



LOIS LOWRY '54

AND OTHER WRITERS AT BERKELEY CARROLL



You'd think writing one's final letter as Editor

would be an easy task—even a formulaic one. You'd think, as part of the process, I'd delineate how many issues I've shepherded through the editorial process (fifteen). Or that I'd recall with fondness my favorite interview (the caterer **Abigail Kirsch '47**, who shared a corn pudding recipe for 400 that I still use at all my banquets). Or maybe I'd mention in passing how many years I've been at Berkeley Carroll (nine as Director of Communications, plus an additional ten as the parent of

two BC "lifers"). But it's really not that easy.

Maybe you think I would talk about the magazine's history (prior to my tenure, there had been one issue published in 2003 and another in 2005), or how we decided on the name *The Magazine* (it's descriptive—let's leave it at that). Or even who the "we" are (my talented graphic designer Bob Lane of Studio Lane, who has designed this magazine since my editorial tenure began in 2006, and Matt Weinstock, my assistant since 2011, whose engaging prose style belies just how difficult beautiful writing can be.)

For those less interested in the magazine's antecedents than you are in the institution itself, you might think I'd take this opportunity to talk about how Berkeley Carroll has changed during the nine years I've overseen its communications department. Or you might think I could offer insights regarding the extraordinary alumni writers we're honoring in this issue (including the legendary **Lois Lowry '54**, whose links to Berkeley were only recently discovered). Or maybe you think I could come up with some advice for the magazine's next editor, or even some prognostications regarding the future of the school.

And you might think I might urge you to read and enjoy this, my final issue of *The Magazine*. Because, after all, that's easy.

Enjoy the issue!

Jodie Corngold

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The Berkeley Carroll School Magazine is published by the Communications Office for parents, alumni, grandparents, faculty, and friends of the school. The views expressed in this publication are solely those of the authors.

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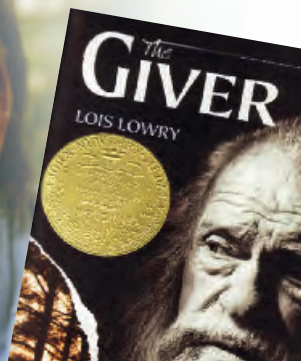
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DEAR FRIENDS,

BERKELEY CARROLL has long been recognized for its ability to produce outstanding student writers. Starting in Lower School students are asked to exercise and stretch their writing skills across a broad spectrum of styles and forms. Evidence of our success comes each year when our middle and high school students are awarded top honors in national contests. Our school's literary magazine has regularly been recognized for the excellence of its fiction and poetry. Adding to the diversity of our students' work, we now produce a science journal that showcases original papers by our seniors.

We get a reality check on our success in preparing our graduates when



BOB VITALO

students come back to visit after graduation and routinely tell us that while their fellow students at college may struggle with the writing requirements, BC alums feel uniquely equipped to meet the demands of higher education.

While the awards and success in college are satisfying, we have a much more important goal when emphasizing the necessity of clear, concise and effective written communication. In this technologically advanced world with the crush of demands on time,

now more than ever, there is the need to connect with others. In academic, social, and professional arenas it is essential to be articulate and literate in order to project one's distinct voice. In learning to put together the right words, students take steps to make a life.



In this technologically advanced world with the crush of demands on time, now more than ever, there is the need to connect with others. In academic, social, and professional arenas it is essential to be articulate and literate in order to project one's distinct voice."

As always, thank you for your interest and support in our school; our shared experiences make all of us richer.

Best,

Robert D. Vitalo

Head of School

Follow Bob at
twitter.com/bobvitalo

THIRD GRADE “IMMIGRANTS” DEAL WITH ANARCHY, LICE, BANANAS

“What’s your business in America?”

a gruff immigration officer asked. “Babysitting,” said a babushka-wearing third grader.

Passersby on Carroll Street might have done double takes on the morning of October 30, 2013, but for the third grade, Berkeley Carroll’s annual Ellis Island re-enactment was an undertaking of total seriousness. One boy who was detained for being an anarchist even burst into tears and had to be comforted.

After waiting in holding facilities in the “old country” (i.e.,

the Lower School music room), the third graders—clutching passports, hobo sacks, and worn leather suitcases—boarded a three-person cardboard ship and walked it to the school atrium, which stood in for Ellis Island. “I’m just really worried,” said one boy of the inspection process, which included jumping jacks, lice checks, and arduous questioning from LS teachers. This year, the interrogations were conducted in Spanish—both to

Documents are carefully read before immigrants are allowed to enter.





Third graders "sail" to the new country.

jibe with BC's partial-immersion program and to give third graders the disorienting feeling of being in a strange land. "In my ten years doing this, I've never seen anyone purposely try to get deported," said **LS Librarian Briar Sauro**, who asked students about their finances, heritage, and political leanings. "They're all *terrified*."

New citizens ascended to the second floor of the atrium for a rousing chorus of "You're a Grand Old Flag," while detainees wrote mournful letters home ("I am very very very sad that I am detained but in the meanwhile I have tried a new fruit called the orange!"). The re-enactment is part of the third grade's yearlong study of

immigration—and in their readings, explained **LS Director Elise Goldman**, "there's always a quasi-amusing anecdote about an immigrant being presented with a banana or an orange and trying to eat this exotic fruit with the skin still on."

GUTS & GLORY *at MS Olympics*

At the inaugural Middle School Olympic Games on February 26, 2014, there were both handstands and free-style raps, both raucous cheers and moments of respectful hush. The crowd went utterly silent before the paper airplane launch, and one superstitious seventh grader kissed the snout of his plane for luck. **Middle School Dean Judi O'Brien** announced, in a sportscaster's monotone, "Our athletes have been visualizing this moment, in some cases, for their entire lives."

The event was devised by the MS Student Council as a respite from the long, cold winter, with events that "everyone likes to do, but no one is really good at," such as limbo-dancing and whistling. (One of the rejected event ideas was a luge that would have used "a frozen Slip 'N Slide.")

Council members spent the day of the Olympics dealing with pre-game jitters ("We were worried, because nobody had signed up for the events," explained **seventh grader Laura Piccard**) and frantically combing the school for limbo poles (they ended up availing themselves of window-closing poles from the library). "That was the spirit of the Olympics," said Judi O'Brien, "not fully knowing what was happening. We have an increased empathy for the Sochi Committee now."

"Like their snowflake!" laughed Council member **Alysse Pierre '18**. "We thought about making one of the rings malfunction at our opening ceremony, as a tribute." The actual ceremony—complete with crêpe-paper torch—went off smoothly in the 181 Lincoln Place gym, in front of a feverish throng of Middle Schoolers garbed



in their grade colors. The excitement only grew over the course of the event—as **seventh grade dean Tom Jameson** expertly beat-boxed, as students struggled to make **Middle School Director Jim Shapiro** laugh

in less than thirty seconds, as the ceremony closed with a bravura one-trombone performance of the Olympics theme. The games were over, but the glory—if not the construction-paper medals—will last forever.



The GOOD SHIP FIRST GRADE Sets Sail

The winds were nonexistent and the sea was chlorinated, but on January 17, 2014, that hardly dampened the ballyhoo surrounding the First Grade Boat's maiden voyage. The seven-foot-long vessel, collaboratively built from recycled bottles, milk cartons, and cardboard, had it all: a mermaid figurehead, a laminated anchor, and rainbow-heart sideboards. The only thing missing, as **first grade teacher Kate Keim** pointed out, was champagne. "Miss Keim forgot it," she laughed.

Cries of "She's wearing a floatie!" and "Fall overboard!" rang out as **Learning Technologies Specialist Camille Harrison** entered the ship and paddled a victory lap around the

Berkeley Carroll pool. "That was my workout for today," she said. After retreating to their classrooms (and debating who would be Hermit Crab Caretaker for the weekend), the first graders reminisced about the ship—a project that grew spontaneously out of a short science unit about the water cycle, water density, and what makes something sink or float. Among the challenges were peaceably collaborating on a sixty-person project ("One class would draw a detail and another class had to color it," said **Katie Fludgate '25**), and making the ship buoyant and waterproof. "We made sure the bottle caps were screwed on tight, and used a lot of scotch tape so

it would all stay together," said **Casper Murphy '25**.

Before deciding on the ship's aesthetic, they studied images of pirate ships—which "is a science skill," said **LS Science teacher Erin Baldwin**. "Even though it's an artistic project, they're observing and drawing conclusions from real life rather than just using their imaginations." Plans are afoot to make the shipbuilding an annual part of the science curriculum; for now, the original ship will be retired and displayed in the 701 Carroll Street lobby. "Maybe some night when none of you are around, I'll sneak it back down to the pool and try it out," said Ms. Keim.

Jonathan Franzen

Talks High School and Oprah



"I was wretched, more or less continuously, in seventh, eighth, and to some extent ninth grade," admitted the National Book Award-winning novelist **Jonathan Franzen**. Still, on October 17, 2013, Franzen braved the "slightly traumatic" sight of a high school cafeteria to have a thoughtful, self-deprecating conversation with Berkeley Carroll seniors.

While the subjects ranged from bird watching to the *Peanuts* comic strip to Franzen's high school "pranking organization," Franzen's hour-long talk was largely focused on the business of writing—from his widely acclaimed novels (*The Corrections*,

Freedom) to his essays. "There's something very emasculating about being a writer—and probably defeminizing, too," said Franzen. "Writing is like being home sick from school, wishing you be could be with people."

Lucie Allouche '14 asked Franzen about the ethics of "imposing meaning" on memories in his non-fiction ("All of our memories are to some extent fictional narrative constructions," he said), and **Andrew Colon '14** asked if he felt pressure to write autobiographically due to his fame

(the response: "Really substantially no"). At one point Franzen gently mocked a student's tentative "auction-auction" hand raise, and he became incredulous when asked to elaborate on an essay about his relationships. "Have them, is my advice," he finally said. "Be in relationships." But Franzen was a warm and ruefully funny speaker, in direct contrast to what he called his public reputation as "a bad person" that was sparked by a 2001 run-in with Oprah Winfrey.

"I felt so ashamed by the mean things people said about me [after that], acting like they knew me," he told BC students. "They *knew* I was the white straight male personified, who *disdained* women, who *disdained* ordinary readers." The brouhaha nudged him into revealing more in his non-fiction, as a kind of "defense." "I thought: you want to know about me?" said Franzen. "Here, read *this*." ✚

(mailbag)

"Matt Weinstock did a wonderful job profiling **Margaret Farrar '16** in your fall issue. As the *New York Times* crossword editor, and a friend of Margaret's from years ago, I know a lot about her and crossword history, and your article provided a lot of new information. I really enjoyed this. Wonderful photos, too!"

— **Will Shortz**

Crossword Puzzle Editor,
New York Times



(connections)



SPORTS



SPORTS

(connections)



SPRINGS GIRLS





THE PRIME OF DR. POLLOCK

On the afternoon of November 13, 2013, Berkeley Carroll's Holocaust History elective was stuck in a familiar high-school limbo. The period had started, but class couldn't begin in earnest until a handful of students shambled their way in from their previous classes. So the sophomores spent the time riffing—about *Triumph of the Will*, about whether their finals should be graded Communistically (“Everyone would get a B-!” said **Aaron Goldin '16**), and about a student from the Class of 1976 who'd just visited **Upper School History teacher Marvin Pollock**.

“You were here in the seventies?!” one incredulous sophomore asked.

“Did everyone have bowl cuts back then?” said another. “And bellbottoms?”

“I had bell bottoms,” said Dr. Pollock. Then the last straggler showed up, and the conversation shifted to the contradictory qualities of anti-Semitic Nazi propaganda. The sophomores were left with the faint vision of a bellbottomed Dr. Pollock, but none of them could have imagined the breadth and impact of a 42-year teaching career that has made Dr. Pollock “a legend in my own time,” as he wryly puts it.

✦ B Y M A T T W E I N S T O C K



When asked about his reputation at Berkeley Carroll, Dr. Pollock is modest. "There's a completely different world that teachers aren't privy to," he says. "When they're in the Commons or the Atrium, and they don't see you coming—I don't know how I fare in that world. I have no idea. I will say that, my first year of teaching here, I asked my wife to go to the lady's room and see if there was anything written

on the walls about me. She didn't find anything."

Dr. Pollock survived those years of insecurity—as well as the school's 1980s struggles ("At one point there were six kids enrolled in the freshman class," he says with a shudder), and its rebirth under the stewardship of **Head of School Emerita Bongsoon Zubay**. Today, encountering his intellectually vigorous teaching style is a BC rite of passage. In a recent Holocaust class discussion about the Nazi educational system, Dr. Pollock was a near-kinetic force.

"Gym!" he shouted, shifting in his chair, gesticulating wildly. "That was their most important subject—gym! What does that say about their schools?"

Let's talk about

Berkeley Carroll's mission statement. We want kids to graduate as independent

thinkers, global thinkers, critical thinkers. What did Hitler want?"

"He didn't want individuals," said **Garrett Collins '16**.

"What was the phrase he used?" asked Dr. Pollock.

"The beast of prey," said **Henry Pearson '16**. "He was raising an army."

"Yes, but an army that has no..."

"No soul," said **Lily Meier '16**.

"This might be a side note," said **Jules Munroe-Sabatini '16**, "but what if someone was in eighth grade when the war ended? Did they think, *Oh my God?* How would they be able to create a life for themselves?"

It was the sort of question Dr. Pollock might have posed to the class—with his fondness for Socratic dialogue, for dense, gnarled questions that don't have "right" answers, like "If Hitler had swooped in at any other time, do you think he could have had the impact he did?" The sophomores in his semester-long Holocaust class answer these questions in essays that



draw on primary sources (speeches, letters, political cartoons), and avoid relying on historical hindsight—which Dr. Pollock refers to as “cheating.” Ignoring the accepted historical narrative often results in surprising realizations—that not all Nazi supporters were motivated by anti-Semitism, for example, or that Hindenburg’s advisers initially saw Hitler (in Dr. Pollock’s words) as “a *schlemiel*, an eighth-grade dropout whom they could control.”

While his students now use iPads instead of paper handouts, and the classroom’s interactive Smart Board occasionally reduces Dr. Pollock to nostalgic reveries about chalk, he thinks that technology has primarily changed teaching in that “it puts the emphasis on analysis, which is what I always wanted. In the world we’re liv-

ing in today, information is so accessible—it’s about what you do with it.”

“My educational philosophy is to give them takeaways, things that they’ll never forget,” he says. “And it’s not going to be the definition of ‘con-scription.’ I’m trying to convey that history is a story, a story that had the potential to go in any direction at any time. If you treat it as a story, there’s a lot you can remember.”

The “takeaways” from Dr. Pollock’s classes often include Hulk Hogan trivia. A lifelong fan of professional wrestling, he has been known to sneak wrestling questions onto his multiple-choice tests, and the AP US History Class of 2007 bought him an

enormous wrestling belt with the words “MARVELOUS MARV” inscribed on it. “I still follow wrestling,” he says. “Not with the consistency that I used to, but I know the characters, and a wrestler never grows old. You reach your prime at about the age of 78, or something like that, so once you know them, they’re always there.”

Dr. Pollock is in something of a prime himself, having lightened his BC administrative duties and course load in 2012. “All the administrative work used to drain me,” he says. “I didn’t feel as fresh as I do now when I go into the classroom. Now I’ve got my game face on.” ✚

“Chalk is like an endangered species,” Dr. Pollock says. But it was still plentiful in the seventies (below) and the nineties (right).

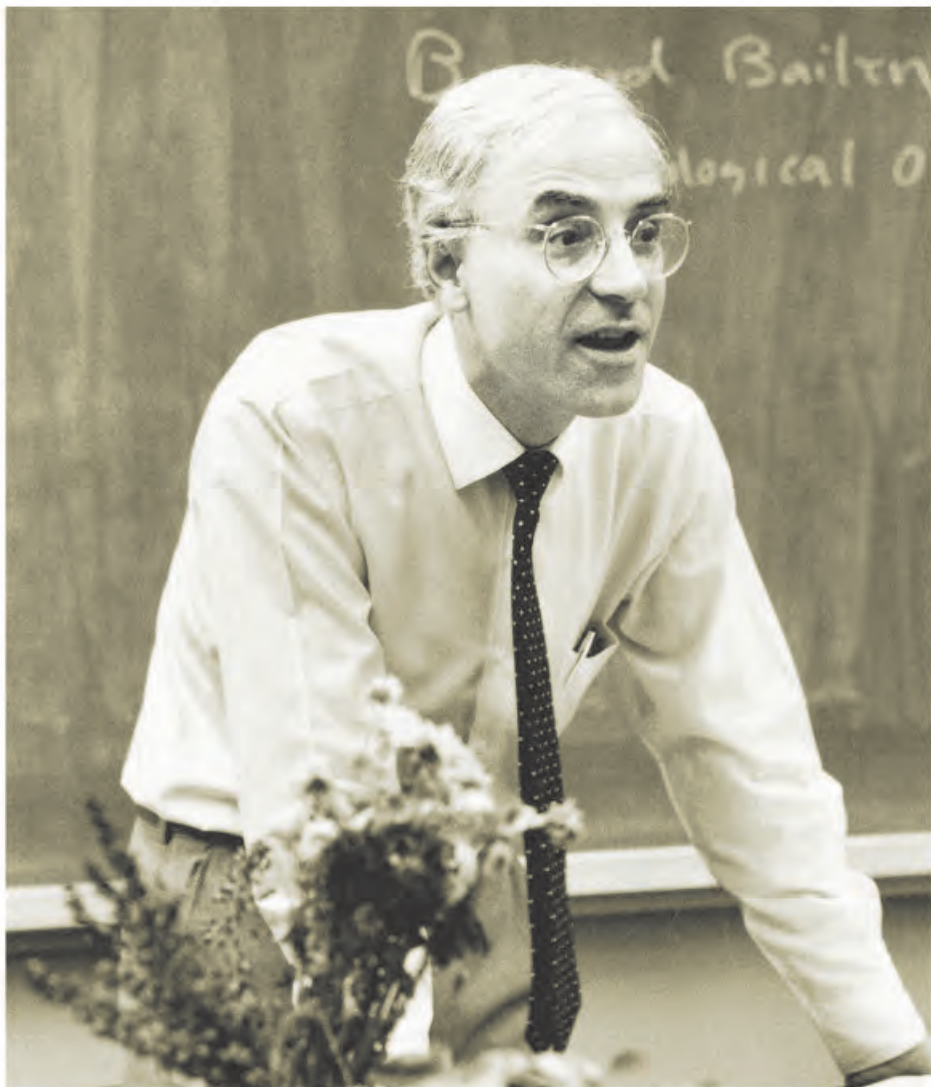
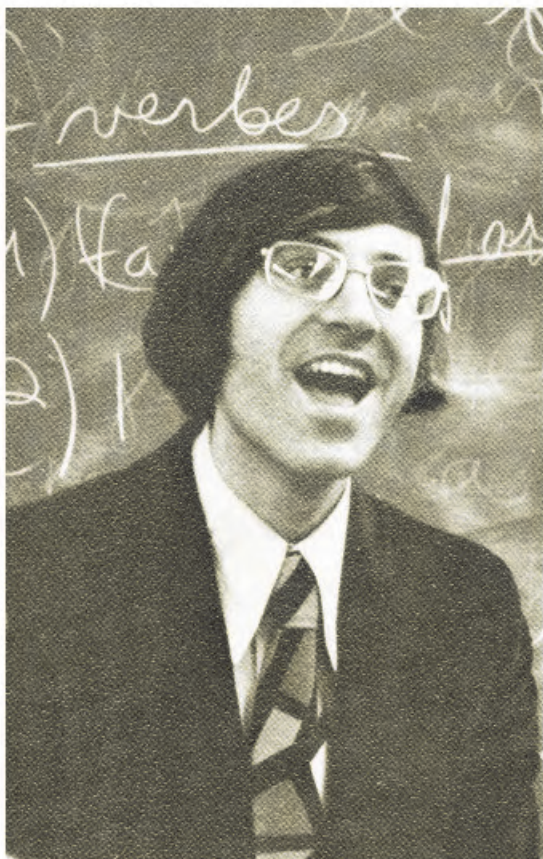




PHOTO: NEIL GIORDANO

THE INTIMATE PEEK INTO A MIND

Lois Lowry '54 on Dreams and Scissor-Lust

Upon learning that the Newbery Medal winning author Lois Lowry attended kindergarten at Berkeley, exactly fifty years before I did, I reached out to her via hand-written letter. The address was printed in script, and an extra stamp was placed on the corner, just in case. I knew that she had been in Cape Town, on the set of the long-awaited film adaptation of *The Giver* (out August 2014, starring Meryl Streep, Alexander Skarsgard, and Jeff Bridges), but I watched my mailbox for days regardless. I envisioned a response in old, paper-thin airmail stationery, penned in a lightly wisped cursive, a response that would be the beginning of a wonderfully authentic pen-pal friendship. She, of course, wrote me, quite practically, an email. That is one of the wonderful things I learned about Lois, during our email-based, eight-day interview that straddled Christmas and stopped just short of ringing in 2014—that she was romantic, contained multitudes, and was also quite candid, realistic, honest (and that all these things were not necessarily that different).



The emails were also dense, revealing. As I sat in front of my computer, still recovering from dreams spurred by a midnight re-reading of *The Giver*, sweating to compose the “perfect question,” she seemed to draw responses like silk threads from her mind. Our conversation went deep, to places I could never have

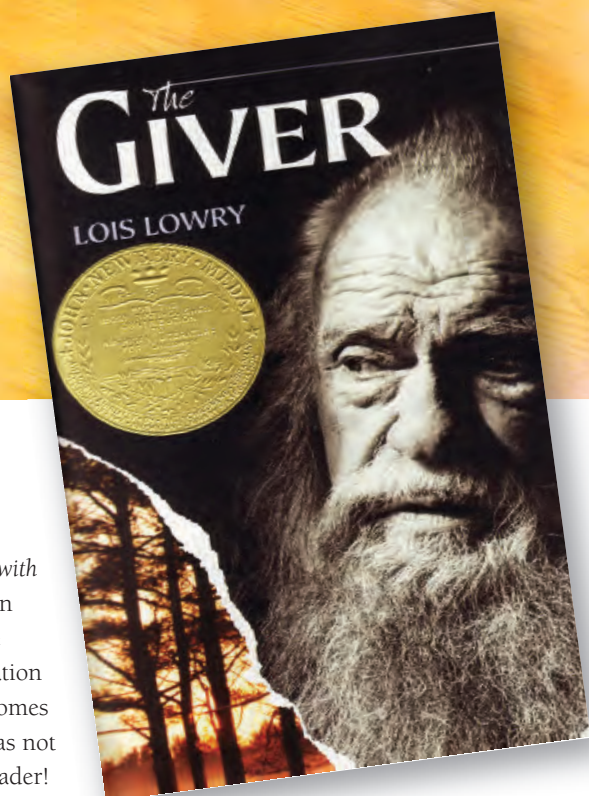
✦ B Y S O N I A N A Y A K ' 0 4

predicted—not unlike my first encounter with *The Giver* in sixth grade. (The novel is still taught to Berkeley Carroll sixth graders today.)

I no longer have my original copy, but I still remember the wound-like crease in the spine, from overuse, and the gray-and-white man on the cover that beseeched me, silently, every time I went digging around the dregs of my rubber-bottomed Jansport backpack for a pencil. I also remember how the book changed people. It made them understand that book-reading was time-traveling, that the hours passed erratically, unpredictably, that narrative was transportive. My correspondence with Lois began with a similar kind of time travel, to the place where all writing starts: other books, education, and childhood.

SONIA: What were some books—that you read long ago, and recently—that helped you with your own writing? Any that you were introduced to during your time at Berkeley?

LOIS: When my mother died at age 86, and I was cleaning out her desk, I found a collection of my own old school reports, going all the way back to kindergarten at the Berkeley Institute in the early 1940s. “Her unusual ability to read and write,” the report said, “sets her apart from the other children.” I was four. My sister had begun first grade (at Berkeley) when I was three, and under the guise of “playing school” had taught me, each afternoon, what she had learned that day. So I had learned to read from a stern taskmaster, a six-year-old despot who said sternly, “Pay attention!” if I fidgeted. But what a gift she had given me! My world became one of books. And we were fortunate that we were surrounded by books at home. I



remember a book by Margery Flack called *Humphrey: One Hundred Years Along the Wayside with a Box Turtle* (I still have it here, in my bookcase) which charted the long life of a turtle as the civilization surrounding him grows and becomes more urban, more modern. It was not an easy book for a brand new reader!



But my mother had read it to me, so I knew the story and the familiarity helped me sort through the more difficult words (like the name Humphrey itself, with that odd “ph” that I felt should be an “f”). That book gave me an awareness of history and the passage of time that I don’t think most children acquire until they are older.

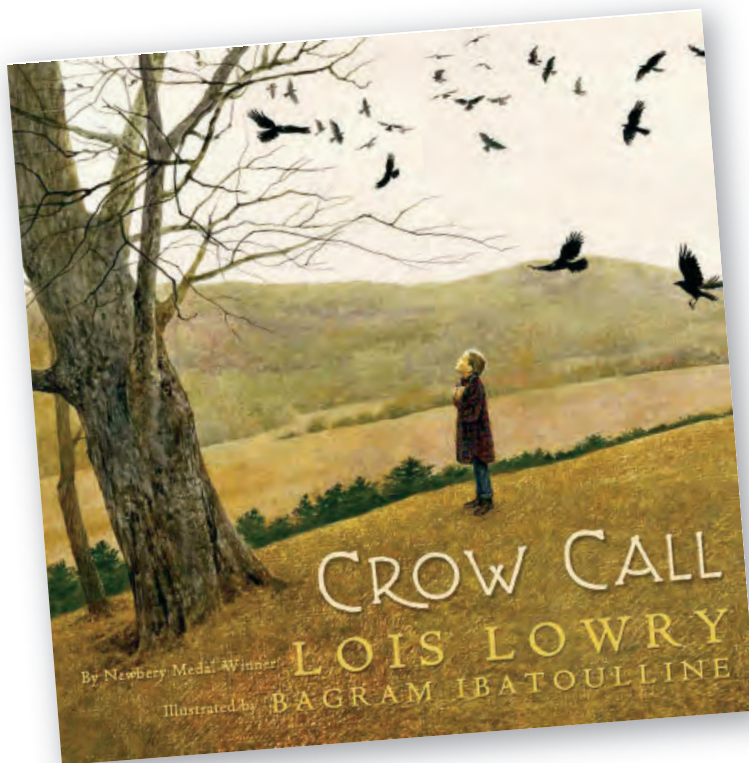
SONIA: What books made you feel as if you had walked into the most interesting, exciting, sometimes frightening space that is a newly discovered world?

LOIS: *Mary Poppins* opened a door to fantasy and magic that enthralled me. I remember a chapter in which

characters—maybe Burt, the chimneysweep, was one? I’ve forgotten, and I no longer have a copy of the book—climb endlessly long ladders to repair the night sky, maybe to pin stars back into place. I knew it was fantasy. Yet it led me to stare through my window at night, examining the sky, becoming newly aware of the limitlessness of space. Now, recalling it, I see that it is connected to the awareness of *time* that reading *Humphrey* gave me. I was a solitary, introspective child. Did books, and the ability to read, make me into that kind of child? Or was I that from the start, and thus turned to books? It’s hard to know which is chicken, which is egg. In any case, I must have been something of a pain in the ass to my Berkeley kindergarten teacher, who also noted on my report that I sometimes refused to join in group activities. Looking back, I think it was simply that books provided the vehicle that propelled me over and around the expected activities—*group* activities, a phrase I still loathe—of early childhood.

SONIA: Speaking of childhood, I was fascinated with the interesting relationship between your book *Crow Call* and the children’s classic, *The Yearling*—in which a young man has to shoot his pet deer, who is eating all the corn crop the family subsists on. In *Crow Call*, the young girl stops her father from killing the crows that eat the crops. Is this one of the many superpowers of literature—that each generation can reinterpret the classics for themselves, and for their own children, who will do the same for their children?

LOIS: The *Crow Call* story as opposed to *The Yearling*. Nice contrast, which I had not thought about before.



But *Crow Call* was autobiographical. It was not my own interpretation....or, in fact, was it? It is the story of what happened that day. But how would my father tell it? Completely differently, no doubt; and less fraught with meaning. We all, of course, superimpose our own emotions on any given set of facts. And I suppose ultimately that is the job of the writer...to do that superimposition in a way that speaks to other people instead of remaining completely solipsistic (otherwise, what's the point?) So perhaps my little story was, in fact, a reinterpretation of the classic *The Yearling*. Would I have written it at all, had I not grown up with and loved the Rawlings novel? If that story had not been there in my consciousness, would I have remembered—and *how* would I have remembered—that November morning with my dad? Is literature, in fact, a kind of apostolic succession of moments? I think it might be so.

SONIA: In terms of autobiographically based stories, *The Giver* begins with Jonas feeling frightened because “an unidentified aircraft had streaked over the community twice.” It made me wonder if you had any memories of the air raid drills that the Berkeley Institute had to have for its students while you were in school here, from 1941 to 1942.

LOIS: I remember the early days of WWII very clearly, even though I was only four when it began. I had been born in Honolulu, so when the news came over the radio—and I heard “Hawaii,” and saw my mother’s face—I understood that something was terribly wrong. My father was a major in the army, and within the year he had to go to the Pacific. Our days in Brooklyn ended eventually when Mother took my sister and me back to Pennsylvania where our grandparents lived. But in the meantime, at Berkeley, yes, I do have a memory of

Lois [left] with her sister Helen, on her first day of kindergarten at the Berkeley Institute.





air raid drills. I seem to recall that we all were taken to a nearby subway station; can that be true? [Ed. note: air raid drills were actually held in the 181 Lincoln Place gymnasium, which was stocked with games, mimeographed sheet music, and writing pads, so that students could pass the time in the event of an actual air raid.] I also still have an ID tag with my name and Bay Ridge address engraved on it. My father had them made for my sister and me out of gold and we wore them on chains around our neck, like jewelry, not realizing the intent was to identify our bodies, should there be an attack on New York, as many people expected. I remember, too, the heavy black-out curtains that my mother hung at the windows of our house, and how we watched, at night, the searchlights traversing the sky, looking for enemy aircraft. These were, of course, pre-television years and so as children we saw none of the terrifying images that today's children have had access to during frightening times. But I was, even at that young age, very aware of the uncertainty and fear that pervaded the lives of the adults around me.

SONIA: In this seeming similarity between potential air raids and frightening unidentified aircrafts in *The Giver*, do you think that there is a fine line between “realistic” depictions of life and “dystopic” ones?

LOIS: In comparing such things to the imagery and feelings wrought by dystopian literature, I sense a very real difference. Dystopian, by its nature, means speculative. Unreal. Therefore: preventable. And likely not really terrifying because the young reader can distance himself/herself from it. In contrast, even without TV images, the news that came each day into the

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My sister had begun first grade [at Berkeley] when I was three, and under the guise of ‘playing school’ had taught me, each afternoon, what she had learned that day. So I had learned to read from a stern taskmaster, a six-year-old despot who said sternly, ‘Pay attention!’”

household of a literate and impressionable child during a war in which my father was taking part—that was true horror. I can only assume that my mother shielded my sister and me from the worst of the news, but it permeated our lives for the war years—growing worse as the casualties became greater and my awareness more mature. My focus was on the war with Japan, because my father was in the Pacific. But of course the war raged on two fronts and I can only imagine, now, how terrifying it must have been for the children of Japan as well as the children of Europe, all of whom were so close to the carnage.

SONIA: As a writer of many different genres, do you think a dystopian/science fictional world satisfies something that other genres do not? What, for you, are the lessons we can glean from a dystopian literature?

LOIS: Does a dystopian literary world satisfy some need in a young reader? I think so, yes; it allows them to believe in their own power to prevent a tragic future. I think this is an important role for books to play in these uncertain times.

SONIA: Dystopian fiction can often come across as dreamlike; surreal. I know you take memories very seriously, in the sense of their importance. Do you think there is a relationship between the dream-scape and the memoryscape?

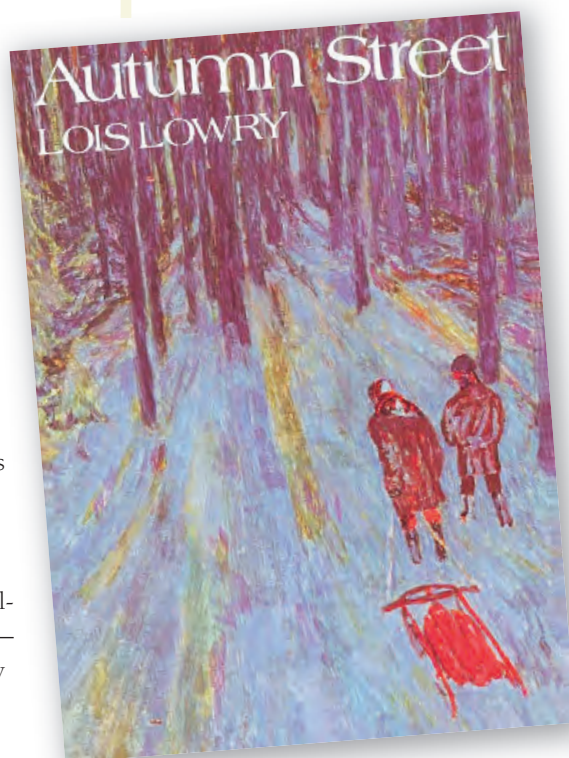
LOIS: A book I wrote some years ago, *Autumn Street*, is autobiographical. In it, the child I was...whom I named Elizabeth in the book...is very young, just six. She shares a bedroom with her sister. In one scene, at night, Elizabeth is talking in the dark to her sister, and encounters silence but hears deep, even breathing and realizes that her sister is asleep. The narrator then says: "Suddenly I realized that her dreams would always be different from mine." I have always been fascinated by the two things—memories, and dreams—because they are the two things most ineluctably personal. They grow from a completely individual subconscious and no two people can ever have the same dream or same memory. I explored the subject of memory in the book *The Giver* and I have also dealt with dreams in a less well-known book called *Gossamer*.

SONIA: Do you have recurring dreams? Have any spurred stories?

LOIS: I do have several recurring dreams (including the dream that all educated people have, in which the exam is upon you and you have forgotten to go to class or to read the textbook), one of which is so deeply satisfying that each time it recurs (though it takes different forms, it is always the same theme) I am thrilled at its return, as if a greatly-loved friend has appeared at my door unexpectedly. And that is the dream in which I have moved into a new house, or dwelling, which I have acquired in some fashion, and after being there for a bit and acclimating myself to it, I suddenly realize that there is a door... sometimes it is a staircase... that I had not been aware of; and it leads to a number of rooms I had not known were there. So there is the surprise of the space opening itself up to me, but more than that—the rooms are beautifully furnished, comfortable and welcoming. I have not specifically used this in any fiction I've written, but I think it may be something of an archetypal image in much literature. I think of Alice holding a key she has found at the bottom of the rabbit hole, and opening a door to see an exquisite garden. Or, for that matter, Mary Lenox in *The Secret Garden*, who has almost the same experience. It's the opening into a new and profoundly satisfying space. Maybe, in fact, it's analogous to what a reader feels—or at least feels the possibility of—upon opening a book.

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SONIA: Your recurring dream is wonderful. It reminds me of a bit that used to air on “Sesame Street,” in which a girl walks down a hallway of doors with question marks on them, and can choose any one to enter, which always fascinated me. I feel that when choosing a new book to read. Or when opening a letter! I know you love reading collected letters—seeing into the minds of authors that you love. Would you ever consider publishing your own letters?

LOIS: I couldn’t possibly publish my own letters simply because I never saved any. I wrote them and mailed them and they were gone. There may have been a few gems out of the thousands, but they are lost to history now. I’ve been a pretty-strictly-email person for years, except on occasion when I felt the need to save and document a

strongly held opinion, as in the outraged letter I wrote last week demanding to know why exactly my insurance wouldn’t cover the cost of a procedure. Now, see: if I were reading that comment in a letter by, say, Carol Shields, I would flip to the index to see if there is another mention of that procedure because I would want to know exactly what was done, and why, and if it hurt. It is the very intimacy I value in reading collected letters. (I also, incidentally, love looking at photographs of actors’ living spaces or work spaces: seeing the pack of cigarettes on the desk, the flowers with drooping petals, and realizing that actual life is being lived in that moment captured.) The intimate peek into a mind. Though to be honest, I yawn and skim when there is too much discussion about the craft, or the business of writing. What I prefer is the quotidian details of a life. I want to know what Flannery O’Connor had for breakfast, or whether Penelope Fitzgerald will buy the new sweater she worries she can’t afford. But I would be less interested in such minutiae if it came from the pen of a housewife or sales clerk. I think what I am looking for are the mundane details—so like those of any life—in order to perceive (but without being lectured on it) how that ordinariness, combined with those observational powers, plus of course the ability to write about those details with clarity and wit, coalesces into the fiction or poetry that becomes the public voice. I also, to be honest, am fascinated by the flaws in the writers I admire. So I savor every sordid detail about Cheever’s sexual angst and I was fascinated by Richard Burton’s self-loathing over his inability to stop drinking in his recently published diaries (diary—another form of letter; a letter to one’s self).

SONIA: I’ve always loved keeping diaries and writing letters, and my friends and I still do—there’s something very satisfying about non-instant gratification. When you write a letter to someone, what is your impetus for writing? Do you write a draft? (I usually don’t, and the letter, much like mine to you, is random, meandering, but from the heart.)

LOIS: A draft? A draft of a LETTER? Goodness, no. The instant one were to write a draft, then it would no longer be a personal letter—with all the intimacy and spontaneity that implies—but would become a self-conscious essay. My grandchildren are arriving any minute. *[Ed. note: this portion of the interview was emailed on Christmas Eve.]* One of them, twelve at the time, wrote me a masterpiece of a letter last summer, from a summer camp I had paid for but which he loathed. “Although this has not been the most wonderful experience of my life, I am grateful that I am having the opportunity...”

SONIA: What are some of the “mundane details” you mentioned that are scattered around your workspace? In your 2009 National Book Festival speech, you mentioned that one day when you were about eight, you got angry at your brother for going through a very private space, your desk drawers. Would it be too personal to ask what are inside your desk drawers now?

LOIS: Interesting that you would ask that question. Once, years ago, I was a speaker at a weeklong conference... along with other writers... and at the end, we were, maybe five of us, to



speak together on a panel. We were talking about how to give it a theme, or focus, and I suggested that we each describe some object on the desk where we write... why it is there, what it means to us, etc. But the other four writers all looked at me as if I were completely nuts. And of course I hadn't even mentioned the "inside the desk drawers" topic. Actually, these days, my desk drawers are filled with simply the standard "desk stuff" that I so treasured as a child: all of the papers and envelopes and paper clips and rubber bands and glue sticks and Scotch tape and post-it pads. (Those last three items hadn't been invented yet, during my childhood, though.) And scissors! I have a large collection of scissors because these days, of course, you can buy scissors cheaply, no big deal. But when I was a kid, there were never available scissors! My father forbade us from using his very serious medical scissors. And my mother said no, we could NOT use her sewing scissors to cut out our paper dolls. So my sister and I were always fighting over the one pair of scissors, whose turn it was, who had them last, etc. Now I suffer from constant scissor-lust and buy them every time I walk through Staples. All of that was sacrosanct to me then, when I was a kid, because *things* were not as available, or accessible. It was a big deal to have a cache of different kinds of paper, or a set of colored pencils. I hoarded and treasured them. Now, as for the desk top itself, these days I have three houses (actually two houses and an apartment) in three different geographic locations; and I also have a laptop that I schlep around. So there is no longer the sanctity of a single desk, as there was once, in my life. But I will tell you the thing I most value on my main-house-serious-desk-top. After my son died, in 1995, his

wife sent me the coffee cup that he most often used. It has his USAF pilot name...ZANE...on it (his real first name was Grey; so you can see where "Zane" came from) along with the insignia of the USAF Fighter Weapons School from which he had graduated. I've kept it on my desk for years, with pens in it, and it is talismanic for me. To glance at it each morning makes my day start with a twinge of loss and a smile of gratitude.

SONIA: I really appreciate your openness: the mug is a beautiful thing to have on your desk. Do you think it is the sanctity of one's desk and surroundings that makes letters so much more satisfying than emails?

LOIS: Today's blogs are society's attempt to emulate the letter-writing of the past, I think, but for the most part they fail out of self-consciousness and ambition. One too often has a sense that the blogger is thinking, *Will I get a book contract out of this clever personal narrative?*

SONIA: That brings me to the (unfortunately) more commercial side of publishing. I read you mentioning that sometimes children send you stories that they put the copyright© on. I've read that you dislike book tours. As someone who used to work in publishing, I've noticed a new culture of celebrity authors that has spurred a connection between writing and wealth/fame; a culture that has the potential to take away from the romanticism of writing.

LOIS: Oh yes, the marketplace. Always a source of mixed feelings. I'd like to be a total purist, to write for the

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love of writing. But facts intervene. The fact is, I make my living by writing. So I have to be aware of the pub-

lishing end, the marketing arm, the “promote yourself” part. That side of the literary world has, it seems to me, grown like a giant wart in recent years, largely because of social media, the internet, etc. So authors are now expected to do a lot of self-promotion. And some are so good at it! I am not. I’m old-fashioned, and nostalgic about the days when a writer simply wrote the book and gentlemen wearing bow ties went out on the road and tastefully sold the book. But I follow the instructions that publishers set forth, and to the best of my abilities...which are not much...I try to tell the money-spending world how wonderful I am and how my books might change their lives in amazing and meaningful ways. I blog and boast and blurt out there with the best of them. But to be honest, my blog posts rarely are promotional. I may start out by talking about something I’ve written but invariably my mind wanders off into other pathways and I find myself musing about things unrelated to self-promotion. My tweets are excruciatingly boring. I feel sorry that literature has become a commodity, and more than that, some writers have become celebrities. It gives kids the wrong idea, I think. Now they want to be writers not because they love putting words on a page...but because they want to SELL those words! FOR BIG BUCKS! And then get a Porsche! (It’s one of the questions kids often ask me: *what kind of car do you have?*)

SONIA: You once said that *The Giver* ends so abruptly because you’d been told that if a book “went over 200 pages, the price of the book had to go up.” Are you often in a position of being torn between self-expression and commercial realities?



Today’s blogs are society’s attempt to emulate the letter-writing of the past, I think, but for the most part they fail out of self-consciousness and ambition. One too often has a sense that the blogger is thinking, Will I get a book contract out of this clever personal narrative?”

LOIS: I’m quite bemused by the commercial savvy of new authors. Before a book is even written they are talking about agents and launches and pub dates and cover art and movie deals. “I’m writing a trilogy,” they say before the first chapter of the first book is written. How do they know that? *How do they know it’s a trilogy?* But I am speaking dinosaur talk here. What I’m describing is the way it’s done now. I think maybe the days of reverence for literature and the writing process are, for many people, of the past. And I don’t dislike book tours per se. I always love the people I meet on book tours: bookstore people, library people, readers, people who value literature as I do. But I’d rather—to be honest—be one of them, instead of the person saying *me-me-me-me!* Look at what I did! Buy

what I wrote! If you go to my website, you can read reviews of my books! And you can read Speeches by Me! And about my awards! And you can CLICK to be redirected to a bookseller and then you can BUY my books! Oh dear. Thank you, all of you, who have actually done that. Wouldn’t your time be better spent, though, curled up in a comfy chair, reading?

SONIA: For this latest generation of writers, myself included, what you’re saying is far from dinosaur-speak. There may be a pendulum swinging back in the near future. I’m trying to think of an insightful, intuitive way to bring closure to this rich, candid interview, but I’m at a loss because of the depth of your generosity with your words and memories. I guess: is there anything—in all the interviews and book talks and questions—that someone has yet to ask you, that you would have wanted to answer?

LOIS: I’m chuckling at your question about whether there has been a question I’ve been yearning to answer...because it so directly applies to my *previous* answer. What I most yearn for is to read—or think—about other people! Not to blather on about myself! The question I yearn to answer is: *Would you please shut up???* And my answer would be: Yup. ✚

Sonia Nayak '04 is a doctoral candidate in the English program at Duke University. She focuses on 20th century and contemporary American and transnational literature; in the Spring, she will be presenting on a panel at the Northeast Modern Language Association conference, on the possibility and tropes of a post-9/11 literary genre. She still feels like she should have become a medical doctor. She is currently working on the manuscript of her first novel, and yes, she is typewriting it on a Remington Rand.

SOMETHING

PHOTOGRAPH © 2014 JACK MITCHELL

WONDERFUL



The Life of Dorothy Sarnoff '31

Dorothy Sarnoff told Jimmy Carter to ease up on his grinning and advised Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to lose the “menacing, thick, black-rimmed” glasses.” That may sound like message-board snark, but Dorothy was (as *The New York Times* put it) “one of the first, and most influential, image consultants,” with more than 50,000 clients ranging from Bob Dole to Danielle Steel. Image consulting was just one of Dorothy’s many identities. Bullied for being an “ugly duckling” in her Brooklyn youth, Dorothy engineered a remarkable string of self-transformations: from opera diva to Broadway star to bestselling self-help author. In the words of the Rodgers and Hammerstein song she introduced in *The King and I*, Dorothy Sarnoff’s life really was “Something Wonderful.”



Born in Brooklyn in 1914, Dorothy was the daughter of Jacob Sarnoff, a plastic surgeon, and Belle Roossin, a frustrated singer. “Those weren’t the days when women had careers,” Dorothy later said of her mother. “But she translated herself through me.” Dorothy was barely out of swaddling clothes when she won her first singing contest (she was four, and belted out a “mammie song”), but her hypercritical mother left her with a constant feeling of

✦ BY MATT WEINSTOCK

Dorothy Sarnoff in 1976.

insecurity. “As a child I wasn’t very attractive, and I was painfully shy,” said Dorothy. After six months at Erasmus Hall High School proved “too rugged” for her, she transferred to the Berkeley Institute, which she remembered as “a lovely school.”

“Lovely” is a peculiar word to use in conjunction with the Great Depression, which hit midway through Dorothy’s junior year at Berkeley. “Frankly, I don’t think we knew there was a Depression,” explains her classmate **Elise Droste Turrell ’31**. “We lived very simple lives. They made an effort not to let children know too much. I think there was the feeling that you couldn’t cope with both the Depression and getting your grades in line.”

Berkeley’s student newspaper *The Inkwell* retained a blithe tone, devoting its front page to stories about gum chewing and smocks. In a December 1929 ode to Fifth Avenue, the late **Dorothy Clune Lindsay ’31** wrote, “There are beggars in the street but they only add by way of contrast to the splendor of our procession.”

Maxine Meyer Greene ’34 says, “The trouble was that they didn’t care much about finding out the hard truths [at Berkeley]. It’s not like it is today. We were ‘protected.’ We lived in Brooklyn, so I would sometimes think, *If I could go over the bridge, I would be in the real world*. Berkeley was so separate from the world.”

Dorothy Sarnoff did make it over the bridge; her mother took her on weekly Broadway outings that Dorothy would later remember fondly as an escape from the “dese and dose” accents of her Flatbush neighbors. “She was interested in the theater, and a very attractive girl,” recalls Elise Droste Turrell. Dorothy studied elocution and drama at Berkeley, and upon matriculating at Cornell she acted and



Dorothy in her Brooklyn youth.

sang in the Glee Club. After a post-graduate year of vocal study in Paris, Dorothy entered the world of American opera.

Dorothy quickly gained attention for her waiflike beauty, which made her an anomaly in a medium dominated by Brunnhilde types. One headline blared, “Pretty Girls Get a Chance in Opera,” and in 1942 *Esquire* magazine featured her in a centerfold inspired by the petticoat striptease she did as Rosalinda in Strauss’ *Die Fledermaus*. In its review of the show, *The New York Times* said that Dorothy had “the greatest voice in the cast.... It is an exceptional organ, full and rich throughout its compass, brilliantly effective in the upper register.”

Dorothy was also the rare diva who

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dug enthusiastically into the acting process. For Villa-Lobos’ *Magdalena*, she went barefoot throughout rehearsals in order to fuse with her role as a whip-wielding gypsy, and refused to break character even after a floodlight burst during one performance and set her hair on fire. (Costar John Raitt “beat out the fire with his hands” as she sang.)

The cultural centrality of opera in the 1940s is slightly mind-boggling today. Sarnoff was never a first-rate star, but she still did product endorsements (“That’s why I smoke *extra-mild* Fatimas—they really taste better”), and received fawning press coverage.

“She makes her own hats and they are the envy of her friends,” reported the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. “[She] can



Dorothy performed in *Pagliacci* at Carnegie Hall in 1940.

also turn out a steak sauce with the dexterity of a French chef.” The press reported that MGM wanted to mold her into the next Jeanette MacDonald, but Dorothy’s manager discouraged her from slumming in movies or Broadway musicals. “If you leave opera, you’ll never sing opera again,” he told her. “Don’t taint yourself by going to Broadway.”

Ironically, Dorothy’s lone foray into traditional musical theater—*The King and I*—would grant her immortality, along with a tidy little nest egg (in 1989 she boasted, “I’m still getting half a cent a record”). However, appearing in Rodgers and Hammerstein’s 1951 classic was a consistently frustrating experience for Dorothy. She had only one night to

prepare for her audition as the King of Siam’s lead concubine (in a pinch, Dorothy recalled modeling her accent on “how a Chinese waiter sounds”). Although she won the part, her contractual stipulation for two songs was ignored as a result of pressure from the show’s star, Gertrude Lawrence.

Dorothy consoled herself by tricking up the largely mute role of Lady Thiang with “reactions” (her rehearsal script is full of scrawled directives: “Hands like sunburst. Hands like doll. Hands clasped”), and by using her eyebrow pencil to draw a notch on her vanity mirror every time her solo “stopped the show.” (Dorothy’s one number, “Something Wonderful,” eventually became a beloved standard that was covered by Doris Day, Nina

Simone, and Barbra Streisand.)

After fifteen months Dorothy left *The King and I*, telling one journalist that she was hoping “to gamble and try Hollywood again.” Dorothy’s small role in the 1952 drama *Park Row* was cut before the film’s release, though, and she never appeared in another movie. Despite a steady schedule of concert engagements and operas, she began to sense a shift in the culture.

On September 6, 1956, she sang “Something Wonderful” on “The Ed Sullivan Show,” on the same episode that Elvis Presley gyrated his way through “Hound Dog.” Among the 54 million viewers that night was Dorothy’s friend Cornelia Carithers, who wrote to congratulate her. “It went from the sublime to the ridicu-

lous when Elvis came on,” she said, “but the children didn’t think so.”

As the 1950s wound down, Dorothy became increasingly aware of what “the children” thought about her genre of music. She recalled, “I was singing at the Persian Room of the Plaza, and I was entering one night, just to go in, and I said to my husband, ‘You know, this scene is going to change, and I want to change before it changes.’ Just out of the blue, you know, it came out.”

The career that she landed on—image consulting—was ideal for a woman who had spent her life doggedly pursuing self-transformation. Dorothy admitted that she’d seen the ugly duckling taunts of her childhood as “a challenge,” and 1940s publicity photos reveal a supremely self-confident woman, gazing at the camera with a sort of Marlene Dietrich imperiousness. She carefully repressed her Brooklyn accent, to the point that one discerning reporter could only detect the “faintest trace” of it.

Though she would eventually release an audiotape offering a “Cure for the New York Accent,” Dorothy’s inaugural 1966 courses were specifically geared towards housewives—who were taught to lower their “strident” voices and to painstakingly prepare topics to discuss at dinner. “Just as she wouldn’t meet him with curlers in her hair,” Dorothy said, “why meet him with curlers in her thoughts?”

Despite dismissing elocution lessons as “old-fashioned,” Dorothy was in many ways a traditionalist, with little sympathy for the women’s rights movement. “They were ugly, so they needed an excuse,” she sniffed of Betty Friedan and her ilk. “Feminism was an excuse for people who were just not attractive and didn’t make it.” Men didn’t ignore women because of culturally entrenched misogyny, Dorothy



From left to right: Yul Brynner, Dorothy Sarnoff, and Gertrude Lawrence in the original Broadway production of *The King and I*. “Yul really thought he was the King,” laughed Dorothy.



In 1993, Dorothy returned to Berkeley Carroll to speak with students and faculty at Career Day.



Dorothy spent the early 1960s touring and singing in supper clubs.

asked at one point.

In a small spiraled notebook, Dorothy kept a log of her encounters with the President. “He imitated many of my readings and colorings easily,” she wrote in January 1980. “Eden brought [White House Communications Director Gerald Rafshoon] a bag of popcorn which he ate voraciously popping the corn into his mouth non-stop as the Pres spoke (like a teenager at the movies). We all had our antenna[e] out for each other and the sense of JC’s ease and energy level. Rafshoon turned to E and bobbed his head up and down with a smile, silently saying, ‘He’s making it work.’”

Dorothy spent the rest of her life “making it work” for clients; she died on December 20, 2008, at the age of 94. Although the closest she got to Hollywood was a cameo as herself in Robert Altman’s “Tanner ’88” miniseries, Dorothy had no regrets about giving up acting. “Being in the theatre is like playing a game or going to a party every night,” she said in 1985. “It is not real life. It doesn’t give you a chance to live life in reality. I made that decision. I had been in ‘make believe’ too long.” ✚

argued, but because their voices were “whiny, nasal or whispery.” Her program—known initially as Speech Cosmetics—sought to remedy that.

The program (rechristened Speech Dynamics) quickly expanded beyond the housewife set, and in 1970 Dorothy broke into the fledgling self-help book industry with *Speech Can Change Your Life*. In the book, which the *Philadelphia Inquirer* declared “definitely one of the best ‘How-to’ books ever,” Dorothy outlined her tenets: public speakers must give off a “vibe of joy,” a “vibe of concern,” and a “vibe of authority,” while speaking succinctly, sweeping the audience with their eyes, and mentioning the title of their book “a minimum of five to seven times.”

To reduce pre-speech jitters, she advocated that clients tense their abdominal muscles in a practice she dubbed the “Sarnoff Squeeze.” Many of Dorothy’s prescriptions went

beyond speechmaking: she also told clients how to eat artichokes, when to trim their moustaches, and which umbrellas to buy (they should have “at least ten spokes,” she wrote).

The advertising agency Ogilvy & Mather bought Speech Dynamics in 1974, and Dorothy’s client list ballooned to include CEOs, politicians, and celebrities, with a \$1000 fee per session. Her advice prompted the author and television host Dominick Dunne to gush, “I learned everything I know from a lady named Dorothy Sarnoff.”

The capstone of Dorothy’s career came in a series of confabs with President Jimmy Carter to discuss his speeches. She advised him to “go down in pitch at the ends of phrases,” not to shift on his feet, and to use more varied language. “Do you have a thesaurus here at Camp David?” she

Many of Dorothy’s quotes are drawn from an exhaustive oral history conducted by the American Jewish Committee in 1989 and housed in the New York Public Library’s Dorot Jewish Division. Permission to quote from the Dorothy Sarnoff Papers is courtesy of Cornell University Library’s Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections.



FROM NAZIS TO BORSCHT

The Many Beats of
Lucette Lagnado '73

In her favorite Upper East Side bakery, Lucette Lagnado '73

is holding a laughably tiny cupcake and discussing the whereabouts of Nazi doctor Josef Mengele's remains. "It sounds totally preposterous, but I think I came closer to Mengele than anybody," she says.

Lucette was referring to her brief stint as a Nazi hunter in the early 1980s—the start of an extraordinary writing career that has encompassed bestselling memoirs, award-winning investigative journalism, and humorous articles for the *Wall Street Journal* about borscht. The Mengele assignment came back when Lucette was working as a "junior muckraker" for the syndicated columnist Jack Anderson, who routinely had his reporters comb through the trash of government agencies.

"I've never looked through trash," Lucette admits, "but I've probably done everything else in the quest to be an ideal Jack Anderson reporter." So when Anderson asked her to "penetrate Nazi circles in South America," she complied—although the trip mostly consisted of her "wandering around Paraguay asking total strangers, '¿Dónde está el Señor Mengele?'" Eventually she tracked down a former neighbor of Mengele's, who spoke at length about the fugitive's guilt-induced insomnia.

✦ B Y M A T T W E I N S T O C K

"When our government purported to have found Mengele's bones in Brazil in 1985," she says, "and had no information about his years in Paraguay, I never believed them. I always believed my own reporting." She takes a bite of cupcake. "But I wasn't there very long. I was a quick Nazi-hunter. And it's kind of a dying art, Nazi hunting."

Lucette specializes in dying arts. She has a habit of arriving in a given environment just as it's crumbling—whether it's the world of print journalism or the culture of monarchial Egypt. (Lucette was born in Egypt a few years after King Farouk's 1952 exodus; her Aleppo Jewish family's history, and their struggle to cobble together new lives in Paris and Brooklyn, became the subject of her acclaimed 2007 memoir, *The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit*.)

Even the prim, white-gloves mentality of the Berkeley Institute was crumbling during Lucette's freshman year there, from 1969 to 1970. "It was like *Mad Men*," she says, "this time of change in the sixties, from a fairly dainty culture to an insane hard-rock culture that I couldn't comprehend. And it was all happening *that year*, in the months that I was at the school."

In her 2011 coming-of-age memoir *The Arrogant Years*, Lucette traces that cultural shift through a series of school "mixers": at the Fall 1969 dance, unthreatening music was played and students campaigned in vain for per-

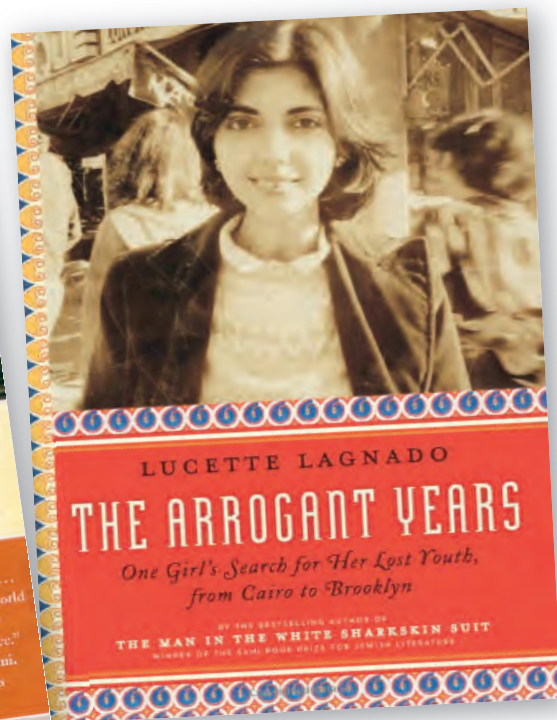
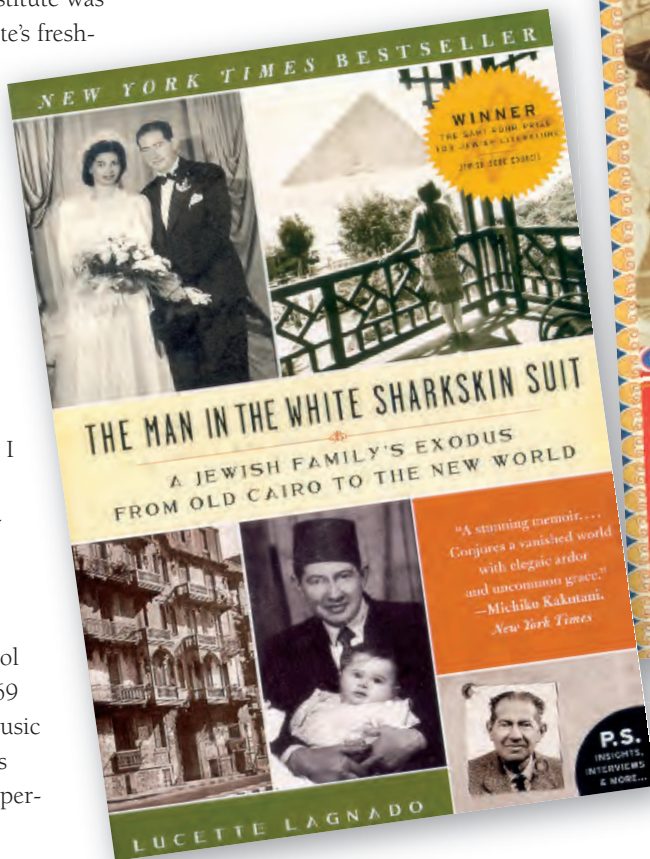
mission to wear pants. By the next mixer, everyone was wearing flared-leg pants and gyrating to Jimi Hendrix. "The rules that had tied us up in knots months earlier seemed antiquated...irrelevant," Lucette writes. That May, after the Kent State shootings, Berkeley girls "declared a strike and refused to attend classes... Senior girls sought and received permission to wear black armbands at graduation in solidarity with the fallen".

Lucette's scholarship wasn't renewed at the end of her freshman year (she suspects it was partly because she scrawled "Thanks for nothing" at the bottom of her French final exam), but in *The Arrogant Years*, she dwells on her time at Berkeley. "I remember nobody that I went to Vassar with," Lucette says. "New Utrecht [High School], a few people—not many. But the Berkeley girls

have shapes and forms and personalities. It was a splendid school, and precious to me. I've never fit in anywhere, but at Berkeley I felt this strange, and obviously very temporary, feeling of belonging."

That feeling permeates the Berkeley chapter in *The Arrogant Years*, which offers nuanced portraits of her chic, rebellious classmates, as well as Berkeley's beloved **drama teacher Islay Benson** ("with her British accent, 1940s hairdo, and severe clothes out of another era"), and **Headmistress Mary Susan Miller** (whom Lucette remembers as "charming, elegant, and utterly dictatorial").

Lucette actually interviewed the late Dr. Miller, and several classmates, in the course of writing her memoir. She likes to say that she functioned as an "investigative reporter on my own



past," with a zeal for accuracy that comes from her decades reporting for Jack Anderson, the *New York Post*, and the *Wall Street Journal* (the latter has been her home since 1996). Both her memoirs were written in bed—often while listening to the soulful crooning of Charles Aznavour, and often while dealing with illness.

"I know I work at a daily paper, and I'm supposed to be consumed with the news of the day—but I am *completely* immersed in the past," she says. "I don't worry every minute about breaking news. I think that would unhinge me."

Indeed, many of her stories for the *Wall Street Journal* register as attempts to salvage the bric-a-brac of vanished cultures. "Most of the world doesn't remember," Lucette says. "And it doesn't matter. Because we remember." In 2012 she profiled a 91-year-old Floridian who was trying to restore the lost ritual of the ladies' bridge lunch. Later that year, she exposed the hidden Nazi past of Hubertus Strughold, a space scientist who was the namesake of a prestigious Space

Medicine Association award.

"It was the most obscure story in the world, but someone wrote me a letter [about Strughold] and I just plunged into it," says Lucette. "They have since suspended the prize, and there are very strong rumors that they're going to eliminate it. So we did accomplish a little bit, in a strange way."

The Strughold experience mirrored Lucette's 1980s reportage on Josef Mengele's barbaric twin experiments at Auschwitz; she learned about the subject from an unsolicited letter, and her articles eventually prompted the United States government's first major manhunt for Mengele. "The twins had never talked to anybody," says Lucette, who spent six years tracking them down and persuading them to share their memories of the charismatic, candy-dispensing doctor. One twin told her, "I believe Josef Mengele loved little children. Yes! Even though he was a murderer and a killer."

Lucette idolized the TV spy heroine Emma Peel as a child, and she once said, "Part of me is definitely an

Avenger, down to the stories I try to pursue as a reporter." Still, she says now, "I wish I hadn't done any of it. I was gone too long [working for Jack Anderson]. When I came back, my family was in disarray. My parents were both desperately ill. I think you pay a price in your personal life when you become completely obsessed with work."

"I come from the Syrian-Egyptian-Levantine community," she explains, "this insular little culture where girls get married at eighteen and stay close to home. The world that I abandoned—maybe because I had no choice—I'm always missing it, more and more, and feeling the inadequacy of the culture that I joined: this culture where I became more American than the Americans, working fourteen-hour days for years and years. That's driven my memoirs, really: my efforts to grapple with what I did and didn't do. And the parents that I miss."

She pauses—ever the journalist, ever conscious of spin. "Which might not be what your readers want to hear, right? They want to hear, perhaps, about how it was all so thrilling and exciting." She laughs. "I don't want to mess up your story. So tell me what to say." ❖





SARAH SHUN-LIEN BYNUM

BC was the “yeast” for her loaf of a novel

Sarah Shun-lien Bynum taught seventh grade English at Berkeley Carroll from 1995 to 1998, but is probably better known at this point for her luminous, incisive fiction. Her debut novel *Madeleine is Sleeping* was a National Book Award finalist in 2004, and *The New Yorker* declared her one of their top 20 fiction writers under 40. Sarah now lives with her husband and daughter in Los Angeles, where she teaches writing at the Otis College of Art and Design. In November, Berkeley Carroll Upper School English teachers **Brian Chu** and **Erika Drezner** phoned Sarah to discuss what she’s working on now, the challenges of juggling writing with teaching, and the ethics of presenting a fictionalized Berkeley Carroll in her 2008 novel *Ms. Hempel Chronicles*. Here are excerpts from their conversation—which took place on a Friday afternoon, over the sound of slamming lockers and Jazz Band trumpets.

ERIKA DREZNER: I want to start by talking about love of students, because I feel like that motivated you both as a teacher and a writer. Do you still feel like a privileged observer of your students’ lives in their moments of transformation?

✦ BY ERIKA DREZNER
AND BRIAN CHU

Berkeley Carroll Upper School English Teachers

SARAH SHUN-LIEN BYNUM:

I think that's what keeps us coming back to teaching, whether you're watching a seventh grader transform herself onstage, or learning that one of your art school undergraduates—who's a very accomplished tattoo artist and a former Navy Seal—has decided to go on to graduate school for writing. That never ceases to be a source of wonder for me: to witness people change in that way.

BRIAN CHU: What I love about this job is there's such a wonderful exchange of energy between my students and me. But you do use up so much mental and emotional energy. I'm curious if you were able to get any writing done while you were here.

SARAH: I went into teaching right after undergrad, because I naively thought it was a profession that would leave me time to write. *(laughs)* You know: "The day ends at 3:15! You have three months of summer vacation!" But after two years at Berkeley Carroll, I hadn't written anything other than anecdotes. I think all my creative energy got channeled into my anecdotes.

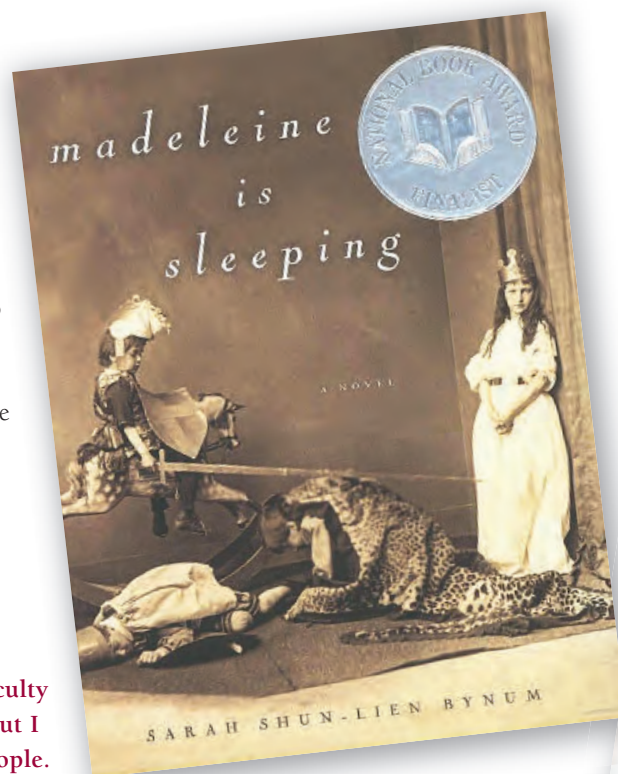
ERIKA: *(laughs)* Mine still does.

SARAH: Then, during my third year here, I took a night class at Columbia University's School for General Studies, which was taught by [Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist] Michael Cunningham. That was such incredible good fortune to end up in his workshop, and he was the person who pushed me to apply to the Iowa Writers' Workshop. But it was hard getting my writing done. I remember being in a panic in the school computer lab, trying to finish a story, at

the same time that my students were furiously working on their seventh grade history projects. Then, after the Columbia class ended, several of us continued to meet. I'm someone who really responds to deadlines and to structure, so that helped me carve out some room for writing in my last year at BC. But it's hard. It's something I still struggle with.

ERIKA: In *Ms. Hempel Chronicles*, there's a certain amount of scandal that you explore among the younger faculty members. They're pastiches, but I definitely recognized a few people. Did you worry about the ethics of drawing on your experiences? Or did you just say, "Hey, this is great material, and I'm writing it all down"?

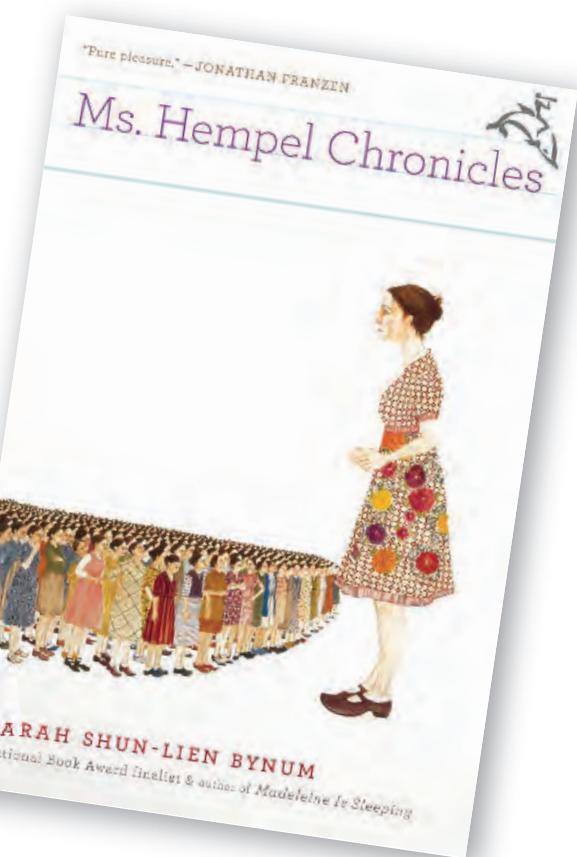
SARAH: I had many moments of doubt about the ethics of it—and I really genuinely thought that most of the portraits were composites. I didn't anticipate how transparent they would be. *(laughs)* I'm probably totally misquoting her, but I remember being consoled by something Alice Munro had said: that details from real life act as the yeast that gives rise to a bread that's something all its own—but that readers will recognize some of the grains of yeast, and will think the loaf of bread is somehow a faithful portrait. My brother had a similar experience reading *Ms. Hempel*, because he knew that I was writing fiction, but it was a fictional story *populated* with all these totemic details and objects from our shared childhood. Similarly, I would latch onto certain things at Berkeley Carroll, like the way the librarian's desk was shaped like a cockpit—even though the librarian wasn't necessarily a portrait of



Kathleen Ellis. Still, it's hard, because you can't control how readers are going to respond.

BRIAN: I'd love to learn more about your writing process. [Short story writer and MacArthur "Genius" prize recipient] George Saunders says that he tries to keep himself "from being too analytical in advance," and that "delaying the entrance of the conscious mind seems to be a worthwhile goal."

SARAH: I try to keep the conscious mind at bay throughout the whole process. *(laughs)* And I think that using real details somehow allows me to keep the conscious mind locked in the closet. My story "Accomplice" began as a long rant about how much I dreaded writing anecdotes, and I really had no sense *how* it was going to turn into a story. But by starting with a feeling that was very close and very familiar, I think it allowed these other connections to arise that I wasn't conscious of. Often I know a story's done when something happens in it



that surprises me: something that I didn't see coming, that I didn't know was there. In "Yurt," the story about going to Mooney's [the now-closed pub located on Flatbush and 7th Avenue], I set out at the beginning really thinking that Ms. Hempel was going to hook up with Mr. Polidori. And really *wanting* that for her—thinking, "You've had a bit of a rough go of it; it would be nice if that happened for you." (*laughs*) And it wasn't until I got them into the bathroom stall that I was like, "Wait! He doesn't do it! He changes his mind." And that was when I knew the story was reaching its close.

BRIAN: I teach a senior elective on writing short stories, and I'm wondering if you have any advice for my students: 17-year-olds who are just starting out as short story writers.

SARAH: The thing that I keep returning to is Saul Bellow's idea that

"a writer is a reader moved to emulation." I find that sometimes my college students are *really* passionate about writing, but there's not an equal passion for reading. In workshops, often the references that they'll make will be to movies, as if that's become their shared vocabulary. I keep telling them, "Okay, that's a helpful comparison, but we're not *making* movies. We're writing stories, and there are pleasures that the story can provide—like interiority, like delving into someone else's consciousness—that movies can't." The advice I have for students is to *cultivate* a love for reading, and to read as widely and voraciously as possible—even though it's hard now to create the time in which to read deeply, when there are so many other distractions offered to us.

BRIAN: What are you working on now?

SARAH: I'm working on stories that are shaped by living in Los Angeles, which is such a different world than any I've ever experienced. A lot of the stories have to do with marriage and parenthood. To go back to your question of ethics, I'm worried about how my daughter's going to feel when she reads them. (*laughs*) The stories are slow in coming, but I'm hoping they'll accumulate into a collection.

ERIKA: You have to come visit. We'll assign any of your stories to the kids. And we won't tell them where they're set.

SARAH: Berkeley Carroll was such a profoundly formative experience for me. Jim Shapiro was my mentor, and I still go back all the time to the advice he gave me—which was, "Never be afraid to take the back off the clock and let the students see the works

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We're writing stories, and there are pleasures that the story can provide—like interiority, like delving into someone else's consciousness—that movies can't. The advice I have for students is to cultivate a love for reading, and to read as widely and voraciously as possible—even though it's hard now to create the time in which to read deeply, when there are so many other distractions offered to us."

inside." He meant that in terms of the teaching process. If you're doing a lesson and it's not going as you'd hoped it would, you can say, "What can we do to salvage this?" You can be really transparent with your students; it's not some sort of performance where you have to stay in character all the time. I remember being so grateful for that advice. I always think of Jim Shapiro whenever I take the back off the clock. ✚

1930s»

■ Congratulations to **Maxine Meyer Greene '34**, who turned 96 in December! “I like to deny my longevity,” she laughs. The influential, much-published Dr. Greene has been a professor of philosophy at Columbia University’s Teachers College since 1965; she is now a professor emeritus, but still gives lectures and advises individual students. She remains a ravenous culture buff, and counts Colum McCann’s *Transatlantic* among her favorite recent reads. “I’m always eager for the new one,” she says. “There’s a review in today’s *New York Times* about a new book that’s out, *The Luminaries*. And I can’t wait to read that. I don’t want to be behind the times. I teach literature, and I think that if you help people engage with literature, it changes them. It gives them a sense of alternative possibilities. I relish that.”

1940s»

■ **Pamela Thirkield Lavin '47** has a grandson doing graduate work at MIT, and two granddaughters living in Brooklyn. She’d love to hear from her Berkeley classmates. “What with the recent anniversary of President Kennedy’s death,” she says, “I’ve been thinking about Jackie Kennedy, who was in my class and my freshman dorm at Vassar. We had a few conversations. My senior project at Berkeley had been about *dressage*, the Olympic equestrian event, and I got it published in *Rider and Driver*

magazine. During freshman year, Jackie Kennedy came up to me and said, in this very oblique way, ‘I saw an article by someone with your name in *Rider and Driver*.’ I said, ‘Yes, I wrote it.’ She just said, ‘Oh.’ Jackie had been a New York debutante, and was sort of a loner. She had very curly, frizzy hair, and she was the only one—in our dorm, at least—who’d go to an off-campus salon every week to get her hair done. The rest of us just used the sink.”

1950s»

■ **June Teufel Dreyer '57** is a professor of political science at the University of Miami, and a senior fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI). Her book *China’s Political System* will soon be in its ninth edition, and in February she was quoted in an article in *Foreign Policy* about the prospects for continued independence in Taiwan. June says, “I was in Los Angeles this past fall to give a talk at USC, and called my classmate **Ina Gianella Klem '57**. We had a wonderful conversation.”

■ **Marie O'Connor Pitt '58** is continuing full-time work in private practice as a therapist; in her free time she enjoys yoga, tennis, and her book group. Marie has four grandchildren; her son and Argentinian daughter-in-law have developed and opened an equilibrium yoga and eco art retreat on the pacific coast of Nicaragua. Marie and her husband Joel are volunteering to serve in the Peace Corps.

■ **Ruthann Lind Heap '59** writes: “Seventeen of our children and grandchildren gathered in Palm Beach for a wonderful Christmas! As of today—January 7—my son and family who live in Hong Kong are still there, thanks to Jet Blue cancelling flights. I am in Hong Kong waiting to fly to Saigon late today to join my husband, who is lecturing on a ten-day cruise. Meanwhile, jet lag is helping me finish a book I’m reading about Ho Chi Minh.”

1960s»

■ **Deborah Clancy Butler '66** writes: “I am in my tenth year as pastor at Hope Lutheran Church in the East San Francisco Bay Area, and hope to continue my ministry here for another 5-7 years. The people of Hope are wonderful—caring and committed to serving the community. We’re involved with the Greater Richmond Interfaith Program, serving

homeless and working poor neighbors, and with the Richmond Ceasefire Lifelines to Healing nightwalks, which have helped reduce gun violence in Richmond by over 50%. My husband Jay has a yacht rigging business in Berkeley. I’m grateful to have grown up in Brooklyn and to have received a fine education at Berkeley.”

■ **Shelley Della Rocca Aprea '68** writes: “My passion and my life now is all about the Community Mayors, an organization my father founded over 60 years ago. We’re all volunteers from uniformed civil service departments, dedicated to children with special needs. Our annual Operation Santa Claus event happened in December; it’s a party for four thousand children with special needs in a hangar at JFK Airport. The children welcome the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Santa as he arrives, waving, on a Delta Air Lines aircraft (also donated for the day). It’s a day of magic for all.



■ **Celia Costas '68** executive-produced *August: Osage County*, which received two Oscar nominations. Her next film, *Annie*, will be released on December 19, 2014.

Community Mayors started having our membership meetings at Poly Prep last spring and it's stirred up old memories, stimulating my interest in the old Berkeley girls."

1970s»

■ **Mitch Fredricks NG '73** attended eighth grade at the Berkeley Institute. "I'm interested in touching base with anyone from those years." To contact Mitch, email alums@berkeleycarroll.org.

■ **Ruth Lucas Finegold '74** writes: "I live in Yarmouth, Maine, just outside of Portland, with my husband Bob. My daughter Hannah is 25, and is in the audio engineer music industry in Los Angeles. I work as an independent media consultant (Lucas Media), serving ad agencies and local businesses."

■ **Peter Brown '79** is a firefighter; he recently secured a position as a Lieutenant in Engine Company 202 in Red Hook, Brooklyn.

1980s»

■ **Andrew Chernin '86** writes: "I'm in my twentieth year as a high school English teacher at Galesburg High School in Illinois, (Galesburg, IL) and have in recent years designed and implemented several classes which focus on media issues, including 'Media and Society' and 'Introduction to Film.' I also tutor homebound students through the Special Education Cooperative



■ **Eve Waltermaurer '86** continues to live near New Paltz, New York, with her children Daisy (15) and Quinn (10). She works at SUNY New Paltz as an Associate Professor, and as the Director of Research and Evaluation for the University's public policy center. This past May she published a book, *Epidemiological Criminology: Theory to Practice*, through Routledge/Taylor & Francis.

in our community, and am three courses away from completing my second Master's in Special Education (anticipated completion in 2015). I have a son, Hunter, who is a sophomore at Galesburg High School and I've been married to my current wife, Robin, since 2007. Robin and I recently spent twelve days in Hawaii (where I lived before moving to Brooklyn my junior year of high school) visiting with my brother and

taking in the sights. As an educator, I am grateful to the incredible people at Berkeley Carroll who provided me with some truly inspirational role models. **Susan Goldberg, Marvin Pollock, Bongsoon Zubay, and Marlene Clary** taught me so much about life and learning that I remain indebted to them for their amazing work. In June 2012, I visited Brooklyn to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of **Mary Ann Hartley**

and Ron Hartley. The Hartleys showed incredible kindness toward me while I was a student at BC and remain very dear to me."

■ **Heather Cunningham '89** is the artistic director of Retro Productions, which has been workshopping a world premiere play, Christie Perfetti's *An Appeal to the Woman of the House*. The play revolves around an encounter between an Alabaman farmer and a group of lost Freedom Riders in May 1961. *Appeal* had its first public reading on March 9, and had a full production in New York City this May.

1990s»

■ **Oaxaca Schroder '90** resides in East Providence, Rhode Island, with his wife Anna, their twelve-year-old daughter Olivia, and Eva the cat. He works as a Financial Coordinator for The Education Alliance at Brown University.

■ **Josh Prinsky '92** lives in Brooklyn with his wife Julie and their three boys, Joey, Jack, and Mason. Josh works in technology as an account executive for SAP in their Financial Services business unit.

■ "The campaign went back as far as elementary school," newly elected New York City Council member **Laurie Cumbo NG '93** told BC students and teachers on September 25, 2013. "Running for office is like the show 'This Is Your Life'—the good and bad things from your past all come back to you. A woman told me she wasn't going to vote for one of

my opponents because the opponent had bullied her daughter when they were little.” Laurie spoke affably and articulately to BC’s World Affairs Breakfast Club about her belief in the transformative power of the arts in urban areas, which led to her founding the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts in Bed-Stuy in 1999. She decided to run for City Council after seeing that funding for the arts was “being cut on both the state and the federal levels.” After her talk, Laurie hugged her former **art teacher Susan Haber** and reminisced about her three years here. “Berkeley Carroll was my introduction to having a separate room and a separate space to create art,” she said. “It made me realize that art was serious, that it could be a viable career.” She also recalled her “intense” relation-

ship with **English teacher Sue Ely**. “Mrs. Ely would redline your paper to the point that you could no longer see what you’d written,” she laughed. “But I’m so grateful for that foundation. When I hire people now—no matter what degree they have—writing a perfect letter is still sometimes an issue.”

■ **Jessica Slater Nakata '93** writes: “I am still living in Los Angeles. I continue to do residential interior design, and have had my own firm for over ten years. I recently filmed an episode of an HGTV show, which was a fun change. I have been married for almost 15 years; we have a four year old daughter who keeps me on my toes and is the light of my life.”

■ **Khalid Rahmaan '95** hosts “It’s Sooo Up and Coming,” a



■ **Coltrane Curtis NG '93** has been an MTV VJ and an editor-at-large at *Complex* magazine; he is the co-founder and creative director of the New York City-based agency Team Epiphany, where he works with brands such as Heineken, Moët+Hennessy, Nike, Jordan Brand, Harman International, Pepsi, the *Wall Street Journal*, Timberland, and more, to craft new strategies and execute ideas for connecting with consumers in the age of new media. Team Epiphany’s areas of expertise include strategic consulting, experiential events, public relations, social media, and celebrity and influencer engagement. The firm recently opened its West Coast headquarters in Portland, OR, and will celebrate its tenth anniversary this year.



Laurie Cumbo NG '93 [at left] caught up with former art teacher Susan Haber.

bimonthly comedy show in Crown Heights, as well as “Straight Up,” a monthly comedy show held in Prospect Heights’ Soda Bar. Both shows regularly feature comics from Comedy Central, VH1, MTV, and late-night shows.

■ On March 2, 2013, **Tim Brennan NG '96** married

Bridget Carroll. Among those present were Tim’s sister **Sarah Brennan '92**, Tim’s best man **David Tirolo NG '92**, and **Head of School Emerita Bongsoon Zubay**.

■ **Lauren Arana '97** is now Director of Individual Giving at the Brooklyn Public Library.



The wedding party of Tim Brennan NG '96 included a sprinkling of BC friends and family members.

■ **Lois Duquesnoy NG '97** writes: "I attended Berkeley Carroll from first to third grade, and left when my family moved to England. I attended the University of Leeds, where I studied Literature and Philosophy, and got my MA in Russian Literature and Culture at University College London. After uni I lived in the mountains in France for about a year, translating and rewriting a book, *The Healing Power of Bordeaux Wine*. For the past ten years I've been training and teaching in complementary medicine as a homeopath, a craniosacral therapist (similar to osteopathy), and more recently in radionics.

The whole family is pretty passionate about holistic approaches to health; it's what we talk about at the dinner table! Last year I emigrated to beautiful Cape Town, South Africa, where my husband is from. I manage to get to the beach every day to check out the dolphins, whales and seals that hang out on the coast. Hope all my old classmates are happy and doing well, wherever they may be."

■ **Celine Duquesnoy NG '99** studied at the Royal Veterinary College and now works as a veterinary surgeon in London.

2000s»

■ **Zoe Lister-Jones NG '00** was a regular on the new CBS sitcom "Friends with Better Lives," which also starred James Van Der Beek.

■ **Gerald Schultz '00** writes: "I'm happily married to Jeannine Jones and a proud father of our 18-month-old daughter, Clara Jane Schultz-Jones. I have been a card-carrying member of Local One, I.A.T.S.E since 2003. I was recently promoted to department head electrician of Studio 3A at NBC. I graduated from NYU's Steinhardt School of Education in 2004

with a degree in Music Business."

■ Congratulations to **Ben Grossman-Cohen '02**, who married Cosabeth Bullock on September 21, 2013 in Westport, Connecticut! Ben works as the senior media officer and the Washington deputy manager of an Oxfam America initiative to influence food and beverage company policies. Cosabeth is vice president for media relations at M&R Strategic Services.

■ **Alex Lamb '03** got engaged last July! She and her fiancé Sam met at Bowdoin College, and plan to be married there in August 2015.

■ **Michael Micalizzi '03** writes: "A play I was in, *Looking at Christmas* by Steven Banks, aired on PBS for the third year in a row over the holidays. I shot an indie pilot in March."

■ **Adam Halper '03** writes: "I recently completed degrees in law and business from the University of Michigan and the University of Oxford. I'm currently resting my brain on the beach in Tel Aviv, but will be returning to the States this summer, when I'll begin my post-graduate school career as an associate at a management consulting firm."

■ Congratulations to **Ben Baccash '04**, who married Laura De Sole on November 30, 2013. Ben is an assistant project manager at Shawmut Design and Construction in Manhattan; Laura is a director

of global marketing for Estée Lauder in Manhattan.

■ **Shahna-Lee James '05** recently left her job with New Heights Youth to work for another community-conscious organization, The Christopher Rose Community Engagement Campaign. She is serving as their grant writer, in order to help the campaign expand its work providing at-risk youth with alternatives to violent lifestyles.

■ **Brett Chalfin '06** writes: "This past summer, I finally realized two of my goals: 1. I moved to New Orleans and 2. I became a full time teacher. Then reality set in. I am working as a high school special ed. teacher at a school in Algiers, supporting and managing a caseload of students with special needs in general ed. classes. It has not been easy. But I

love the kids with whom I work, and I look forward to seeing many of them graduate this spring. Although I've put my music career on hold for at least a little while, I am surrounded by, and immersed in, the ubiquitous rhythms and melodies that pour out of New Orleans."

■ **Joanna Guest '06** writes: "I've been living in Washington, D.C. for three years now and am currently working full-time at a government affairs consulting firm, while going to Georgetown University in the evening for my Masters in Public Policy. It's been a lot to juggle, but this past Thanksgiving break I was able to take some time off before finals to visit **Chloe Lew '06**, who is finishing up her stint with the Peace Corps in Nicaragua. Together we had a wonderfully unique expat Thanksgiving—exploring the coast of the country;

hanging out at the beach; cooking a remarkable meal that was part-Nicaraguan, part-Hannukah, and part-Thanksgiving; sledding down the side of an active volcano; shopping in local markets; and generally getting to know a lot about the driving conditions and road etiquette in the country Chloe has become a real part of. Everyone should get the chance at least once in their life to enjoy relaxing after a big Thanksgiving meal in a hammock!"

■ On October 20, 2013, **Daniel Goldberg '06** premiered his short film *The Master Cleanse* at the Anthology Film Archives.

■ **Daniel Kleinhandler '06** is the pastry chef at the Upper West Side restaurant Picholine. A recent *New York Times* column about restaurants that "let



■ **Sarah Murphy Gersowitz '01** writes: "Elliott and I welcomed Fiona Isabella Gersowitz to the world on September 6, 2013, at 12:50 a.m. Our little bird weighed 5 pounds, 11.5 ounces, and was 18 1/4 inches long. We can't believe that she's already four months old, babbling up a storm, smiling, and rolling around! Fi has brought so much joy into our lives!"



■ Congratulations to **Liz Luciano '07**, who gave birth to Milo James Ramirez on January 30, 2014.



[l to r] Joanna Guest '06, a friend, and Chloe Lew '06 at the summit of a Nicaraguan volcano.

diners come just for the dessert” stated that Daniel “brings a touch of irreverence to his desserts, which cheerfully capsize traditional flavor combitions.”

■ **Chloe Lew '06** writes: “In March 2014, I finished my 27-month service as a health educator with the Peace Corps in Nicaragua. For the last two years I have been living in a rural mountainous community, providing support to the Ministry of Health, living in a boarding school for indigenous girls, and developing ChatSalud, a first-of-its-kind national SMS-based sexual health hotline.

After Peace Corps, I hope to continue working in global health, but ideally with greater access to NY bagels.”

■ **James Morgano '06** is working at the New York City Department of Education doing data analysis.

■ **Toby Gingold '07** writes: “My new employment is as a leasing agent in a luxury rental building in midtown called New Gotham. I’m also dual licensed with Halstead Brooklyn—the real estate firm on the corner of Berkeley Place and Seventh Avenue. I’m happy to help anyone

who needs housing in Hell’s Kitchen, or has questions about the market.”

2010s ▶▶

■ **Walker Harrison '10** writes: “I have one semester left at Columbia, which I’m using to finish up my applied math and creative writing majors. I recently accepted a first year analyst position with IBM. I’ll start at their NYC branch in July. Between graduating in May and starting at IBM, I’d like to take a trip across the country. Perhaps I’ll turn it into one of those MLB stadi-

um hops, being an avid baseball fan.”

■ In April, **Chandler Rosenthal '10** reprised the role of Momma Rose in the Yale Drama Coalition production of *Gypsy*. She previously played Rose as a freshman at Berkeley Carroll, under the direction of the late **Marlene Clary**. After graduating, Chandler will embark on an eight-week, eleven-country tour around the world with her all-senior a cappella group, Whim n’ Rhythm.

■ **Bari Saltman '10** writes: “I’m finishing up my degree in



Chandler Rosenthal '10 has essayed the role of *Gypsy*'s Mama Rose twice: at Berkeley Carroll (left) and at Yale (right).

sociology and psychology at Harvard, and in September I'll be starting work at LinkedIn in the Bay Area. I'll spend time in the company's recruiting, customer operations, sales and foundation departments during a sixteen-month rotation program. I also plan to continue working for local non-profit organizations as a freelance writer."

■ **Zak Sawyer '10** graduated from the University of Michigan in May, and plans to move to Chicago to pursue his career in business and strategic consulting at the Corporate Executive Board.

■ **Andrew Timko '11** writes: "After spending a great summer in Barcelona, last semes-

ter I lived and studied abroad again—in Buenos Aires. Despite these fantastic experiences outside the country, I'm happy to now be back home at Georgetown, where I'm currently in my third year studying Math and Economics. This coming summer I hope to return to NYC to intern!"

■ **Alex Akers '12** writes: "When I took a year off from school to accept a job offer from Branch, little did I know that right now I'd be heading to San Francisco for Facebook employee orientation and training. As a software engineer, I'll be doing iOS pro-

gramming on the Conversations team."

Becca Glanzer '12, currently a sophomore at Columbia University, was featured in a *New York Times* article on September 29, 2013 about students increasingly choosing colleges close to home.

HAVE NEWS OF YOUR OWN?

We'd love to hear about your work, family, travels, and if you've met up with any Berkeley classmates recently.

E-mail us at alums@berkeleycarroll.org

DEATHS IN THE BERKELEY CARROLL FAMILY

■ **Vivian Stewart Carey '33** died, aged 98, on December 2, 2013. Born in Brooklyn, Vivian graduated from the Berkeley Institute and Miss Dunbar's School. After living in Garden City for 27 years, Vivian and her husband Paul moved to Sarasota, FL, where she served as President of the Sarasota Welcome Wagon Alums, and spent many years as Historian of the Pine Shores Presbyterian Church Women's Fellowship.

■ **Harda Klaveness Fellows '35** was born on February 8, 1917, and died on November 20, 2013 at the age of 96. At the Berkeley Institute, Harda played hockey and volleyball, chaired numerous social events, and (according to the yearbook) was "the only member of the Senior Class to enjoy the distinction of a train of Lower School pupils, literally following her around the building." After graduating from Bradford Junior College, Harda became an actress and played opposite Helen Hayes in the 1943 Broadway hit *Harriet*. She married Rear Admiral John B. Fellows, Jr., and devoted herself to traveling and raising her children. She is survived by two children, two grandsons, and one great grandson.

■ **Rosalie Parker Campbell '43** died on October 15, 2013, of complications from a stroke. She was 87. Rosalie was born in Brooklyn on May 26, 1926,

and while at Berkeley she was assistant editor of the *Blotter* and a varsity bowler. She graduated from Bryn Mawr College, and married Raymond E. Campbell in 1952. They settled in Arcadia, California, where they raised their four children. Rosalie is survived by her husband, her sister **Katharine Parker Stell '47**, three children, and four grandchildren.

■ **Catherine "Cappy" Knight Dillingham '47** died, aged 84, on February 20, 2014. Born and raised in Brooklyn, Catherine spent her time at the Berkeley Institute working on the *Blotter*, singing, and serving as President of the Student Association. Her senior yearbook referred to her as an "indefatigable idealist [who] will defend her viewpoints at the drop of a tunic, by means of the excellent lungs that are her birthright." Catherine graduated from Skidmore College, received her master's in education from Fairfield University, and her master's in nature sciences from Worcester Polytechnic Institute. She taught high school science for twenty years, and also served as an adjunct professor of environmental ethics at Fairfield University. Catherine is survived by her husband Bruce, three daughters, and eight grandchildren.

■ **Janet Dorf Gloger '50** was born on March 20, 1933, and died on February 11, 2013.

■ **Betty Manson Whitney '50** died on February 17, 2014, at the age of 82. At the Berkeley Institute, she participated in the Glee Club and the Inspirational Chapel Committee, and played hockey, volleyball, bowling, and softball. Betty graduated from Swarthmore College and the Harvard Graduate School of Education, after which she taught in the Lexington school system for several years before leaving to raise her five children. Upon the death of her first husband, Dr. Hugh Pyle, in 1979, she began working in financial aid—first at Wellesley and later at Brandeis. A long-time treasurer of the METCO Scholarship Fund in Weston, MA, Betty was also a devoted gardener, Girl Scout leader, and Red Sox fan. Betty is survived by her second husband Charles Whitney, five children, five stepchildren, twenty-three grandchildren, and her sister **Virginia Manson Frick '39**.

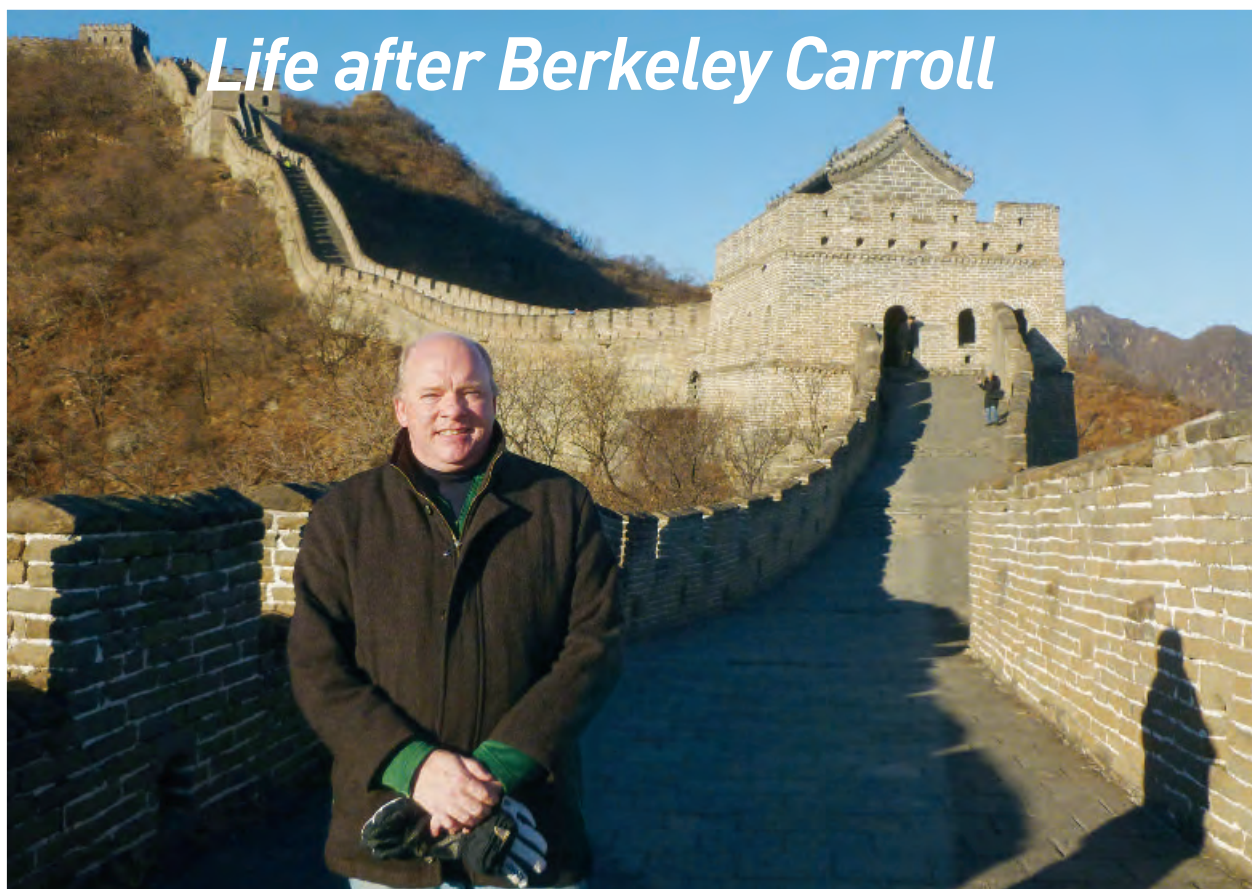
■ **Jesse Ross '95** died on January 11, 2014. His former coach **Walter Paller** remarked, "Jesse was as gentle and easy going as he was talented. He was a great teammate and a coachable, unselfish star. His grace was on display in all sports, and his smile was so real. I've coached many boys and girls over the course of my career. Jesse, you take a back seat to no one. You helped legitimize our athletic program and asked for no

credit. You will be missed, and always be remembered for the impact you made."

■ **Damien Wisotsky '98** died on January 23, 2014, after a long battle with cancer.

■ **Geoffrey Zubay**, the husband of **Head of School Emerita Bongsoon Zubay**, died of cardiac arrest on February 5, 2014. He was 82. Born in Chicago, Dr. Zubay was a precocious student who graduated from the University of Chicago at seventeen; he then received his master's in physical chemistry at the University of Chicago, and his Ph.D. from Harvard. In 1964 Dr. Zubay became a professor at Columbia University; during his 41-year tenure, he pioneered early studies on gene expression in the wake of the discovery of the double helical structure of DNA and genetic code. His more than 160 publications include widely employed textbooks on biochemistry and the origins of life. Dr. Zubay enjoyed basketball, swimming, and relaxed games of poker. He is survived by Bongsoon, his wife of 47 years; their son Geoffrey Pyong; their daughter-in-law Erin; and three grandchildren, Ryan, Abby, and Geoffrey Mitchell. ❖

STAYING THE COURSE WITH FORMER FACULTY



Life after Berkeley Carroll

Andy Webster

*Upper School Director, among other positions —
1992-2005*

"I continue to serve as Head of School at the Wardlaw-Hartridge School in Edison, NJ. My wife, Aurea, teaches at the Red Oaks School in Morristown, NJ, while oldest son, Max, attends Swarthmore College as a freshman. Julian is now a junior, Tomas is in seventh grade, and Nick and Leila are in fifth grade at Wardlaw-Hartridge. My school prides itself on the cultural diversity of its student body (we have no majority group), and having a true global focus in our cur-

riculum, which has led me on some interesting travels. The photo is from a December 2013 trip to Beijing for the Confucius Institute World Conference. I was fortunate to visit the Great Wall on a day where most of China seemed to stay home, perhaps in stunned relief from the outrageous pollution that had choked Beijing the day before. I am in touch with several teachers and alumni, and can be reached at awebster@whschool.org."

Mauricio Albrizzio

Science teacher — 2000-2009

"For the last five years, I have been working at the French American International School in San Francisco, CA, teaching tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade IB chemistry. It's been a great experience and has forced me to start learning French! I was back in Brooklyn visiting the school in late October, and saw all the great changes to the physical plant. I was happy to see so many familiar faces still there, keeping the BC spirit going. If any alums visit San Francisco, they should feel free to drop me a line to meet up for coffee, lunch, or a tour of the city. I miss BC, and most of all hearing the wonderful news regarding our graduates."

Lenora Brennan

Director of Alumni Relations — 1985-2001

"Since my departure from Berkeley Carroll I've been busier than I planned to be. John and I have done lots of traveling, which we both really enjoy. From September 2001 through April 2012, I consulted in fundraising and nonprofit board development for several organizations, despite my intention to retire. This started with a phone call from the late **Janet Comtois Stirm '41**. Since I am an honorary member of her class, I just couldn't say no! Several years ago, my family started a tech business with a friend of my son's, and we now have more than 100 apps in the iTunes Store, as well as on other platforms. I can't take any credit for the technology work, but am occasionally involved on the research end. I look back my time at BC with great fondness. I wore lots of hats from 1978 through 2001—parent, volunteer, PA representative, and then staff member—it was an exciting, intellectually challenging and occasionally nerve-wracking experience. I have kept track of some BI and BC friends, and am happy for this opportunity to say hello to others. I can be found on Facebook."



Maxine Barnett

Third grade teacher, among other positions — 1981-2012

"I'm now at the halfway mark to obtaining my Masters of Divinity at the Virginia Theological Seminary, and sometimes I still can't quite believe how different my life is now compared to what it was at BC. It took a while to adjust to the new rhythms of living on campus in a new city while pursuing a totally different vocation. Being on the other side of the classroom means that I lug around a backpack the size of a fifth grader's, have more reading than can be completed in the time allotted, and always, *always* seem to have some assignment due. (About my classes in Biblical Greek, I can only say that I survived.) I've also had many new and exciting opportunities outside of the classroom—including a pilgrimage and study tour of the Holy Land in January 2014, and working as a chaplain at St. John's Episcopal Hospital in Far Rockaway this past summer."

Sam Chaltain

English teacher — 1996-2000

"Since leaving Berkeley Carroll, I've always stayed in education, which has let me work with and in schools all around the country. Now I live with my wife, **Sarah Margon '94**, and two sons in Washington, D.C., where I spend all day writing about the state of

teaching and learning in America, and how it can be strengthened. And yes, I still hang out with **Mr. Nocera** and **Mr. Edelstein** whenever I can. (Seriously.) I loved my time at BC, so I'm always excited to hear from all former students and colleagues, either via email (schaltain@gmail.com), Twitter (@samchaltain), or Facebook. Lions roar!"

Jenny Connell Davis

College counselor and English teacher
— 2009-2013

"I left Berkeley Carroll (and New York) in June, to go on a long-delayed honeymoon with my husband Kyle. We spent six weeks in Greece and Turkey, hiking and eating our way through the ancient world (many thanks to **Latin teacher Alexandra Durham** for her exhortation not to miss Ephesus—it was incredible!). We met lovely expats in Tilos, saw political protests in Athens, climbed to mountaintop monasteries on Mainland Greece, and observed Ramadan alongside locals in Istanbul. Then, two days after we got back, our moving truck arrived. We've been settling into Baltimore—he at Johns Hopkins for graduate school, me at a large independent school to teach. I've gotten back to New York several times to workshop a new play I'm writing and to see old friends, including several folks (students and faculty) at BC. Maybe most exciting: we're expecting a baby in May! Next year, I'll be working from home, tutoring and doing some independent college counseling. Baltimore's a unique city, but I miss New York, and Berkeley Carroll, like crazy. I'd love to hear from former students—so please feel free to drop me an email at jennyconnell.davis@gmail.com."

Barbara Moore Frawley

Kindergarten teacher — 1981-2001

"I always refer to Berkeley Carroll as my 'second home.' I taught kindergarten here for twenty years, and continue to run BC's Science Explorers camp each summer—meaning that I get to visit old friends, bump into former students, and observe how BC has grown into a beautiful campus. I also teach at Kingsborough Community College in the early childhood department, preparing future teachers. Of all my classes, the one I most relish is Math and Science Technology for Young Children. (My former students would definitely nod

a 'Yes, of course' at the direction my life has taken me, as a science buff from way back.) Some of my college students hear me praising my 'second home' and find their way to Berkeley Carroll as assistant teachers or in the after-school program. I love it! Funny story: at Kingsborough I recently taught **Liam Cahill NG '04**, who was one of my kindergarteners at BC! I have two daughters, both of whom attend Fontbonne Hall Academy. Keira Shane is going to college next fall—either Miami University or Penn State—and Emma Rose is a freshman."

Susan Goldberg

English teacher — 1982-1989

"I taught at Berkeley Carroll for only seven years, but they were pivotal in my life. Working to build what for us was then a 'new school' was challenging and exhilarating, with many of the faculty spending hundreds of hours preparing new curricula or putting up bulletin boards or doing anything that needed to be done to create a new school. I relished my classes: teaching 8th grade through 12th grade English and writing was intellectually stimulating and very demanding, even though our first few graduating classes only had 10-15 students! Deciding to leave the school upon the birth of my first child, **Max Goldberg Liu '07**, was difficult, but that is what I did. However, I remained in education for another ten years by tutoring many BC students privately. Eventually, when both Max and his sister, **Emma Goldberg Liu '10**, were in school full-time, I switched gears and began working with my husband, Simon Liu, in our family business, manufacturing artists' painting supports. Working for ourselves has allowed us to follow Max and Emma during their college years, as each of them has studied abroad in France and elsewhere. We find ourselves in France at least once a year, usually in Paris, but more recently in Normandy and Brittany where Max was teaching English at the University. I have been fortunate to keep in touch

with many former colleagues and a few former students and it is gratifying for me to know that many of them have gone into teaching and educational



Mary Ann Hartley

Upper School administrative assistant, among other positions — 1979-2010

"In April 2011, I had knee replacement surgery and am doing just fine with my new knees! Ron and I celebrated our 50th anniversary on June 9, 2012, and had a great party at Giando on the Water. We then traveled to Paris and Normandy with **Susan Goldberg**, Simon Liu, **Max Goldberg Liu '07**, and **Emma Goldberg Liu '10**—a wonderful and very memorable trip. In the summers, Ron and I vacation on Shelter Island with our daughter **Kristine Hartley-Maneri**, her husband, and my granddaughter Jessamyn. I take Jessamyn to school every day, along with swim classes and anything else I can do to help out. Haven't been doing much quilting (which I miss and want to get back into), but have been using my sewing skills to make 'twirly' skirts for Jessamyn and clothes for her dolls. For Christmas, I made her and her new doll matching red flannel pajamas—really cute! I go to the gym regularly and especially love the water exercises and chair yoga. So I guess one can say that I keep myself busy."

administration. I'd love to hear from any of my former students so please email me at goldberglu@aol.com. And here's to Berkeley Carroll!"

Len Heisler

Math teacher — 1988-2007

"I am the executive director of Dreamstreet, a musical theater company with a cast of young adults with Down syndrome, Asperger syndrome, and Autism, who break down stereotyping with their live shows and whose videos (on www.breakthrudd.wordpress.com) serve as a resource for special needs families. I'm also a mathematics consultant for families in the homeschooling community, which is very interesting and exciting for me, having worked in the education system for many years. In February I gave presentations in Santa Rosa and Concord, California, on multi-modality math teaching. I have created a website (www.breakthrugrief.wordpress.com) where those who have lost a loved one can create videos to share their stories and coping strategies. I'm a bass singer in the Brooklyn Community Chorus; **Marlene Clary's** legacy is going strong. I also play bass in The Backyard Barbecue Band—a group of friends who play birthday parties, graduation parties, etc. I'm happily married to Sasha Silverstein, a brilliant painter and sculptor, and we live on Lincoln Place, up the block from the school. My daughter Kendra is a professional photographer and my magic. I appreciate those alums who wrote in my departing yearbook that I am the crazy uncle they wish they had. I have great affection for Berkeley Carroll, and wish everyone the very best."

Heidi Kasevich

History teacher — 1999-2005

"I have been Head of History at the Nightingale-Bamford School since 2005. 'World Religions' and 'Women's History' (renamed 'Fragile Goddesses') are still my two favorite electives to teach, and *Time Regained*, the student



Bob Weiss

Visual Arts teacher — 1991-2011

"I am still painting and selling my art. I have a studio on 9th Street and spend much of my time there. Along with Brooklyn cityscapes, I've been doing colored pencil drawings of people in Mexico (both of my children are married to Mexican nationals). It is great starting on new subjects and material. I trained at boxing for over 15 years, and when I retired from BC got my trainer's certification. I've been teaching and training people to box at the Body Reserve at Union and 5th Ave, averaging from four to five clients a week—some are trying to get healthy, some want to enter the Golden Gloves. I recently did four sessions with a former BC student home for vacation from college. Although most of my students are forty years younger than me, I still do some sparring with them: tough on the body but great for the mind. One year ago I became a grandparent when my daughter **Susannah Weiss NG '00** gave birth to a son, Rio Emiliano. My wife of 35 years and I spend much time sharing Rio's many new accomplishments—walking, talking, etc. Sally and I have been traveling, and are recently back from three weeks in Spain, where my son and his wife live. Life has been very busy but great. Should have retired at 45!" ✚

journal of current affairs, recently won a fifth gold medal from Columbia Scholastic Press Association. My most recent interest involves the pedagogy of leadership, and my leadership training program for sophomores, 'Closing

the Gap,' is now in its second year. I received my doctorate from New York University in 2011; my dissertation was entitled *A Civilized Yogi: The Life of French Explorer Alexandra David-Néel*. In March, I lectured about David-

Néel's incredible life at the Explorer's Club. I'm looking forward to directing the Oxbridge Academic Program in Paris this summer. I have been happily remarried for almost eight years, and my two (former BC) children are both settled into their college lives: Emily is a junior at Haverford and Jeremy is a freshman at the University of Chicago."

Cindy Molk

Science teacher and grade dean — 1988-2011

"Leaving BC was a hard choice. I loved the vibe of the school—loved working with students. In a sense I've taken some of that with me on this new adventure. I'm building a private science tutoring practice that gives me the opportunity to connect to students and teach, and I've been running after-school science enrichment classes for fourth graders. (This is interesting after all the years of high school energy!!) I'm also working as an educational consultant where I go into schools all around the city and observe classes. Lastly, I am writing curriculum for both science and human rights education. A big bonus of this new lifestyle is that I get to spend more time with my cats. They are very happy about this."

Liz Perry

English teacher and Director of Educational Design & Innovation — 2005-2013

"I have been adjusting to life away from BC—a life without a daily commute to Brooklyn! I'm enjoying my new role as Head of Upper School at St. Luke's School in New Canaan, CT. St. Luke's reminds me of BC in many ways: a close community, strong academics, and an emphasis on service and character. Probably the biggest differences are the strict dress code, seniors who drive to campus, and all the playing fields. I still manage to teach one English class, so I get my daily fix of literary analysis and geeking out on semicolons. On a personal note, my husband Max continues to

enjoy his work at the Second Congregational Church of Greenwich, and our daughters Grace (age 5) and Emily (age 2) are thriving. Grace started kindergarten this fall and it's so exciting to watch her learning to read. I miss my colleagues and former students at BC and hope everyone will keep in touch."

Wendy Schlemm

School Nurse — 1992-2013

"Since retiring, I can't say I miss head lice, strep throat, pinkeye, scraped knees, etc. However, I do miss my friends and colleagues and the Lower School children who trooped through my office. I make frequent trips to school to meet with old friends, take Spanish classes, and work out at the Athletic Center and pool. I've been lucky enough to occasionally sub for the new nurse, Heidi, so don't be surprised to see me in my old office!"



Danielle Fallon

Math teacher — 2007-2010

"I recently got engaged to George Ross and will be moving back to New York City in April. We're planning to get married in October in New Orleans. For the past year and a half, I have been living in Columbus, Ohio, working as a research associate at Diamond Hill Capital Management. It's been a change from teaching math, but I find that math skills are essential in the new job."

Justin Storer

Math teacher — 2010-2012

"I'm living in Charlottesville, VA. It's okay, but I very much miss NYC, and Park Slope especially. I am teaching down here, and the atmosphere is totally different from BC. Students should be thankful for the schedule and atmosphere that they have, which allows (I think) for teachers and students to know each other better and work with each other more effectively. My other two lives are still family and music. My son, Huck, is now two, and he is officially the cutest two-year-old of all time (according to a recent study conducted by *USA Today*...okay, maybe not). And music, well, it's going rather well. I recently came out with a new record—*Dear Brooklyn*—which has been well received. If people look it up, they'll likely recognize the cover, which features buildings on 9th Street." ✚

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Berkeley Carroll is fortunate to have an involved, committed, and generous group of donors. Parents, alumni, grandparents, and friends actively support the school both through current gifts and gifts that will benefit Berkeley Carroll in the future. Many alumni have expressed their appreciation and support for the school by including Berkeley Carroll in their estate and financial plans, creating a legacy that will help ensure a strong, vibrant school for future generations of Berkeley Carroll students.

Planned gifts have helped Berkeley Carroll build new facilities, launch new programs, attract superb faculty, and provide financial support to many qualified, talented students. For alumni, planned gifts are a way to express their commitment to Berkeley Carroll and help define the future of the school.

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If you would like to know more about the benefits of planned giving, please contact Pamela Cunningham, Director of Development at 718-534-6580.

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