educational experience*. In this room, as in the classroom and indeed everywhere, we strive to educate the whole student and to help you develop the skills and habits identified in the Portrait of the Graduate. So, these speakers are a part of a whole, and these talks can mark moments of powerful learning.

Second, the goal is to hear from speakers with diverse views, backgrounds, and experiences who will *inform, challenge, and inspire*. They will inform by educating and providing information, leading to the “Now I understand it a lot better” kind of experience. They will challenge by testing our assumptions, appropriately discomfiting us, confronting us with complex ideas, or asking us to take action. They will inspire us by elevating our sense of power, responsibility, and possibility.

Third, the speaker *has to have credibility, expertise, and authority*. It's not hard to find people with opinions on an issue—the internet is filled with them. But if we are going to bring someone to Taft and use our time and space, they need to have what jazz musicians call “chops,” meaning real competence and ability, as in “they've got the chops to be in the band.” This is especially true when they are taking on an issue that is really complicated and controversial. You better have the chops. Those speakers from 1969 were taking on the most urgent topics of the day, but each of them had *deep* experience, and that continues today, whether the speaker has summited Mount Everest, served as director of the Environmental Protection Agency, or offered economics lectures at Oxford University.

Fourth, we invite speakers *consistent with our core community values*. Of course, our core values include being nice and respectful and inclusive, but also others: rigorous scrutiny of assumptions, the importance of understanding the thinking of others, the necessity of debate marked by respect, the need to include diverse voices, the mandate for accurate information, and the shared benefit of interrogating ideas.

Finally, we hope speakers *enhance and strengthen the school community*. This can happen when we are moved together by a concert or a speech that brings us together in joy and connection. But we are also brought together, and strengthened as a school, when we are invited to the table of disagreement and tasked to listen and asked to speak. I see students challenging a speaker during Q&A as communal. I see an audience leaning into uncomfortable questions as communal. I see talking and even arguing in the Main Hall on the way to F block as communal. The bringing together of members to listen, debate, explain, question, probe, test, challenge, qualify, and learn is exactly what makes a school better.

That's the thinking that underscores the philosophy of our Bingham speakers, inside the community or visitors: the program is central to our educational mission; the speaker will inform, challenge and inspire, and have credibility, expertise, and authority; and their message will be consistent with our values and strengthen us as a school. Much as was the case in 1969, now we have to do our *very best* work in hearing, including, and respecting different perspectives. The moment calls for our bravest and best self as a school. This is where you learn to wrestle with the great questions and problems of today, and this is what marks a liberating education.

When you graduate from Taft, you will join a huge family, and somewhere at some point, you will meet a stranger and figure out you both went here. You will small talk and then connect over all the things you have in common. And at some point, one of you will mention sitting in Bingham, and the other will say, “We had amazing speakers when I was there. I don't remember all of them, but there are a few I have never forgotten.” You will realize what you share: the privilege of this school, which has this lovely room where each week we are called to listen, and where the voices we hear might inform and challenge and inspire and make us a stronger school.

William R. MacMullen '78

SOCIAL SCENE

Follow @thetaftschool on Facebook, @taftschool on Instagram and Twitter for daily glimpses of Taft life.



If it's Wednesday, we're serving! Tafties spend the first Wednesday of every month in service to the community, volunteering their time to support the Connecticut Food Bank. #whytaft #mytaft #taftlife #nonutsibi.



Sundown Watertown. #taftlife #mytaft #whytaft



The competitive season for our Chess Team is under way. Matches for the Danbury Area Scholastic Chess League run weekly December through February. Go Big Red! #taftlife #chesslife

Alumni SPOTLIGHT



Vega's coffee bags are signed by their farmers and include a postcard with a story behind the coffee. NATHAN NGO

Equitable Coffee



Rob Terenzi '01, of Vega Coffee, at a start-up accelerator conference in Granada, Nicaragua, as a mentor. NOUSHIN KETABI

IN 2005, DURING AN INTERNSHIP working with a nonprofit women's cooperative in Nicaragua, Rob Terenzi '01 was struck by how little individual coffee farmers were earning for growing the world's second-most traded commodity. "This was my first exposure to the coffee supply chain," Terenzi says. "They were earning around 70 cents per pound. I was blown away by that number. I saw how hard these farmers work." Seventy cents per pound of coffee that would then go up the supply chain to end up costing the final consumer up to \$20 per pound, a 90 percent profit margin that "bewildered" Terenzi. "It takes five to seven years to produce coffee," he says. "These women

farmers who own less than one acre of land have to make their entire life planning around their one paycheck a year." Global coffee consumption has doubled over the past two decades, with an estimated 2.25 billion cups of coffee consumed every day. Terenzi and his wife, Noushin Ketabi, and his Boston College friend, Will DeLuca, saw an opportunity to help coffee farmers and upend the supply chain. In 2015, they formed Vega Coffee, which has been dubbed the "Etsy" of coffee production for its dedication to individual coffee farmers. Much of the profit in coffee production goes to middlemen buyers and shippers, but roasting the beans is also profitable. Vega Coffee brings the roasting back to Nicaragua, putting more money in the hands of the farmers. Ninety percent of the coffee beans Vega buys are from women-owned farms, and all of Vega's roasters are women. The 15,000 farmers they source from grow beans organically. Growers harvest their beans and then take them to a centralized roasting facility near Esteli, Nicaragua, where they are able to roast, grind, and package their beans. The facility, which opened five years ago,

regularly hosts training days, where farmers come to learn about the process, taste coffees, and participate in roasting sessions. Vega's farmers make on average four times the traditional method, and are also paid every two weeks, instead of a few times per year. The company's international customers subscribe online at www.vegacoffee.com and choose how often to have their coffee delivered. It usually takes around two weeks from order to delivery, and subscribers can choose from a variety of roasts and grinds. Terenzi and his partners are also bringing Vega Coffee to colleges and universities, where the appeal to help small coffee growers lands on fertile soil. "When we bring our company to a college or university, we really emphasize the connection with the farmers," he says. "We know the farmers incredibly well, and showing students how much money goes back to the farmers, I think students understand that better than most." Vega Coffee has contracts with a growing number of educational institutions, such as Emory University and the University of Alabama, as well as SUNY schools.

"When I drive through the communities that we work most closely with, I see new houses, the women's cooperative just bought more land to grow coffee, women who are going to school to finish a degree, bringing their families to the doctor for the first time—we're actually seeing the difference we are making," he says. Coffee is just one product Terenzi and his partners are exploring. Up next? Cacao beans, which make chocolate. "We're working on a cacao product in a bean-to-bar process," he says. "We will do all the work in-country, including Nicaragua, Colombia, and Guatemala."



Three farmers who work with Vega from Finca Los Angeles in Nicaragua select partially dried coffee beans. WILL DELUCA

Terenzi says his experiences have been life-altering. "I will never forget the first day, meeting this family in Mirafior, Nicaragua," he says. "They were the first farmers I had met—the first time I'd ever seen a coffee field. They were so underrated and so valuable. That was a really big turning point." And while coffee prices are still substantially below the cost of production, Terenzi and his team hope to empower local growers and show that the Vega model is a sustainable way forward. By keeping more money in country, Terenzi notes the side benefits: less deforestation, less need for emigration, and more money in the pockets of the people who actually produce the world's coffee. As for himself, Terenzi admits he doesn't drink too much coffee himself. "One triple macchiato per day," he says with a laugh. ■

—Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow '84

Impacting Lives Through Tea



rooted in his family for nearly half a century. And he's never looked back.

"It's incredibly rewarding work transforming lives through tea," says Wertheim, reflecting on the company's partnership with Sorwathe tea factory in Rwanda, where the bulk of Tea Importers' production occurs. "You can really see the economic impact in Rwanda. Tea is a cash crop, and it enables farmers to pay for school, buy clothes, and build better lives for their families."

Sorwathe's booming business has positively impacted more than 100,000 people living in the area, fueling the construction of banks, bars, and many other storefronts.

Left: Andrew Wertheim '76 (left), president of Tea Importers, tea maker Stanislaw Ntamahugiro (back center), and Rohith Peiris (right), general manager of Sorwathe in Rwanda review different stages of tea production.

ANDREW WERTHEIM '76 truly knows tea. He is the owner and president of Tea Importers, a socially responsible business that buys teas from tea producing companies around the world and sells them to major tea packers and blenders. And though Wertheim has been with the company for nearly two decades, he's been connected to the tea industry for much longer.

Wertheim's father, Joseph, cofounded Tea Importers in 1958, shortly after World War II, and the business has been family owned since then. The company headquarters moved to Westport, Connecticut, in 1967, where they still operate today.

Wertheim practiced law for 17 years before joining Tea Importers in 2001. He felt dissatisfied in his career as a lawyer and saw an opportunity to oversee the company that had been



View from the Sorwathe guesthouse over the mist-covered "valley of tea" toward Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda.

Though Tea Importers has only four employees working out of its Westport headquarters, its broader impact is colossal. The company sells primarily black and green teas—leaves that are suitable for tea bags—to manufacturers in the U.S., Canada, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East that combined bring 3.5 million kilos of tea to the world. Its customers include major tea packers such as Unilever (Lipton), Bigelow, Celestial Seasonings, and Starbucks. Plus, Tea Importers employs 3,500 farmers and 2,500 factory and field workers in Rwanda, bringing jobs and economic prosperity to countless Rwandans.

And the organization's merit is not unrecognized. In 2012, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton presented Tea Importers and Sorwathe with the Award for Corporate Excellence, an honor bestowed annually on just two U.S. companies. Clinton praised Tea Importers for being a good ambassador for the values America wishes to promote overseas, and for being a company that gives back to the communities where it does business.

"Our corporate philosophy is that our farmers and factory workers are our partners," Wertheim explains. "We count on

each other for business, and social responsibility is a huge part of who we are."

Over the years, Tea Importers has helped the community around Sorwathe in numerous ways—by bringing in potable water, repairing and maintaining roads to the

company factory, building schools and sports teams, establishing medical clinics, starting adult literacy programs, and much more.

Tea Importers and Sorwathe have also partnered with UNICEF in an important effort to facilitate access to



A tea plucker at work.

early childhood development, as well as preprimary education for infants and young children in areas around the factory.

The existence of such significant partnerships is thanks to Wertheim's strong communication skills, to which he credits Taft. "Taft was a good socializing experience for me," he says. "I learned to 'play well' with others there. I have more friends from Taft than I do from college, or any other chapter of life."

As for the future of Tea Importers, Wertheim hopes to continue impacting lives through the production of tea.

"And maybe we'll get into some brand products of our own," he muses. "Right now we don't have our own line of tea, and that would be a lot of fun." ■

—Carola Lovering Crane '07

Partnering for Clean Water

THE IDEA FOR DRINKWARE COMPANY

Powwater came about for Ellie O’Neill ’11 in the wake of a traumatic experience—her boyfriend Jack Hartpence’s near-death car accident. O’Neill, who was working in finance in New York at the time, found herself jolted awake by

the intensely contemplative conversations she and Hartpence began to have in the aftermath of his trauma.

“Jack felt like he’d been given a second chance,” O’Neill recalls. “We talked extensively about what good we were doing in the world, and it ultimately became clear

that we both felt our lives lacked meaning. Our careers weren’t fulfilling us. At that point, we realized there was no real reason we couldn’t take a step back and start again on a different, less-traveled path.”

From there, based on the shared view that water scarcity is one of the most pressing issues of our time, O’Neill and Hartpence cofounded Powwater, a social business selling reusable water bottles, coffee mugs, and wine tumblers that reinvests profits into sustainable clean drinking water systems across the globe.

“By 2025 two-thirds of humanity will live in water-scarce regions, and that’s not just in developing countries,” O’Neill explains. “In many of these regions, women spend half their day fetching water—precious time

they could spend doing something else far more productive, like getting an education.”

Social businesses give consumers the power to make an impact with every purchase. They’re designed to tackle global issues by empowering communities to solve their own problems, creating jobs and stimulating economic returns.

And while social businesses like Powwater are for-profit, their profits are channeled toward social causes rather than being pocketed by investors or owners. In the words of Nobel Peace Laureate and Powwater advocate Muhammad Yunus, “A charity dollar has only one life; a social business dollar can be invested over and over again.”

When you purchase a piece of Powwater drinkware—after the company recoups its costs—the leftover profits go to the company’s partners, microentrepreneurs heading water systems in Africa. Instead of merely giving the impacted regions clean water, Powwater provides the tools and education

for these communities to build and maintain water systems and lasting solutions.

“It’s amazing to think about the potential of our impact as we grow,” O’Neill shares. “We’re hoping to be able to launch a water project here in the States in the near future. Not many people realize that the water crisis exists in our very own country, but it’s a real problem.”

In addition to O’Neill and Hartpence, there are two other cofounders of Powwater, and each of the four team members brings their own area of expertise. The company hopes to expand from drinkware in the future and broaden its impact by offering additional product lines. While O’Neill feels positive about Powwater’s progress so far, she acknowledges the difficulties that arise in a start-up culture.

“When you build a company yourself—or with only a few people—there’s not really anyone to validate your work and your progress,” she says. “So that’s

been hard. It’s a challenge I’ve never had to face in my professional life, until now.”

While O’Neill’s uncertainty is natural for anyone who starts their own business, Powwater’s numbers speak for themselves. Since launching in August, the company has already brought clean water to over 20,000 people in need. And that number only continues to grow.

O’Neill attributes both her passion for making a difference and her entrepreneurial spirit to her years at Taft.

“Taft was the most pivotal experience of my life,” she reflects. “To leave home at such a young age really forces you to grow up quickly. And Taft’s motto about giving back is so important and was what made me aware of my privilege. It taught me that so many others hadn’t been given what I’d been given. That knowledge became rooted in me; it has shaped my life.” ■

—Carola Lovering Crane ’07



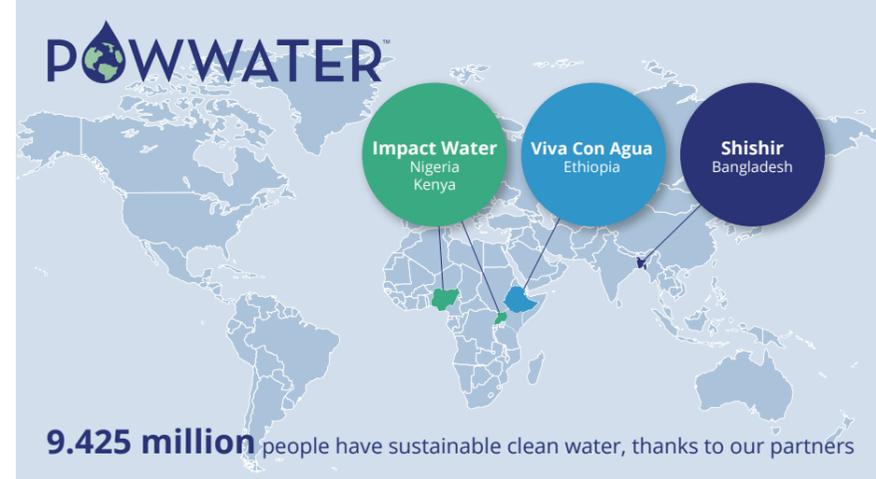
One of Powwater’s partners, Impact Water, helps provide and maintain water systems in Kenya.



Ellie O’Neill ’11, cofounder of Powwater, a social business drinkware company, holding one of their bamboo mugs.



Left: Powwater reinvests its profits into sustainable clean drinking water systems across the globe through its partners.





Charley Rosenberry '77, far right, and llamas with a group of veterans from Wounded Warrior in Oregon's Wallowa Mountains.

But in 1986, Rosenberry was injured in a car accident, which left him unable to carry as much on his back as required for the sort of hiking and camping he loved. After taking in that first llama four years later, he "started to read up on them and find out what they're capable of doing," he says. "The pieces started coming together."

The first llama was a bit too old to be a "packer," but Rosenberry soon added to his herd. He also shears his animals after the winter. "I have a handful of people who love to use the wool to spin to make gloves or caps, so I just give it to them," he says. "It's a lot of work."

Until recently, his time spent with the llamas was limited by his day job. Always thinking he would go into biology, Rosenberry discovered a passion for law while at Whitman, which was located not far from the state penitentiary. In those days, the prison, he says, was in "complete turmoil."

"The inmates ran the place," Rosenberry says. "The motorcycle gangs could run their bikes around the running track. It was chaotic."

Nonetheless, Rosenberry began volunteering and speaking with inmates, seeking to understand more about



From Law to Llamas

CHARLEY ROSENBERRY '77 still couldn't tell you why he said yes to the llama. Best he can recall, he simply acted on impulse that day in 1990 when a friend arrived at his home on Vashon Island, outside Seattle, and, gesturing toward Rosenberry's expansive pastureland, asked if he'd be interested in caring for an old llama. Rosenberry had never owned one and didn't know what it would entail. He agreed anyway. Nearly 30 years later, he owns six of them, and his initial fascination with the docile creatures has turned into a full-time avocation. Rosenberry, who retired from his law career in 2017, now spends his days organizing pack trips into the Cascade Mountains helping to resupply

trail crews working for weeks in the forest. Each carrying 70 to 80 pounds of gear, the llamas are surprisingly nimble on slick and treacherous terrain other pack animals like horses or mules couldn't handle. "They're very sure-footed, similar to an elk or a mountain goat," Rosenberry says. "They're also very low maintenance. They don't require that much water. We don't even have to take additional food for them." Besides putting the llamas to work for the trail crews, Rosenberry developed a relationship with veterans through several local organizations and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Wounded Warrior Project five years ago. He now leads weeklong hikes for veterans who have recently returned

from combat. The llamas serve partly as valets, helping those veterans who are no longer able to carry much weight with their tents and belongings, and also as a form of therapy. "The vets really become attached to them," Rosenberry says. "It's a very meaningful experience for them." Rosenberry can relate. The Colorado native was always an avid outdoorsman, and after spending four years in relatively flat Litchfield County, Connecticut, to attend Taft, he longed to return to the backcountry after graduating. So he headed back west to Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington, where he could more easily hike, fish, and continue his lacrosse career, his favorite sport.



A youth trail crew with Rosenberry's llamas that helped haul in the crew's supplies.

incarceration and criminal justice. It was Taft, he says, that made him want to pursue a law degree and, eventually, devote his career toward advocating for juveniles caught up on the wrong side of the justice system, which he did for 30 years. "I always loved Taft's message of service and giving back," Rosenberry says. "I can't say that was central, but that message always resonated with me." Now he's gone full-time from law to llamas. Rosenberry is devoting his energy these days toward helping animals in need. He recently helped rescue a llama that had been abandoned by its owner, earning the animal's trust in order to capture it and bring it to an adoption agency. "It's the spice of life," Rosenberry says. "You never know how things are going to shake out. I love what I'm doing." ■

—Zach Schonbrun '05

Sea Change

IN NOVEMBER, SCIENTISTS BASED at the Caribbean Research and Management of Biodiversity (CARMABI) station in Curaçao spent five days broadcasting interactive live lessons directly into classrooms in 29 different countries.

Reaching nearly 23,000 students, the series was just one of many engaging programs produced by Irina Prentice '94 and the team at Encounter Edu, a London-based education agency using innovative teaching methods to help students learn about pressing environmental issues through the use of tech in the classroom.

Raised in Paris as the child of two American artists, Prentice developed a global mindset early on. "Going to French and bilingual schools, my siblings and I became bicultural," she recalls. "I

became aware of the concept of pluralism in society, which allowed me to see how a single event could be interpreted differently depending on the individual and his or her background."

At Taft, Prentice applied this broad worldview to her studies and worked with faculty members to develop her own programs of study. "Lance Odden, headmaster at the time, was an extraordinary mentor. He not only understood my American roots, but also my biculturalism," she says. "The school allowed me to embark on a more individual way of learning. For example, I was able to do an independent study project, developing an English literature class with a reading list focused on the journey of identity through travel and exploration."



Above: Irina Prentice '94, who works with Encounter Edu to provide educational live-stream learning in classrooms around the world.

Prentice also fostered a love of the environment during these years, helped by taking her education out of the classroom. "I was introduced to environmental science while at Chewonki," she says of the formative semester that she spent at the rural outdoor-focused school in Maine. "Taft also allowed me to take a 75-day journey through the Patagonia wilderness on an expedition in

Chile with the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) the following year."

After such impactful educational experiences, it's no surprise that, 20 years later, Prentice would join an organization seek-

understanding of our planet and the vital connections among all the ecosystems."

One of the most exciting programs that Encounter Edu curates is a series of Live Lessons—live video-links with the world's

is to make the Lives as smooth and as engaging as possible for everyone involved, no matter how remote the live link is."

The results of this innovative approach speak for themselves. Already, Encounter Edu has reached more than 9.8 million students in more than 4,000 schools across 96 countries. Prentice is incredibly optimistic not only for the future of her organization but also for the future of education as a whole.

"This is the way that education is going," she says. "Applying what these students are learning against current case studies makes the education process much more engaging and more relevant—for everyone!" ■

—Christopher Browner '12



Left and below: Arctic Live streaming sessions from the U.K. Arctic Research Station in Ny-Alesund, Svalbard, connected students around the world to a microplastics and ocean acidification field research team.



Encounter Edu offered a series of Coral Live education broadcasts for teachers to use from scientists at the Caribbean Research and Management of Biodiversity (CARMABI) station.

ing to revolutionize the way that students around the globe learn about environmental challenges facing the planet.

At Encounter Edu, Prentice and the team are guided by the unofficial motto of "bringing the far away nearby for students to build critical thinking skills, practice 'working scientifically,' and develop environmental stewardship." To achieve this, they adapt current research into resources aligned to the curriculum to help teachers broaden the scope of their classroom teaching. The resources include in-depth schemes of work made up of hundreds of lesson plans, student sheets, online activities, bite-size multimedia and 360 VR content, and professional development opportunities for educators—all offered free of charge.

Much of the work that they do looks at marine ecosystems. "Our planet is 70 percent ocean, but our education system focuses predominantly on the terrestrial world," Prentice notes. "By omitting the oceans, we're giving students only a partial

leading scientists, some of whom are a part of active scientific explorations. "We've been able to connect students directly with researchers working in the field," Prentice explains, "whether to those studying microplastics in the Arctic, coral reefs adaption and restoration in the Caribbean, or exploring the deep ocean on board a submarine expedition in the Indian Ocean. And they can ask questions in real time."

In addition to running communications, partnerships, and outreach for Encounter Edu, Prentice works closely with the home office team in London to ensure that each Live Lesson goes off without a hitch.

"We have teams in two locations—one in London and one in the field," she says. "I oversee and support the London team, working with the teachers to pass on student questions to the field team, to troubleshoot technical problems teachers might have. I also monitor the quality of the broadcasts, coordinating with the production side if problems arise. Ultimately, our goal



In PRINT

The Revisioners COUNTERPOINT Margaret Wilkerson Sexton '00

In 1924, Josephine is the proud owner of a thriving farm. As a child, she channeled other-worldly power to free herself from slavery. Now her new neighbor, a white woman named Charlotte, seeks her company, and an uneasy friendship grows between them. But Charlotte has also sought solace in the Ku Klux Klan, a relationship that jeopardizes Josephine's family.

Nearly 100 years later, Josephine's descendant, Ava, is a single mother who has just lost her job. She moves in with her white grandmother, Martha, a wealthy but lonely woman who pays Ava to be her companion. But Martha's behavior soon becomes erratic, then threatening, and Ava must escape before her story and Josephine's converge.

A national bestseller and *New York Times Book Review* Notable Book of the Year, *The Revisioners* explores the depths of women's relationships—powerful women and marginalized women, healers and survivors. It is a novel about the bonds between mothers and their children, the dangers that upend those bonds. At its core, the novel ponders generational legacies, the endurance of hope, and the undying promise of freedom.

Margaret Wilkerson Sexton, born and raised in New Orleans, studied creative writing at Dartmouth College and law at UC Berkeley. Her debut novel, *A Kind of Freedom*, was long-listed for the National Book Award, won the Crook's Corner Book Prize, and received the First Novelist Award from the Black Caucus of the American Library Association. She lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with her family.

The Season: A History of the Debutante W.W. NORTON Kristen Richardson '93

In this history of the debutante ritual, Kristen Richardson sheds new light on contemporary ideas about women and marriage.

Richardson, from a family of debutantes, chose not to debut. But as her curiosity drove her to research this enduring custom, she learned that it, as well as debutantes, is not as simple as it seems.

The story begins in England 600 years ago when wealthy fathers needed an efficient way to

find appropriate husbands for their daughters. Elizabeth I's exclusive presentations at her court expanded into London's full season of dances, dinners, and courting, extending eventually to the many corners of the British Empire and beyond.

Richardson traces the social seasons of young women on both sides of the Atlantic, from Georgian England to colonial Philadelphia, from the antebellum South and Wharton's New York back to England, where debutante daughters of Gilded Age millionaires sought to marry British aristocrats. She delves into Jazz Age debuts, carnival balls in the American South, and the reimagined ritual of elite African American communities, which offers both social polish and academic scholarships.

The Season shares the captivating stories of these young women, often through their words from diaries, letters, and interviews that Richardson conducted at contemporary balls. The debutantes give voice to an array of complex feelings about being put on display, about the young men they meet, and about what their future in society or as wives might be.

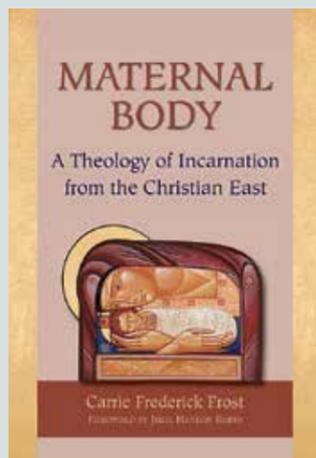
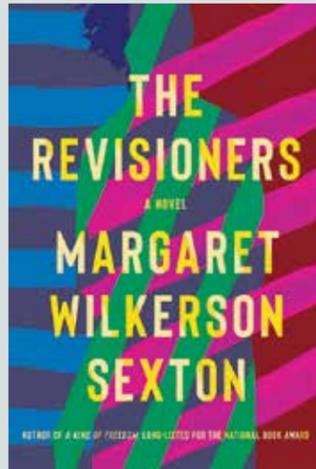
While exploring why the debutante tradition persists—and why it has spread to Russia, China, and other nations—Richardson has uncovered its extensive cultural influence on the lives of daughters in Britain and the U.S. and how they have come to marry.

Richardson was born in London and lives with her son in Brooklyn, New York.

Maternal Body: A Theology of Incarnation from the Christian East PAULIST PRESS Carrie Frederick Frost '91

In *Maternal Body*, Carrie Frederick Frost places Orthodox Christian sources on motherhood—icons, hymns, and prayers—into conversation with each other. In so doing, she brings an anchored vision of motherhood to the 21st century, especially the embodied experience of motherhood.

Along the way, Frost addresses practices of the Church that have neglected mothers' bodies, offering insight for others who also choose to live within truth-bearing but flawed traditions. Whether female or male, whether mothers or not, whether mothers adoptive or biological, we each make our appearance in the cosmos



through a maternal body; our mother's body gives us our own body. In these bodies we live our lives and find our way into the next.

From the unexpected and fresh vantage point of the maternal body, Frost offers new ways of understanding our incarnate experience as humans and better cultivating a relationship with our creator.

Carrie Frederick Frost is a professor of theology at St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Seminary and the editor of *The Reception of the Holy and Great Council: Reflections of Orthodox Christian Women*. She holds a Ph.D. in theology, ethics, and culture from the University of Virginia.

The Dude Diet Dinnertime HARPERCOLLINS Serena Wolf '05

The author of *The Dude Diet* is back with 125 crowd-pleasing recipes to hack the daily dinner dilemma.

In her cult classic, *The Dude Diet*, chef and recipe developer Serena Wolf dared go where no healthy living cookbook had gone before: into the realm of dude food. From wings and nachos to burgers and pizza, Wolf offered clean(ish) junk food makeovers that inspired dudes everywhere to put down the takeout menu and pick up a spatula. Now, *The Dude Diet Dinnertime* gives those same hungry dudes—and their families—dozens of drool-worthy main course dishes.

In *The Dude Diet Dinnertime*, Wolf gives readers 125 foolproof recipes to satisfy every craving and please every member of the family. With soon-to-be classics like Super Sloppy Josés, Turkey Reuben Patty Melts, Chicago Dog Baked Potatoes, and Chicken Parm Quinoa Bake, Wolf shows comfort food fanatics and picky eaters alike how to get a delicious, nutritious, and filling dinner on the table without a fuss—and sometimes in 30 minutes flat.

With easy-to-follow, step-by-step instructions, gorgeous food photography, and Wolf's one-of-a-kind voice and humor, *The Dude Diet Dinnertime* offers a fun and utterly satisfying answer to the eternal question: What's for dinner?

After graduating from Harvard in 2009, Wolf

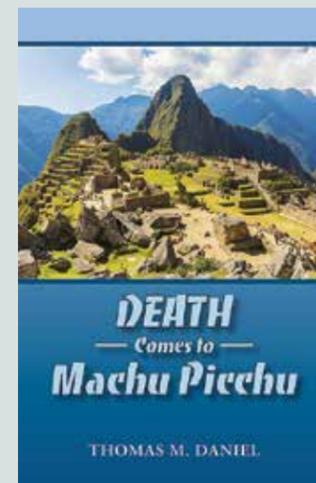
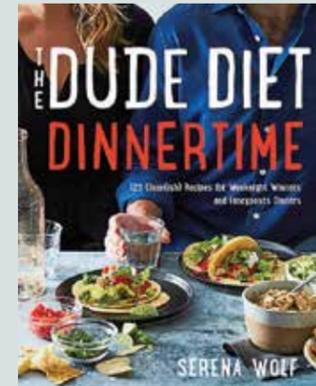
followed her passion for food to Le Cordon Bleu Paris, receiving her cuisine diploma in 2011. Since then, she has put her culinary skills to work as a private chef, food writer, recipe developer, and blogger. She is currently a food contributor for ELLE.com and a member of *SELF* magazine's SelfMade Collective, as well as the former private chef for two players on the New York Giants. Her recipes and photography have been featured on many magazine websites. She has also appeared as a guest on *The Dr. Oz Show* and Martha Stewart's Radio Show, "Mostly Martha."

Death Comes to Machu Picchu FITHIAN PRESS Thomas M. Daniel '47

Ten tourists find themselves spending the night of Christmas Eve together at the inn associated with the Machu Picchu ruins, high in the Peruvian Andes, in Thomas Daniel's latest novel. They are cut off by weather from the world below, and they spend the afternoon getting to know each other. There are two lone men in the group, but most of the rest are couples—husbands and wives and a mother with her adult daughter.

These tourists come from different walks of life—one man is a travel agent, another man works for the CIA, a Swedish couple work for the United States Embassy, and an unmarried young twosome are university students, and so on. They are different from one another, except for one characteristic that each keeps secret from the others: they are all in denial about their dependency on cocaine and their intention to smuggle a small supply of the drug out of Peru.

Thomas M. Daniel is an emeritus professor of medicine at Case Western Reserve University. During his academic career he was a specialist in pulmonary medicine and directed a research laboratory studying patients' immune responses to tuberculosis. In his retirement years he has turned to writing. His first books focused on medical history, then he turned his pen to fiction. He is the author of four novels (and counting), as well as two books of local history. He lives with his wife, Janet, in Hudson, Ohio. ■



Ed. note: In our fall column, we incorrectly published the class year for the author of The Will of the People: T.H. Breen is Class of '60.

If you would like your work added to the Hulbert Taft Library's Alumni Authors Collection and considered for this column, please email the editor (lindabeyus@taftschool.org) and mail a copy to:
Taft Bulletin | The Taft School | 110 Woodbury Road | Watertown, CT 06795-2100

THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR THAT SENIORS ALEX ROBERTSON (LEFT) AND PETER YU (RIGHT) HAVE PERFORMED TOGETHER FOR THE ANNUAL MULTICULTURAL ARTS CELEBRATION HELD AS PART OF TAFT'S MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY.



Alex, who was raised in Las Vegas, and Peter, who is from Beijing, met as lower mids and discovered their shared love of classical piano. By mid year, they were roommates, with Alex performing with Taft's Jazz Band and Peter with Chamber Ensemble. During the fall of mid year, the duo decided they'd try performing a four-hands piece for

MLK Day. That year they played Brahms' *Hungarian Dance No. 1 in G Minor*. The piece was a hit, and they performed again the following year, choosing a faster piece—*Sabre Dance* by Khachaturian. With the goal of topping their past performances, this school year Peter suggested they play a two-piano arrangement of *Flight of the Bumblebee*

by Rimsky-Korsakov. "Peter is one of my best friends," says Alex, "and I love that our relationship has been forged not only through our shared passion for academics and athletics as students, but music and specifically the piano, even though we come from completely different backgrounds and cultures."



To watch a compilation of Peter and Alex's performances over the past three MLK Days, scan the QR code using your smartphone's camera app.



Warm Thoughts, Helping Hands

student SPOTLIGHT

IN THE HEAT OF THE SUMMER, when most people were thinking about how to keep themselves cool, Sinéad Connolly '21 started thinking about how to keep others warm.

"Every Wednesday evening last summer I went to the soup kitchen at the St. Vincent DePaul Mission in Waterbury to help serve meals," Sinéad explains.

During her time at St. Vincent DePaul, Sinéad thought a lot about the people the mission serves and the many challenges they face. She thought about how difficult the winter months can be for those with no permanent place to call home.

"I wanted to find ways to continue helping, once I returned to school, so I asked the director of the shelter what their greatest needs were during the winter months," says Sinéad. "He said there was always a need for blankets and hats for their clients."

And with that, Warm Thoughts, Helping Hands was born, founded as a goal-driven, mission-specific service organization designed to bring communities together to support those in need. To date, Taft students, members of Sinéad's church, and public high school students in Waterbury have engaged in Warm Thoughts projects. She hopes to bring a Watertown



Sinéad Connolly '21 with a blanket made for and donated to the St. Vincent DePaul Shelter.



elementary school into the fold this year.

"My first goal was to deliver 150 hats to St. Vincent DePaul by November 1," Sinéad says, "then to follow that up with a donation of 25 blankets."

Her church helped answer the call on hats—Sinéad's website includes a link to a tutorial showing how to make a simple fleece hat—and both the Taft community and Waterbury's Kennedy High School have come through with blankets. Sinéad will collect new and gently used blankets throughout the school year; collection boxes are in each dormitory common area at Taft.

"Students at Kennedy also made blankets for the drive," Sinéad says. "There is a link on my website to blanket-making kits. There is no sewing involved; you just tie them. It was a great project for the students—they seemed to really enjoy it."

As an official club at Taft, Warm Thoughts, Helping Hands holds regular meetings on campus, which has allowed Sinéad to expand her work to include

Above: (from left) Taft upper middle schoolers Alicia Maag, Sinéad Connolly, and Annabelle Shanks manage a letter-writing initiative on campus to thank servicemen and women. They also create cheery cards for hospitalized children.

Right: Students at Waterbury's Kennedy High School made a kit-blanket to support Sinéad's service initiative.

new initiatives. Alicia Maag '21 helps manage the club. During the meetings, students are invited to write letters to soldiers and first responders, or to create cards for hospitalized children.

"My goal is to collect 150 letters and 150 cards before the end of the school year. In just the first few months of school we have

already collected 50 letters and 25 cards, so we're off to a very good start. I've been grateful for how many people have come to the meetings and gotten involved," says Sinéad.

Sinéad will deliver the letters to Operation Gratitude, a nonprofit organization working to support members of the active military and their families, veterans, wounded heroes and their caregivers, and first responders. The cards will be sent to Cards for Hospitalized Kids, an internationally recognized charitable organization that spreads "hope, joy, and magic" to hospitalized kids across America through uplifting, handmade cards.

"We're all very busy here at Taft, so it may be difficult for people to make all of the meetings. Having projects like these means that people can still contribute even if they can't come to a meeting. Anyone can write a letter or make a card on their own time," says Sinéad. "Those simple gestures can really go a long way in making a difference in someone's life." ■

To learn more about Warm Thoughts, Helping Hands, visit www.warmthoughtshelpin.wixsite.com/volunteer





Teamwork is the name of the game at the Yale Physics Olympics, and Taft's Team Non-Local Interaction (from left)—Peter Yu '20, Harry Wang '21, Christine Li '21, and Felicia Wang '21—made it look easy.

Science Students Compete at Yale

EIGHT TAFT STUDENTS traveled to Yale University in October to compete in the 21st annual Yale Physics Olympics, an all-day physics competition for Connecticut and surrounding area high school students. Forty teams of four students completed a pentathlon of physics-themed events developed by Yale science faculty.

"It was a fun day for all of us," says Science Teacher Jim Mooney. "Some events

involved performing measurements in as precise a manner as possible where the best technique had to be discovered by the students, while others involved building an apparatus that would perform a given task."

Four of the five events vary from year to year; the Fermi quiz is a perennial constant. This year, Taft's team Human Error won the Fermi challenge, which required them to combine clever quantitative guesses

to produce a good final estimate of some unknown number. Congratulations to Human Error team members Ernest Protas '20, Stefan Kim '20, Andrii Torchilo '21, and Ben Le '21, who also finished the overall competition in fifth place. Peter Yu '20, Harry Wang '21, Felicia Wang '21, and Christine Li '21 competed as Team Non-Local Interaction; they finished the Fermi challenge in third place and ended the day 10th overall. ■

Community Service Day 2019

THE FULL TAFT COMMUNITY set aside the daily routine of classes, meetings, and academic obligations on Monday, October 21, to embrace the school motto, *Non ut sibi ministretur sed ut ministret*; Not to be served but to serve.

Established in 1995, Community Service Day is a hallmark of service learning at Taft. This year, students, faculty, and staff visited 50 sites across the greater Watertown region, dedicating their time, energy, and talents to engaging in meaningful projects that support or advance the important work being done by area nonprofit organizations, schools, churches, nature centers, and more. Taft students also hosted local students on the campus, engaging them through activities like sports clinics, science sessions, arts and crafts projects, dance and movement explorations, computer fun, and story hours.

"The day is an embodiment of our motto, 'Not to be served but to serve,'" says Taft Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78. "Service happens at Taft in countless ways and every week, and we should remember that, but a public day—where we stop our normal business of academics—provides a different kind of affirmation of what we believe in as a school." ■



Non ut Sibi



Bringing the World to Taft

Twice each week, Tafties gather in Bingham Auditorium for Morning Meeting, where speakers from across the globe share their unique experiences and perspectives with the Taft community. One of Taft's most important and meaningful traditions, the Morning Meeting program, effectively reflects the school's commitment to preparing students to engage with a broad range of social, moral, artistic, cultural, and political issues in an open, informed, and thoughtful manner. In addition to very powerful talks by faculty members Lindsay Leal, Colin Farrar, and Andrew Prince, Taft students heard from the following notable speakers last fall:

◀ Author Eisa Ulen

EISA NEFERTARI ULEN IS THE AUTHOR of *Crystelle Mourning*, a novel described by *The Washington Post* as “a call for healing in the African American community from generations of hurt and neglect.” Ulen is the recipient of a Frederick Douglass Creative Arts Center Fellowship for Young African American Fiction Writers, a Provincetown Fine Arts Work Center Fellowship, and a National Association of Black Journalists Award.

“All of you matter, too. You matter, because you can do something. *You*...you young people are leading the way already for all of us.”

▼ Artist Christine Mauersberger

2019 ROCKWELL VISITING ARTIST Christine Mauersberger produces complex mark-making narratives in multiple media—paintings, embroidery, and installation works—which were on display in Potter Gallery throughout the fall.

“You can get anywhere you can see. I truly believe this for me, and I believe it for you. If you can see it—if you can think about it—it can happen.”



◀ Environmental Leader Gina McCarthy

GINA MCCARTHY IS PROFESSOR OF the practice of public health in the Department of Environmental Health and director of The Center for Climate, Health, and the Global Environment at Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health (Harvard C-CHANGE). She served under President Barack Obama as the 13th administrator of the EPA from 2013 to 2017, where she led EPA initiatives that cut air pollution, protected water resources, reduced greenhouse gases, and strengthened chemical safety to better protect more Americans.

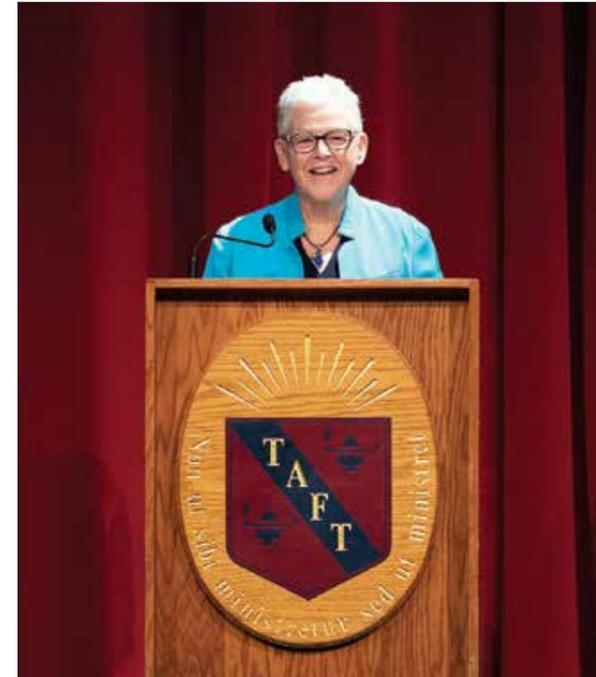
“I want to make sure that in a school like this with students from across the world that you understand that the United States of America is the *united* states of America: We care about one another, we care about our health, we

care about our safety, and we are going to do our part on climate change. Period.”

▼ Charlotte Clymer

CHARLOTTE CLYMER IS AN AMERICAN activist and writer; she is also a U.S. Army veteran and transgender woman. As the press secretary for rapid response at the Human Rights Campaign (the largest LGBTQ civil rights advocacy group in the U.S.), Clymer is an outspoken activist on issues including LGBTQ rights, feminism, and veterans' affairs.

“I would rather be working toward something far more pressing to a reasonable society—eradicating cancer or building a more equitable financial society for everybody. We shouldn't have to worry about who people love, who they are, or what kind of families they have.”





of the great education you're getting here to use that compassion in a way that actually makes life better for other people."

◀ Three Amigos

WHEN A REGIONAL MEDICAL organization acquired a heritage version of the St. John's Bible, it sent one volume to Waterbury, Connecticut. That volume was the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, and the foundational text for all three monotheistic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Local religious leaders Rabbi Eric Polokoff, Imam Aga Gazi, and Monsignor Joseph Donnelly were invited to a ceremony in Waterbury to welcome that text. The conversation among the three was so energetic and enlightening that the trio believed they should expand their conversation, open it to the public, and take it on the road. They brought it to Taft in November.

"We all can be neighbors. We all can be prophets in order to spread the good news—the good news that there is hope, there is brotherhood, there are people who will try always for the betterment of the community and the betterment of humankind."

▼ Martin Cox

ECONOMIST MARTIN COX IS THE director of The John Locke Institute, an educational organization providing short courses in the U.K., France, Italy, Australia, and the United States for students between 13 and 19 years old. It promotes excellence and innovation in

education, and seeks to foster academic ambition, clear thinking, and love of learning.

"At your age many of you are ambitious to change the world and make it better, and I hope that you hang on to that ambition. But I want you to have not just soft hearts, but hard heads. You need to employ all the intelligence and all the advantages



▼ Lt. Col. H. James Greene

AFTER GRADUATING FROM YALE IN 1955, Lt. Col. H. James Greene joined the United States Air Force and became a fighter pilot. He was assigned to the Third Bomb

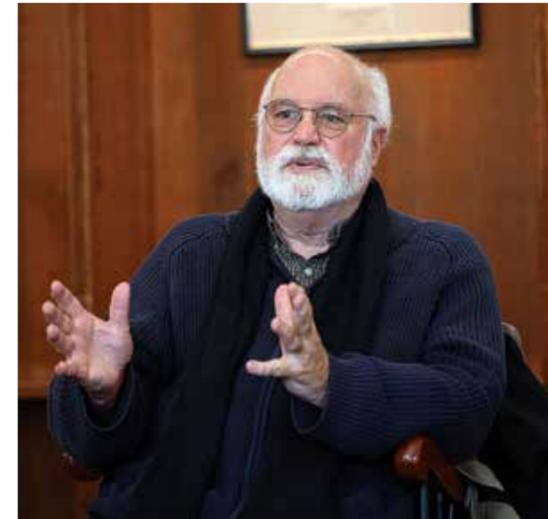


Wing, Japan, and was a certified nuclear weapons delivery pilot targeting sites in North Korea, China, and the Soviet Union. During the early phase of the Vietnam War, he flew more than 100 combat missions in B-57 bombers. His last assignment in the Air Force was as a commander, flying C-5 transports in worldwide operations.

"Is war inevitable? It has always been with us, but if we look at why we have gotten into wars throughout history, maybe we can change that situation. Maybe we can find a way to avoid having more veterans."

▶ Father Gregory Boyle

IN 1986, FATHER GREGORY BOYLE was appointed pastor of Dolores Mission Church, a Jesuit parish in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of East Los Angeles. At the time, the church sat between two large public housing projects and amid the territories of local gangs. Boyle began working to create meaningful opportunities for the gang members and the community and, in 1988, established Homeboy Industries. Today, Homeboy Industries is the largest gang intervention, rehabilitation, and



reentry program in the United States, offering an "exit ramp" for those stuck in a cycle of violence and incarceration.

"What Martin Luther King says about church could well be said about your time here at Taft: It's not the place you've come to, it's the place you go from....The hope is that you will go from here and imagine a circle of compassion, then imagine nobody standing outside that circle. You go from here to dismantle the barriers that exclude."

◀ Sarah Burns

SARAH BURNS IS THE AUTHOR OF *The Central Park Five: A Chronicle of a City Wilding*. She is also the coproducer and director for the documentary film *The Central Park Five*, which she created with her husband, David McMahan, and her father, renowned filmmaker Ken Burns. Burns visited Taft in November as this year's Paley Lecturer.

"As a storyteller, I can inform; try to set the record straight. But I also think that storytelling can help to create more empathy—to open people's eyes to see those who are different from them as less different." ■

Most Morning Meeting talks are available on the Taft School Vimeo channel, <https://vimeo.com/taftschoo>



Celebrating Excellence

SIXTEEN STUDENTS WERE INDUCTED INTO THE CUM LAUDE SOCIETY in October, based on their academic records for both their mid and upper middle years. Founded in 1908, the Cum Laude Society is the secondary school national scholarship society. It parallels the Phi Beta Kappa and Sigma Xi societies at the collegiate level. A maximum of 20 percent of the senior class may be elected into membership in the Cum Laude Society; this group represents 9.7 percent of their class.

Back row, from left: Nicholas Baird, Zack Tonelli, Elly MacKay, Ranon Larpcharern, Ernest Protas, Stefan Kim, Peter Yu, Tony Liu
Front row, from left: Halle Wagner, Kyra McNerney, Meredith King, Meghan Spangenberg, Olivia Gasser, Tetiana Tsunik, Michelle Lian, Cierra Ouellette



In Fashion

MAGGIE CUI '21 WOWED THE JUDGES WITH HER MERMAID/FISHTAIL high-fashion creation, taking top honors in this year's Trashion Show. Sponsored by Taft's EcoMons, the annual Trashion Show invites students to make wearable fashion out of recycled or sustainable materials.



Fan-tastic

TAFT'S FAN BUS BROUGHT TONS OF RHINO SPIRIT TO LAKEVILLE, Connecticut, in November for Taft-Hotchkiss Day. Preceded by Friday night's annual Red Rally, Taft-Hotchkiss Day was once again a day of great sportsmanship, friendly rivalry, and rowdy, rowdy Rhinos.

By Design

ARTIST SUSIE TARNOWICZ '03 returned to Taft in December to work with students in Loueta Chickadaunce's Drawing and Design classes. She led a series of workshops guiding students through the process of creating and binding handmade journals.



Fond Farewell

IF YOU'VE BEEN TO AN EVENT OF any kind at Taft, you know that hospitality is one of our strong suits. What you might not know is that the seamless delivery of everything from morning donuts and coffee in a tent on a field to a five-course meal with elegant linens in Prentice has been touched with pride, dedication, and genuine caring by Catering Manager Lauralee Hurley. It only seems fitting that Lauralee's last Taft event before her retirement would be Headmaster Willy and Pam MacMullen's annual Halloween party for faculty and staff children. It was Lauralee's favorite day of the year; she goes out on a high note and with deep gratitude not just from the MacMullens but from the entire community—students, faculty, staff, parents, grandparents, friends, and alumni—all of whom have enjoyed events and celebrations made better by Lauralee's exceptional touch.



Taft Traditions

THE 84TH ANNUAL SERVICES OF Lessons and Carols marked the end of the fall term and the beginning of Winter Break. In a newer Taft tradition, the services were followed by a reception in Woodward Chapel Undercroft, featuring music by Taft's Jazz Ensemble.



Leading the Way

SIX TAFT STUDENTS TRAVELED TO SEATTLE, Washington, in early December to attend the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) Student Diversity Leadership Conference (SDLC). SDLC is a multiracial, multicultural gathering of 1,600 high school student leaders from across the globe with a focus on self-reflecting, forming allies, and building community. Participants develop cross-cultural communication skills, design effective strategies for social justice practice through dialogue and the arts, and learn the foundations of allyship and networking principles. This year's program was built around the theme "1954. With All Deliberate Speed. 2019. Integrating Schools, Minds, and Hearts with the Fierce Urgency of Now." It ran concurrently with the NAIS 2019 People of Color Conference, also attended by a large contingent from Taft.

Student participants from Taft were, from left: Rachel Peverly '20, Austin Omala '21, Sinthya Guaman '21, Muffin Prakittiphoom '21, Kaitlyn Taliafaro '22, and Linh Vu '21. Photo courtesy Andrew Prince.



Teachers Teaching Teachers

TAFT FACULTY STEPPED AWAY FROM THEIR TRADITIONAL TEACHING ROLES FOR ONE HOUR IN EARLY DECEMBER to engage in a bit of "homegrown professional development," says Dean of Faculty Edie Traina, "developed for the community, by the community." The Winter Workshop program was conceptualized by Taft's Professional Education and Growth (PEG) Committee eight years ago and invites faculty members to develop and lead educational seminars or to attend sessions delivered by their peers. This year's sessions explored a wide range of topics, from classroom design, he-she-they pronouns, and turning your classroom into an escape room, to college counseling, making the most of a maker space, and guided meditation, to name a few.



Mamma Mia!

THE FALL MUSICAL WAS A MÉLANGE OF COLOR AND CREATIVITY, inspired acting and choreography, the best kind of earworm tunes, and, for good measure, perhaps the coolest retro costumes to grace the Bingham stage. It took more than 60 Taft students to mount this spectacular performance—see the feature article beginning on page 42 in this magazine for a behind-the-scenes look at how it all came together.



In Tandem

DANCE TEACHER SARAH SURBER (center) performed on stage in Bingham as part of Taft's Music for a While performance series. She joined Tandem—the resident dance company at Moving Arts Exchange (MAX), a nonprofit dance organization based in Great Barrington, Massachusetts—for the show. "After taking a hiatus from performing, I am thrilled to return to the stage with such a fantastic group," says Surber. "Performing is such a rewarding and fulfilling experience, and I am grateful to be able to bring that experience back to Taft to share with my students."



Dance

THIRTY-FIVE STUDENTS choreographed and performed 11 numbers during the Winter Dance Showcase in December. The program also featured a large group dance in Kathak style, a classical dance style of India, choreographed by guest teacher and local Kathak artist Rachna Agrawal.





Honoring the 1998 U.S. Women's Hockey Team

TWENTY-ONE YEARS AFTER THE FIRST ever Olympic women's ice hockey game was played, its gold medal winners were inducted into the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Hall of Fame. On November 1, 2019, members of the 1998 U.S. Olympic Women's Ice Hockey Team took the stage in Colorado Springs, Colorado, to receive their honor. Taft math teacher, hockey coach, and admissions officer Gretchen Ulion Silverman was among them. (Teammate, fellow inductee, and Taft alumna AJ Mleczo Griswold '93 was unable to attend the ceremony.)

"When we played in '98, none of us put ourselves in the context of 'the world's greatest athletes,'" says Silverman. "We were just playing for the purest of reasons: we loved the sport and we wanted to represent our country. Then, being at the induction ceremony and hearing from athletes like Lisa Leslie, Misty May-Treanor, and [Paralympic swimmer] Erin Popovich, that context suddenly changed; I realized that this was a very big deal—that our team was a part of this incredible history with this amazing group of athletes."

That amazing group of athletes includes some of the most esteemed competitors and

recognized names in Olympic history: basketball player Lisa Leslie, gymnast Nastia Liukin, beach volleyball star Misty May-Treanor, short-track speed skater Apolo Anton Ohno, and swimmers Dara Torres and Paralympian Erin Popovich. It includes Candace Cable, whose achievements as a Paralympic Nordic skier, alpine skier, and track and field athlete are nothing short of remarkable. Diving coach Ron O'Brien joined the class, as did the visionary "father of accessibility" Tim Nugent. And it includes John Carlos and Tommie Smith, whose courage and conviction brought attention to the fight for civil rights during the medal ceremony at the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City.

When the U.S. Women's Ice Hockey team arrived in Nagano, Japan, for the 1998 Olympics, the program was still in its infancy. The first Women's World Championship game had only been played eight years earlier, then in alternating years. The United States and Canada advanced to the gold medal round in each of the four World Championship match-ups preceding the sport's Olympic debut. Canada's four gold medals made them the clear favorite in Nagano.

"On paper, Canada was really the favored team. They had the big names—the star power," says Silverman. "But when it came down to it, we were the team that really played *together*."

By the time the teams met for the first time in Nagano during round robin play, they already knew that they'd face each other in the gold medal game. But it was a preview—a first look—and the score was 4–1 Canada early in the third period.

"The first game against Canada in the preliminary round was 'meaningless' to everyone but the athletes on the ice," says Mleczo. "Every time we ever played Canada it meant something and always brought out the best in both sides. Coach Smith called a timeout when we were down 4–1 with under 12 minutes left to play. He was incredibly relaxed and told us that winning that game plus a dollar would get us a donut—he always had a unique way of getting his point across! But it calmed us down, and we rallied."

"We just started chipping away, one goal, then another," Silverman adds. "We won the game 7–4. It was a big statement. We had the grit and the determination and the teamwork to come back and dig ourselves out of the

hole. Because of our history with Canada, we always had this seed of doubt in our minds. Now we knew we could beat them. We took that mindset into the gold medal game."

Two nights later Team USA and Team Canada took the ice for the first women's gold medal ice hockey game in history. Two minutes and 38 seconds into the second period, Silverman scored the first goal of the game.

"I shot it, but it was a team goal," says Silverman. "That goal happened because we practiced for hours and hours and hours. It didn't matter who put the puck in the net; we had systems in place and when Coach Smith drew up plays, we executed them."

Team USA scored two more goals in their victory over Team Canada. It was a moment, Silverman says, of sheer elation.

"I don't think the history of the moment hit any of us until much later, when we got home and had some time to reflect," recalls Silverman. "We were somewhat removed being in Nagano, and most of us came up playing in empty arenas. We didn't really realize that the world was watching."

Many players, says Mleczo, had not even been in touch with their families.

"Email was not prevalent then and I remember IBM had set up a 'surf shack' with computers in the Athletes' Village for Olympians to email people at home. A few days after we won I reached out to whom-ever I knew with email to tell them about our victory, only to learn it had been front page news and many people had watched the 6 a.m. Eastern broadcast of the game."

The impact of the 1998 team on the sport

is immeasurable. The exponential growth in opportunities for women and girls playing hockey at every level can be directly tied to the 1998 team. And their legacy continues to grow. Silverman visited many schools and youth organizations on her post-Olympic tour. An 11-year-old named Meghan Duggan was in the audience on one of those visits.

"There was a meet and greet after my speech and Meghan and her sister were there. Her sister was holding the Wheaties box. I put my jersey on Meghan and let her hold my medal, as her mother took a photo. Meghan says that is the moment her Olympic dream began."

Today, Duggan has three Olympic medals of her own. She won gold at the 2018 Olympics, where she captained the U.S. Women's Ice Hockey team. It was the first time the U.S. won gold at the Olympics since 1998.

"To see her become the captain and 20 years later win the next gold medal for the U.S.—I can't even put into words the feeling that represents. To know that many of us on the 1998 team had a direct impact on young women who then lived their own Olympic dreams, and even the larger message that the team was able to send to little girls everywhere, that to us is really important. Winning the gold medal was great and all, but now that I am able to look back and understand how our success changed the trajectory of the sport and to see how far it's come 21 years later is an incredible feeling."

And it is a feeling Mleczo shares. "I'm not sure we were capable of absorbing the weight of what we were doing or the

potential legacy we could leave behind in the moment. On reflection, I am amazed at the level of speed and skill the women's game has reached, all while providing much-needed role models for young kids like my own. I am thrilled to have played a role in the growth of the game and incredibly proud of the lasting legacy left by our team."

Silverman's journey to Olympic greatness was as arduous as it is inspiring. It is a tale of defying odds, overcoming obstacles, and the true meaning of persistence. Read her full story at <http://bit.ly/2Npw5AR>. All of the women on the 1998 U.S. Olympic Women's Ice Hockey Team were pioneers in the sport and continue to blaze trails. Read about Mleczo's ground-breaking post-hockey career at <http://bit.ly/3aaqAjs>.

1 Taft Math Teacher and Girls' Varsity Hockey Coach Gretchen Silverman (second row, far right) was part of the history-making 1984 women's ice hockey team that won gold medals in the first-ever Olympic women's gold medal game.

2 Silverman, No. 22, on the ice celebrating the victory in Nagano.

3 For Silverman, a highlight of the Hall of Fame induction ceremony was meeting the other honorees, including John Carlos, who won bronze in Mexico City in 1968. Carlos was a founding member of the Olympic Project for Human Rights and advocated a boycott of the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games pending a series of demands, including the hiring of more African American assistant coaches.

4 Silverman (far left), with members of the 1998 U.S. Olympic Women's Ice Hockey Team on stage in Colorado Springs for their induction into the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Hall of Fame in November.

Fall SPORTS wrap-up

BY STEVE PALMER
Photography by Robert Falcetti



Kelvin Baffour '22 makes a play during a playoff game against Berkshire on November 13.



Susanna Adams '22 playing against Kent on October 26.

Boys' Soccer 16-2-1 FOUNDERS LEAGUE CHAMPIONS, NEW ENGLAND CLASS A SEMIFINALISTS

It was another incredible season for the boys' varsity soccer team, arguably the best in the program's history. The Rhinos posted an impressive final record of 16-2-1 and emerged as the undefeated Founders League Champions (7-0)! For the fifth year in a row, Taft earned a spot in the Class A New England Tournament, and for the fourth consecutive year, the team reached the semifinals, falling to the eventual champion. The program has maintained national attention, being ranked as one of the top five prep school soccer teams in the country. Taft began the season with seven consecutive wins, highlighted by victories over top programs like Avon Old Farms (3-0), Deerfield (1-0), and Andover (2-0). After dropping a tight game to Berkshire, Taft produced another seven-game win streak, marked by wins against Kent (3-0),

Choate (5-2), and a thrilling 1-0 victory over Loomis to clinch the Founders League title. The Rhinos closed out the regular season by defeating rival Hotchkiss (3-1). In the New England quarterfinal, Taft knocked off defending champion Berkshire (1-0), avenging the loss from earlier in the season, before falling to eventual New England champion Worcester Academy (1-2) in the semifinals. Taft's offense was certainly entertaining this season, scoring 63 goals in 19 matches and led by a trio of outstanding central midfielders: Sammed Bawa '20 (21 goals, 5 assists), KK Baffour '22 (7 goals, 11 assists), and James Donaldson '20 (7 goals, 4 assists). Benas Babenskaskas '21 (5 goals, 1 assist), Nur Adhikarie '21 (4 goals, 2 assists), Cole Torino '20 (2 goals, 3 assists), and Charlie Shanks '20 (2 goals, 3 assists) added to this dynamic attack. A talented group of defenders—Jayce Fraser '21, Sebastian Mañon '22, Jordan Miller '20, and Ethan Hindle '20—were excellent all season. Their efforts, combined with those

of goalkeepers Chris Murphy '21 and Brooks Reed '21, limited opponents to only 13 goals for the entire season, less than a goal per game on average. There are plenty of young players eager to build upon this success next year, and the graduating seniors, especially captains Sammed Bawa and Ethan Hindle, will leave an incredible legacy.

Girls' Soccer 7-6-4

2019 was a good year for the program—the JV squad went undefeated at 13-0-4, while the varsity posted a winning 7-6-4 record. Led by its seniors, Taft was able to put forth great effort in every match despite numerous injuries that kept the starting lineup in flux. The team rebounded well after dropping three of four in the middle of the season to go unbeaten in their next five matches heading into the final game against rival Hotchkiss. Taking on a talented Hotchkiss squad, Taft played their

absolute best game and were unlucky to fall 2-1 in the final three minutes of the match after holding a 1-0 lead and pushing the opponent's net for long stretches in the second half. Other highlights were a 5-3 victory over Westminster, dominant wins against Kent and Williston, and an exciting 2-2 tie with Loomis under the lights. Taft will miss the presence of cocaptains Kayla Thomas '20 and Elly MacKay '20, and the entire Class of 2020 that set such a healthy and competitive atmosphere, but several leading scorers return in the fall of 2020. Patience Kum '21 led the team in goals for the third straight year, and Paton Roberts '21 took over as the overall point scorer with 6 goals and 12 assists. Both players earned New England honors and will be part of a very strong senior class looking to get Taft Soccer back into the playoffs in 2020.

Varsity Field Hockey 11-7

NEW ENGLAND CLASS A QUARTERFINALISTS

The varsity field hockey team, led by co-captains Abigail Hano '20 and Olivia King '20, welcomed nine new players to the roster this fall, but this group of 20 individuals was determined to work together. Disappointed with their first tests, a road loss against Milton Academy and another against a very strong Sacred Heart Greenwich team, Taft would not let this start set them back. The Rhinos went on to win seven of their next eight games, marked with a victory over Loomis Chaffee (2-1) under the lights and an exciting overtime win in the rain against Williston Northampton (2-1). Senior Day was highlighted by a 7-2 victory over visiting Northfield Mount Hermon with six of

the goals coming from the senior class—Olivia King (3), Abigail Hano (1), Hartley Messer (1), and Eliza Travelstead (1). A defensive battle on Taft-Hotchkiss Day put Taft on the losing end, but this would not be the final game of their season. The Rhinos landed the eighth seed in the NEPSAC Class A tournament. For the second year in a row, they would travel to the top seed in hopes of an upset. Unfortunately, Sacred Heart Greenwich was too much for Taft to handle, and their championship run would come to an end in the quarterfinals. Abigail Hano and Libby Dolan '21 were named Western New England All-Stars. Emma Hentemann '21 and Dolan were named Founders All-League. Hano and Jenna Guglielmi '22 were named NEPSAC All-League, and Chloe Agopian '23 and Olivia King were awarded honorable mentions. Captains-elect are Libby Dolan and Emma Hentemann.



Goalie Jenna Guglielmi '22 makes a save against Choate on October 12.



Receiver Skyler Bell '21 reaches to make a catch thrown by quarterback Josh Schwartz '20 against Salisbury on September 21.

Football 5-3

Coming off a 2018 Erickson League and NEPSAC Bowl championship, Taft started the season with high expectations and three consecutive wins against Phillips Exeter Academy (33-28), Salisbury School (22-6), and Williston Northampton (55-28), an especially memorable night game with a huge Taft crowd. The team then produced a poor result against a tough Trinity-Pawling team, followed by two more losses against Brunswick and Avon Old Farms, who proved to be the top two teams in the league. The team's confidence did not waver; the squad showed their resiliency and fought for a big win against Kent on Family Weekend (49-14) and a Taft-Hotchkiss Day victory (25-20), culminating a great season for the seniors, when the whole Taft crowd rushed the field in celebration. The Rhinos were led offensively by some of the finest athletes in New England. University of Iowa-bound WR Dante Vines '20 had an exceptional season: 49 receptions for 552 yards and 8 TDs in seven games, while often being the focal point of our opponents' defensive efforts. Skyler Bell '21 (36 catches for 549 yards and 7 TD), captain Michael Yamin '20, Jacob Rooks '21, and M.J. Didio '21 rounded out what was arguably the best receiving core in the NEPSAC. Captain Mashod Harrison '20 battled through injuries and carried the ground game, while Nick Brown '23 adeptly



Finley Delafield '21 spikes the ball versus Choate on November 6.

line—Michael Spencer '20 (10 sacks), Stanley Dennis '20 (10 tackles for loss), and Osirus Rhodes '20 who put together two of the best seasons for defensive linemen in recent memory. Captain Jack Bryant '20 led the team in tackles, while Zach Derish '20 provided leadership and consistently strong performance throughout the year. Jacob Rooks was tasked with shutting down the opponents' best receiving threat, and he excelled in that role. The 2019 season was a successful one, and the returning players are eager to get back to bowl contention in 2020.

Volleyball 10-8

With numerous position changes, injuries, and lineup adjustments, the 2019 season proved to be one rife with possibility and growth. Doing what was best for the team

and their teammates, players tackled the unfamiliarity of a new defensive scheme, new positions, and new techniques. As a result, practices remained productive and focused, and the Rhinos earned hard-fought victories against strong Class A opponents Choate, Sacred Heart, and Miss Porter's, ultimately coming together as a cohesive



FALL ATHLETIC AWARDS

Boys' Varsity Soccer

Livingston Carroll Soccer Award
Ethan Hindle '20
Sammed Bawa '20

Girls' Varsity Soccer

1976 Girls' Soccer Award
Kayla Thomas '20
Elly MacKay '20

Girls' Varsity Field Hockey

Field Hockey Award
Abigail Hano '20
Olivia King '20

Football

Black Award
Diante Vines '20

Harry K. Cross Football Award

Michael Yamin '20
Mashod Harrison '20

Girls' Cross Country

Girls' Cross Country Award
Katie Bootsma '20
Michelle Lian '20

Boys' Cross Country

John B. Small Award
Ian Staines '20

Girls' Varsity Volleyball

Volleyball Award
Adelaide Delafield '20



Ian Staines '20 on his way to setting a new home course record of 16:10 on Family Day against Kent.

unit. This was made most evident on Taft-Hotchkiss Day. Down 0-2 at Hotchkiss, the team would rally to a 15-13 fifth-set win in front of a rowdy, emotional crowd. Such a win, such a final match, was a great way to send off the seniors who were a core part of this team that learned how to fight relentlessly, how to support each other between points, and how to make themselves more efficient, varied attackers. Heading into next year, Taft looks to build upon the lessons learned and the successes earned. The team will return kill leader Mason Delafield '22, who averaged nearly 15 kills a match, along with our block leader, Posey Durling '21, who earned over a dozen blocks this

season. Senior captain Addie Delafield '20 received the Volleyball Award and an All-NEPSAC Award. The All-Founders awards were given to Melisa Kayali '21 and Zoe Kemper '20. The team will be led next year by Finley Delafield '21 and Sarah Katz '21.

Boys' Cross Country 4-3

The 2019 season was marked by exuberance, grit, and continued growth, all leading to strong wins against Choate Rosemary Hall (22-37), Trinity-Pawling (19-42), Williston Northampton (25-30), and Kent (21-36) on Family Day, in which the home

course record was broken. Taft finished third at the Founders League Championships, improving two places from the 2018 season, and then placed eighth at the NEPSTA Division I Championships at Northfield Mount Hermon in the final race. Individual accomplishments for the season included five harriers breaking into the top 30 performances by Taft runners on the home course, including Yuk Sum Chan '21, Nate Dexter '22, Mark Naguib '20, Joe Zarif '20, and Ian Staines '20, whose 16:10 bested the previous home course record set last year by an incredible 16 seconds. Staines and Zarif were recognized as Founders League All-Stars (finishing third and 12th in that race), and Staines, placing 10th overall at New Englands, qualified for an All-Stars race, in which he placed fifth among the best runners in four NEPSTA divisions. All-Founders League recipients were Joe Zarif and Stefan Kim '20 for their great leadership, while

Staines was the recipient of the John B. Small Award for his outstanding season. Next year's team will be captained by Mason Conto '21, Joey Nihill '21, and Andrii Torchylo '21.

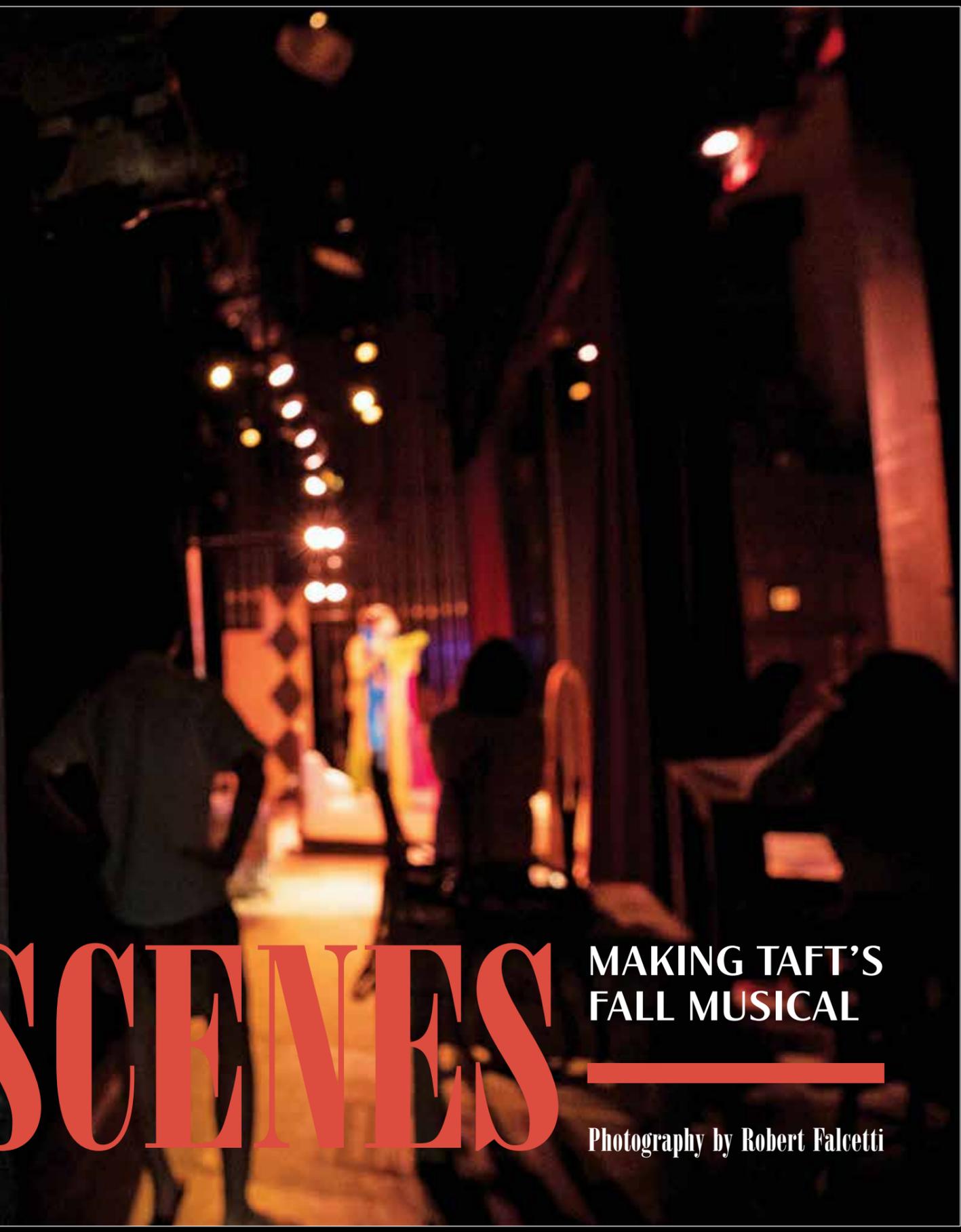
Girls' Cross Country 2-6

This young but talented team was determined to build from the early weeks to be at their best for the major races in November. The first race in 90-degree heat at Avon showed that the Rhinos had a lot of work to do, but with each week the team stepped up their training and came together. That unity and steady work paid off late in the season, especially the resounding win against Kent (17-44) on Family Weekend. In near-perfect conditions on a day when every Taft team would win at home, the girls went hard from the start, with nearly every one of Taft's 22 runners setting a personal record

on the home course. Taft's varsity top seven (Stella Oldakowski '22, Charlie Brodhead '23, Mare Gandarela '21, Annabel Pick '22, Katie Bootsma '20, Michelle Lian '20, and Annie Woodward '23) put up some very fast times, and carried this momentum into the final two weeks where the Rhinos placed fifth at the Founders League Championship, led by Oldakowski (12th, 21:13), Brodhead (16th, 21:39), and Gandarela (18th, 21:49) in a field of nine teams and 63 runners; and then 11th place at the New England Division I championships in the season's final race. For the second straight year, captains and four-year varsity letter winners Bootsma and Lian earned the Girls' Cross Country Award for their leadership, dedication, and spirit. A very strong returning core of young runners, including a JV squad that went 7-1 on the season, will be led by cocaptains Gandarela and Sinéad Connolly '21, and lead runner Oldakowski.



Stella Oldakowski '22 in an October meet against Kent. SEAN PADGETT



BEHIND THE SCENES

MAKING TAFT'S
FALL MUSICAL

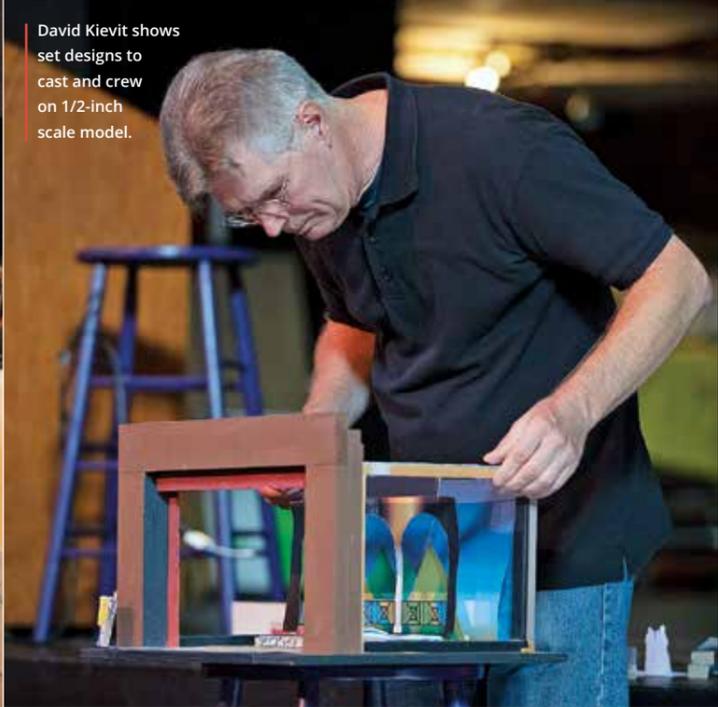
Photography by Robert Falcetti



Moment from a rehearsal for some of the cast of 38 and crew of 38.



Stage crew construct the pier.

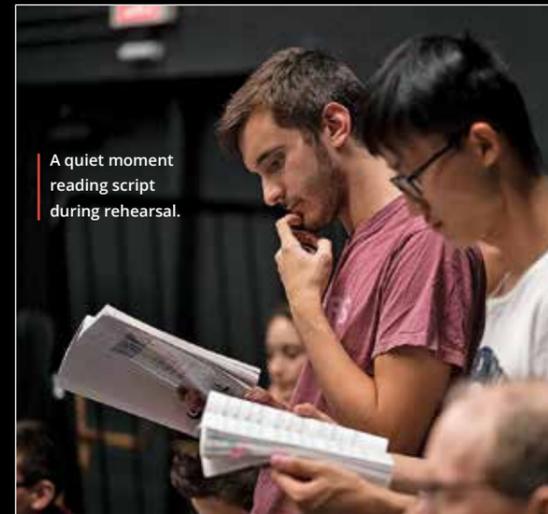


David Kievit shows set designs to cast and crew on 1/2-inch scale model.

“
 WATCHING THE STUDENTS RISE TO THE CHALLENGES OF CARPENTRY, SCENIC PAINTING, LIGHTING, AND FINALLY CONTROLLING AND OPERATING THE TECHNICAL ELEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE PERFORMANCES WAS REWARDING.
 ”
 —David Kievit, set and light design



Kievit working on complex lighting design.

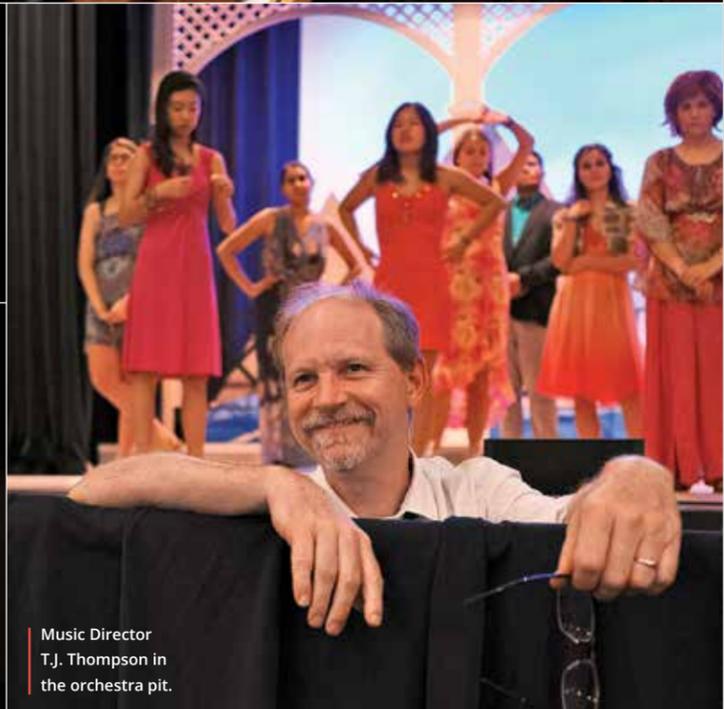


A quiet moment reading script during rehearsal.



Crew member at the soundboard.

“
SEEING HOW PROUD EACH OF THE KIDS WERE ABOUT THE PRODUCTION AS THEY GOT FURTHER AND FURTHER INTO THE RUN WAS GREAT.
 ”
 —T.J. Thompson, musical director



Music Director T.J. Thompson in the orchestra pit.



Director Helena Fifer reviews scene with cast member.

“
WE DECIDED TO HAVE SINGERS IN THE ORCHESTRA PIT, SO THEY COULD BE NEAR T.J. AND HE COULD DIRECT THEM. SO DEPENDING ON WHO WAS NEEDED ON STAGE AND WHO HAD A COSTUME CHANGE, THE GROUP OF SINGERS WAS DIFFERENT FOR EACH NUMBER, AND KIDS WERE RUNNING BACK AND FORTH FROM THE STAGE TO THE ORCHESTRA PIT (WHICH IS NOT THAT BIG AND WAS ALREADY CRAMMED WITH KEYBOARDS AND DRUMMERS). IT TOOK A TON OF ORGANIZATION AND MONITORING.
 ”
 —Helena Fifer, director



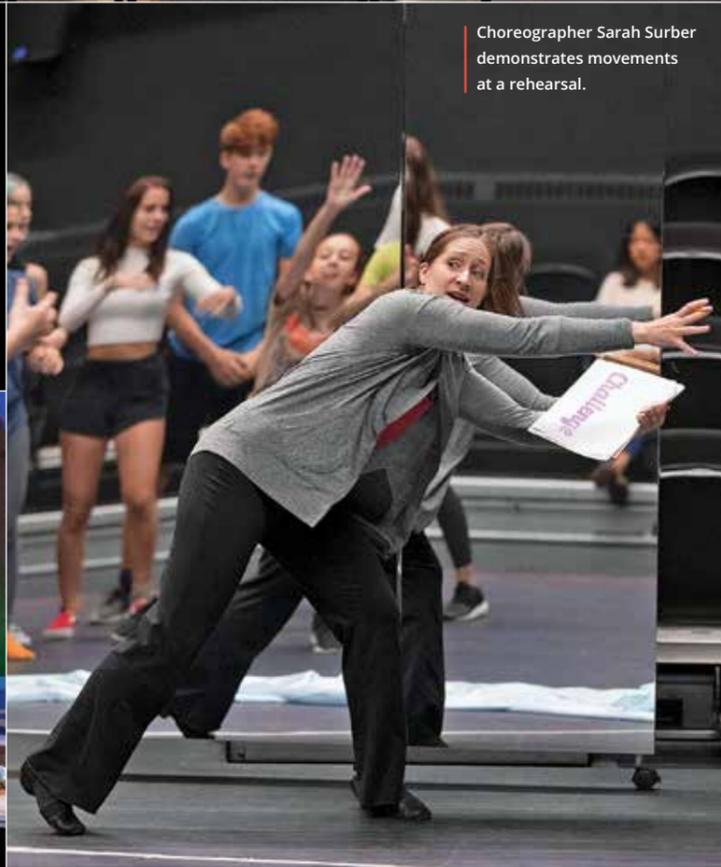
Singer in orchestra pit, with cast performing on stage.



Dance scene rehearsal in the Black Box.

“THE MOST REWARDING PART OF THIS PRODUCTION WAS SEEING THE LARGE GROUP NUMBERS COME TOGETHER. ORCHESTRATING 38 CAST MEMBERS ON ONE STAGE IS A CHALLENGE, BUT SEEING THEM ALL MOVE IN UNISON AND IN AND OUT OF FORMATIONS WAS REALLY WONDERFUL.”

—Sarah Surber, choreography



Choreographer Sarah Surber demonstrates movements at a rehearsal.



Beach dance scene.



Dream scene during dress rehearsal.

Three of the male leads during a dress rehearsal.



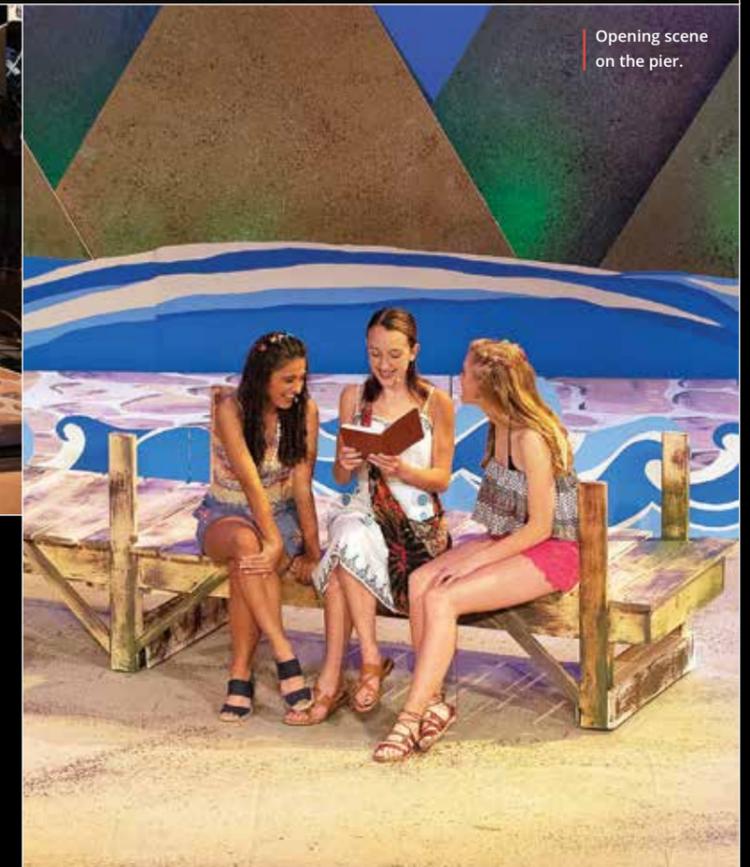
Dancing Queens and ensemble.



Opening scene on the pier.



Crew member helps prepare for the wedding scene.



“ ANYONE CAN BE A PART OF THE FALL MUSICAL, WHICH MEANS THAT THERE IS A RANGE OF TALENT TO WORK WITH. IT IS ALWAYS REWARDING TO SEE KIDS WITH VERY LITTLE PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE EMBRACE THE CHALLENGE AND TRANSFORM INTO DANCERS AND SINGERS. ”

—Helena Fifer, director



Cast doing makeup in a dressing room.

Tags ID costumes for each song.



Carefully labeled costume rack backstage.

—CAST—

- Jackson Almasian '23
- Lauren Anderson '20
- Nick Baird '20
- Diana Braghis '22
- Sam Choi '21
- Avery Comish '20
- Lily Darwin '21
- Sasa Darwin '23
- Audrey D'Autorio '22
- Grace Deng '23
- Erin Farrell '20
- Beckett Fine '20
- Coleman Grustas '22
- James Hughes '21
- Kimmie Johnson '20
- Leo Kaplan '22
- Grace Kenney '22
- Julia Kunzelmann '20
- Babi Marquez Jones '22
- Sheina Patrick '20
- Kunchok Palmo '20
- Anishka Perera '23
- Claire Roberts '23
- Meghan Spangenberg '20
- Chris Stutt '21
- Michelle Tetro '20
- Lily Thompson '20
- Frank Trosky '21
- Yehor Tverdokhlibov '21
- Natalie Vogelstein '20
- Benjamin White '22
- Sarah Woermer '20
- Walker Wonham '20
- Annabelle Wyman '20
- Mina Xiao '23
- Poom Yoosiri '20
- Catherine Zhao '22
- Ivy Zhuang '21

—ORCHESTRA—

- Edvin Tran Hoac '20
- Emilio Justo '22
- Stephen Mayer '22
- Omi Oliver '23
- Anna Serbina '21
- Jaden Spangenberg '23
- Harry Wang '21
- Harry Yuan '23
- James Allen
- Paul Bilodeau
- Fred Krug
- Bob Nolte
- T.J. Thompson

—PRODUCTION CREW—

SET CONSTRUCTION, LIGHTING, AND STAGE MANAGEMENT

- Poli Chubarova '22
- Conner Colucci '22
- Ana Coyanda-Parkzes '23
- Lily Darwin '21
- Jada Dawkins '22
- Elena Echavarria '21
- Beckett Fine '20
- Cory Gan '22
- Olivia Graham '23
- Angela Han '20
- Kayli Henderson '23
- Aghogho Ibori '23
- Ashanti Legare '23
- Tony Liu '20
- Isaiah Marquez-Greene '23
- Sophia Pan '22
- Ziara Pichardo '23
- Liana Stoll '22
- Kaitlyn Taliaferro '22
- Angela You '23
- Madelyn Yow '20
- Harry Yuan '23
- Nicole Zang '23
- Lesley Neilson Bowman
- Amber Cameron
- Cindy Fabian
- Bruce Fifer
- Helena Fifer
- Dot Harrop
- Yuna Hur
- David Kievit
- Chip Machokas
- Dawn Menta
- Sarah Surber

—STAGECRAFT CLASS—

- Aidan Chan '22
- Aidan Foley '23
- Eli Frank '22
- Betsy Good '21
- Leo Kaplan '22
- Brandon Kokedjian '21
- Jack Kreisberg '22
- Anna-Lee Lynch '23
- Babi Marques Jones '22
- Adam Pomerantz '22

MAMMA MIA!

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY

**BENNY ANDERSSON
BJORN ULVAEUS**

AND SOME SONGS WITH STIG ANDERSON

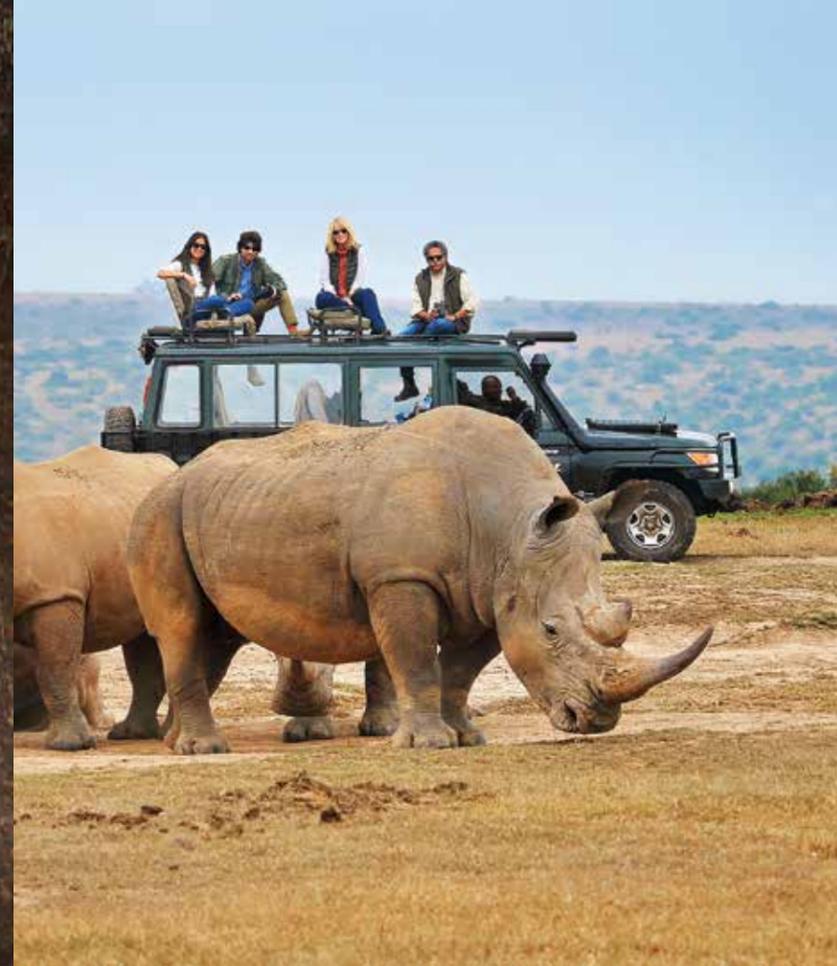
BOOK BY **CATHERINE JOHNSON**
ORIGINALLY CONCEIVED BY **JUDY CRAYMER**

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Joy Phelan-Pinto '75 and Mark Thornton '91*



LOST AND FOUND IN AFRICA

Mark Thornton '91

By Neil Vigdor '95

*There are no roads or lodges
to speak of in the “bush,”
where wildlife sightings include
zebras, leopards, giraffes,
and the fringe-eared oryx...
a type of antelope.*

TO DISCOVER
MARK THORNTON'S
AFRICA, YOU MUST
FIRST ALLOW YOURSELF
TO GET LOST.

Put away your smartphone. Leave the creature comforts of the SUV.

Thornton's adopted continent of 25 years is best experienced on foot, from the cacophony of its wildlife and vast terrain to the rhythms of nature and the warmth of its people.

His company, Mark Thornton Safaris, specializes in walking and wilderness camping expeditions in the Serengeti, Tarangire, and Ruaha national parks, as well as the Maasai Steppe in northeastern Tanzania. One of the guiding principles of his business is “We go where no one goes.”

Encountering a lion or an elephant on a walking safari—albeit from a safe distance—is unlike anything else. “When you're on foot everything's different,” Thornton says. “It's real.”

Big, pristine
wilderness “where
no others go.”



Fun with elephants out of a luxury camp in Tarangire.

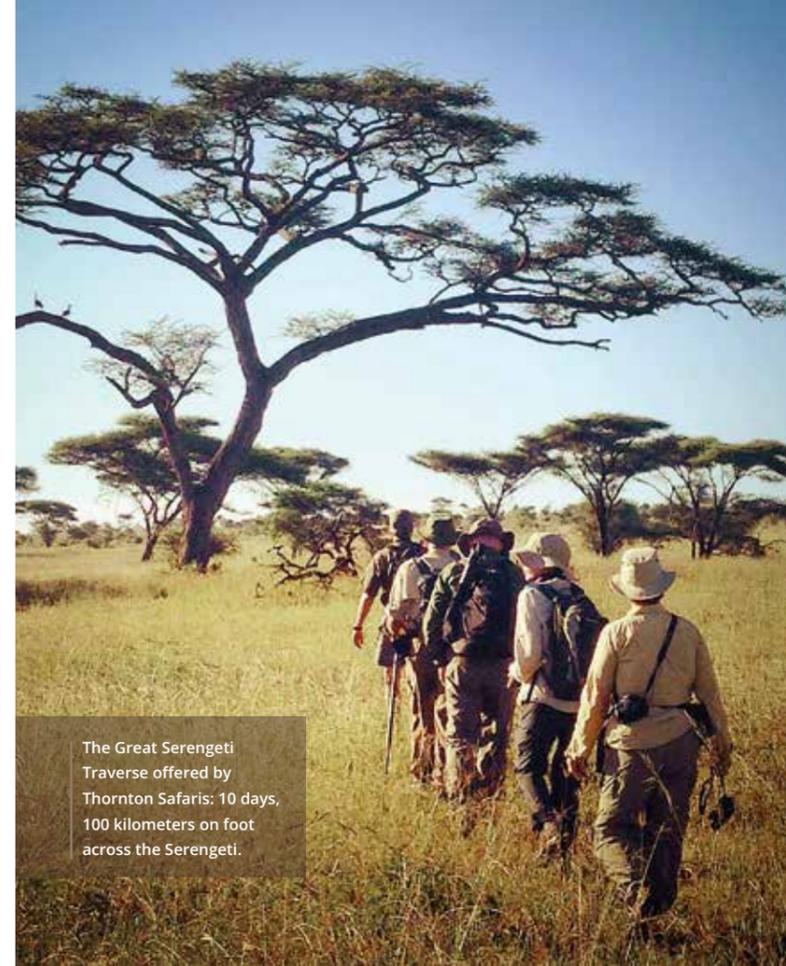
has its share of “run-of-the-mill” safari outfits, according to Thornton, who started his own guide company about 20 years ago. The company creates custom itineraries for its clients based on their preferences, physical abilities, budget, and timetable. The starting price point for a safari package, detailed on thorntonsafaris.com, is about \$800 a day per person.

Thornton also offers non-walking trips. “There could be a really great person who says, ‘My knees are shot. I can’t really walk a lot.’ Or ‘My wife’s not going to stay in that adventure tent,’” he says.

The vast majority of Thornton’s clients are from the United States and Canada. There are first-timers. Young and old. Families who want more creature comforts. And then there are those who just can’t get enough of Africa.

“I’ve had clients who have come back every year for eight years,” Thornton says. “It’s really nice because they become friends.”

Thornton’s safari business is based in the city of Arusha in northern Tanzania, which is a popular jumping-off point for visitors to the Serengeti and Mount Kilimanjaro. Many of them are drawn to the Serengeti for the great wildebeest migration, an annual caravan of two million grazers that



The Great Serengeti Traverse offered by Thornton Safaris: 10 days, 100 kilometers on foot across the Serengeti.

Thornton says there is a fundamental respect for the boundaries of the animals’ natural habitat that comes from years of experience possessed by him and his three fellow guides, who are like family members.

“It’s not about, let’s see how close we can get and push the envelope,” he says. “When you’re out there walking, there is an anticipation and excitement.”

Thornton first visited Africa as part of a semester abroad program during his senior year at the University of Richmond, where he studied wildlife ecology and conservation. After college, he returned to work as an operations manager for a safari company.

“I got exposed to walking safaris,” he says. “Then that changed everything. It really kind of clicked with what a real safari is like.”

Like many other popular tourist destinations, Africa

“When you’re on foot everything’s different.... It’s real.”

A beautiful leopard near camp.



crosses northern Tanzania and southern Kenya.

About one third of the national park is generally off-limits to tourism, but Thornton’s company has been granted access to some of those untouched areas because its walking safaris have a much lower impact on the ecosystem. It would be like having a swath of Yellowstone National Park all to yourself, Thornton says.

“So it’s kind of the purist, leave-no-trace, sustainable safari,” he says. “There’s been a lot of encounters over the past 25 years, whether it’s walking into lions or having those amazing experiences with elephants where you’re close and looking at each other. What really moves us the most is still being able to camp in areas that are not compromised, areas that are pure wilderness. That’s the thing that makes us the happiest.”

There are no roads or lodges to speak of in the “bush,” where wildlife sightings include zebras, leopards, giraffes and the fringe-eared oryx, which is a type of antelope. The Serengeti is also known for termite mounds, which are made of mud and held together by termites’ saliva. Forget about Wi-Fi.

“You get some high-powered people who are on call 24 hours a day, and Day 7 they come up and say, ‘Mark, you know what? I haven’t been on the device in seven days.’”

Thornton and his fellow guides are permitted to carry



After a big walk: eat well and sleep well!



Ever-busy banded mongooses at their den.

heavy rifles, though they are a last resort for safety. Each has years of training. “You’re not just going to walk off into the Serengeti unless you have a good crew,” he says.

Thornton’s adopted home served as inspiration for his novel, *Kid Moses*, which is about a boy who wanders the East African wilderness. Thornton lives with his wife and two young daughters in the forest outside Arusha. Every summer for one month, the family returns to New York City for vacation and to reconnect with family and friends stateside. “You’re gonna laugh. They want to go ride the subway,” he says of his daughters.

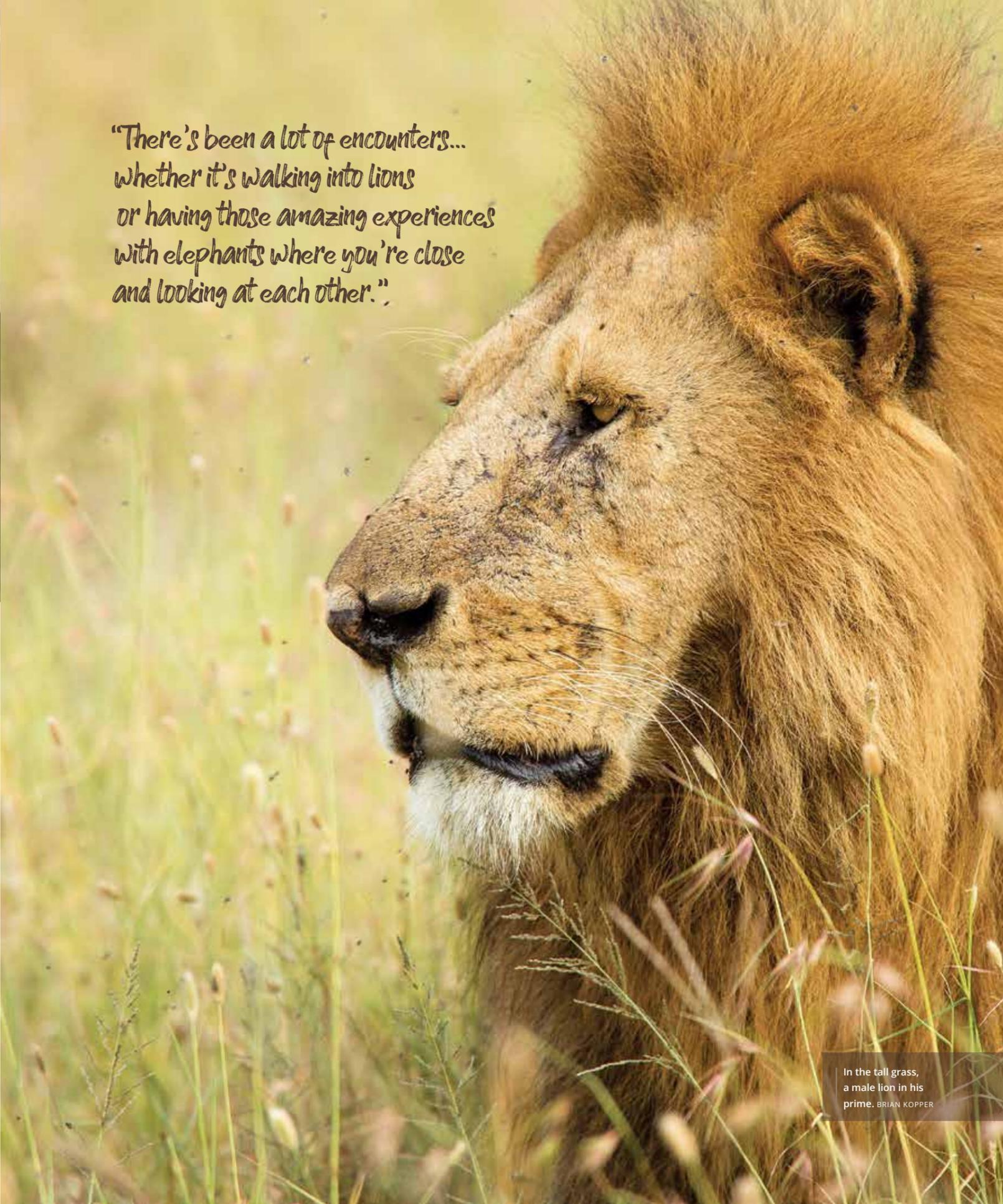
Thornton serves on the board of the Dorobo Fund, a nonprofit conservation group dedicated to protecting the cultures, people, landscapes, and biodiversity of Tanzania. His clients often leave the country with a newfound appreciation for the people.

“I think that people are coming here thinking about wildlife and they leave thinking about how warm and friendly Tanzanians are. Without sounding corny or clichéd,” Thornton says, “you’re out there in the bush together.”

—Neil Vigdor '95 is a reporter for *The New York Times*

To learn more about Thornton Safaris visit www.thorntonsafaris.com, www.greatserengetitraverse.com

“There’s been a lot of encounters... whether it’s walking into lions or having those amazing experiences with elephants where you’re close and looking at each other.”



In the tall grass, a male lion in his prime. BRIAN KOPPER

WELL TRAVELED

Joy Phelan-Pinto '75

By Neil Vigdor '95

*"You really do feel like you're
in the presence of God,"
Phelan-Pinto says of Africa.*

MOST PEOPLE LIVE
TO TRAVEL, BUT
TRAVELING IS A
WAY OF LIFE FOR
JOY PHELAN-PINTO '75.

She's visited 120 countries and territories, an odyssey befitting a member of a diplomatic corps.

No place has the sheer magnetism like Africa for the Connecticut-raised Phelan-Pinto, who is the executive director of Micato Safaris, a family-run enterprise started by her in-laws, Felix and Jane Pinto.

"You really do feel like you're in the presence of God," Phelan-Pinto says of Africa.

The business evolved from a taxi service bought by her father-in-law, a well known farmer, and got its name, Micato, from the first initials of what was known as the Mini Cabs & Tours Co. Felix Pinto had raised champion pigs, and Jane Pinto is a former Kenyan table tennis champion who has been honored by the International Olympic Committee. They raised their family on a farm outside Nairobi.

Sunset drive
through Kenya's
Lewa Wildlife
Conservancy.

The Phelan-Pinto family bottle feeding an orphaned rhino at Kenya's Ol Jogi Conservancy.



Micato treats its guests like family members. "Being a family company, we're kind of barely a company in that sense," Phelan-Pinto says.

A tower of giraffes in Solio Game Reserve, Kenya.



Since Micato's founding in 1966, it has thrived, dominating *Travel & Leisure's* Best Tour Operator award category and earning acclaim from *The New York Times*, *Forbes*, and *Condé Nast Traveler* for its painstakingly planned safaris, personalized service, and best-in-class accommodations. The company has employees on three continents and also organizes excursions to India. "There's something for everybody," Phelan-Pinto says.

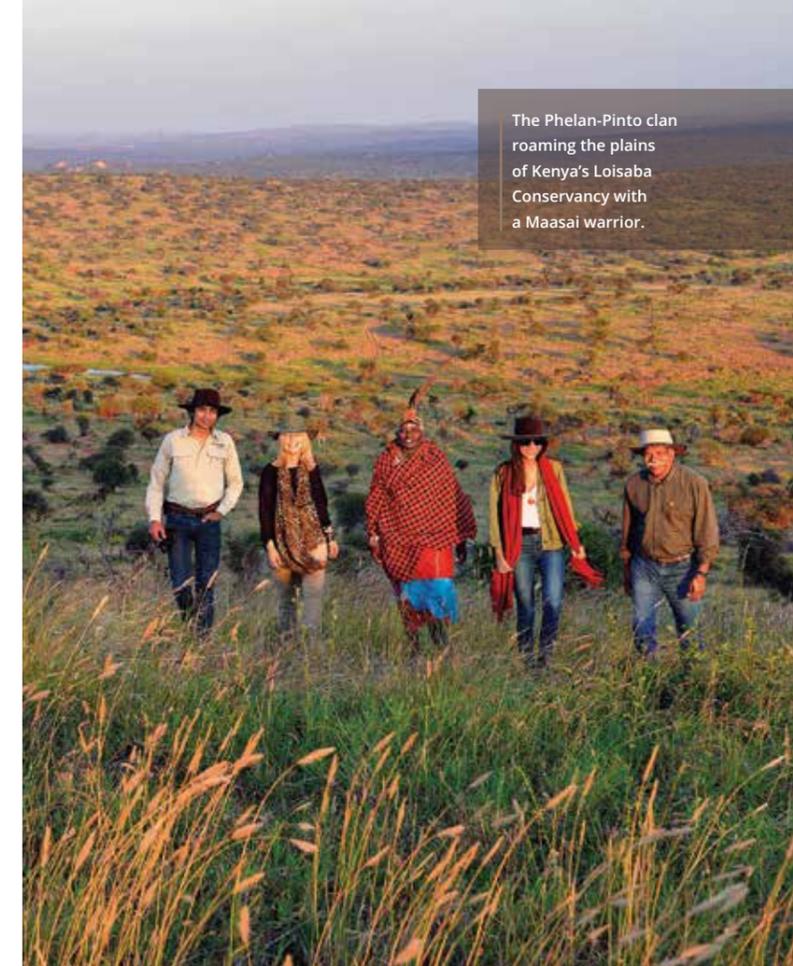
Micato offers 12 "Classic Safaris" programs, plus customized trips, including a 14-day Hemingway Wing sojourn of Kenya and Tanzania during which guests can walk in the "bush" with Maasai warriors, go horseback riding on a coffee estate, and catch a glimpse of unique species such as Grévy's zebra, the Somali ostrich, gerenuk, beisa oryx, and reticulated giraffe.

Micato's clients are encouraged to spend at least one morning or afternoon on foot, after which they will often find a breakfast spread or sunset cocktails awaiting them.

"Certain people absolutely fall in love, and they come back over and over and over," Phelan-Pinto says.

In Africa, "the sky is the highway," with air travel enabling Micato's clients to cover much more of the continent. It gives them more time to explore, whether it's the sand dunes of Namibia, Rwanda's volcanic national park with its gorillas, or the ancient rock art near Lake Turkana in northern Kenya.

The Phelan-Pinto clan roaming the plains of Kenya's Loisaba Conservancy with a Maasai warrior.





A multigenerational family safari with Joy Phelan-Pinto '75 (second from right) and husband Dennis (third from right), flanked by daughter Sasha and son Tristan; Dennis's parents, Felix and Jane Pinto (founders of Micato Safaris); and Dennis's sister, Anna Pinto (far left), with husband Dave Khales.

Phelan-Pinto is in charge of Micato's branding, from the carefully curated editorial and photo content of its website, micato.com, to its impressive brochures. Its Africa brochure is 171 pages long. "We look at it more as a coffee table type of book," she says. "We don't want it to be something that you roll up and swat flies with."

Micato treats its guests like family members, says Phelan-Pinto. They are invited to have dinner with Felix and Jane in Kenya or family friends in Cape Town or in Johannesburg, if their travels take them to South Africa. "Being a family company, we're kind of barely a company in that sense," she says.

Phelan-Pinto began her career in the travel industry as a cruise director for small academically oriented cruises. One of the charters went to East Africa. It was there that she met her husband, Dennis Pinto, who was a ground operator for tour groups in Kenya. They had spoken on the phone for a year before they finally met.

"I remember thinking, he has a nice voice," Phelan-Pinto says of her husband, who is Micato's managing director.

The couple has two children, Sasha, who goes to Brown University (Phelan-Pinto's alma mater), and Tristan, who



Sasha, daughter of Joy Phelan-Pinto '75, with orphaned calves at the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust in Kenya.

If visitors want something more remote, Phelan-Pinto has a suggestion: something called a star bed. Tucked away in the 60,000-acre Loisaba Conservancy in Kenya, the four-poster beds are placed on raised wooden platforms offering complete seclusion. The beds have luxurious comforters, pillows, and a duvet, as well as mosquito netting. "They roll you out on a platform high above the plains," she says. "You've slept literally under the stars."

Micato offers a Hemingway Wing package, a 14-day sojourn of Kenya and Tanzania during which guests can walk in the "bush" with Maasai warriors, go horseback riding on a coffee estate, and catch a glimpse of unique species.



The family amidst herds of migrating wildebeests in Kenya's Maasai Mara.

goes to Yale University. The family splits its time between Africa and the U.S.

Phelan-Pinto's mother-in-law, Jane, spearheaded Micato's philanthropic activities after working with Mother Teresa. Micato-AmericaShare, the business's nonprofit arm that was founded more than 25 years ago, helps children and women in need in Nairobi who have been affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Once they have been in Africa for a week or two, visitors get to see firsthand those helped by Micato and those in need. "People come to Africa to see the wildlife," Phelan-Pinto says, "but they leave in love with the people."

East Africa has made significant strides since Phelan-Pinto first visited. "Everything was very basic," she says. "You brought your own light bulb. You brought your own toilet paper." She would often bring things to her in-laws.

"If you lost your luggage 20 years ago, you were kind of stuck," she says. Now there are gourmet restaurants and shopping malls.

"We laugh—there's better cell phone service in Nairobi than there is in parts of Connecticut," she says. ■

—Neil Vigdor '95 is a reporter for *The New York Times*

Learn more about Micato's safaris at www.micato.com.

Winter WONDERLAND



Above: Horace Dutton Taft sledding with students.

Right: Students sledding in 1980



There are times when I wonder what Taft's campus would have been like if Horace Dutton Taft had moved the school to Watertown's Nova Scotia Hill, a few miles away. For those who aren't aware of this, he had purchased land for a new campus, but after his wife, Winnie, passed away, he lost his steam.

I cannot imagine Taft without our rolling hills with leaves blazing in the fall or the quiet on a foggy spring morning.

And I bet we can all agree, Taft has some of the best hills for winter sledding! Even Horace himself loved it.

—Beth Nolan Lovallo '93
The Leslie D. Manning Archives



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