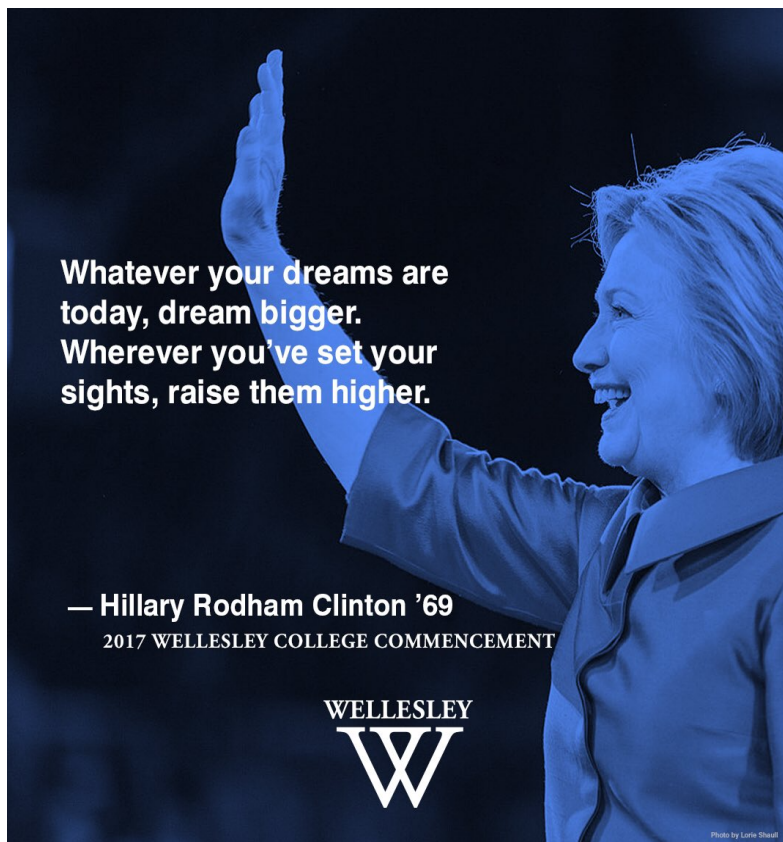


The Wellesley College Class of 1956 Presents

SCARLET LETTERS

Number 30 - January 2024



Whatever your dreams are
today, dream bigger.
Wherever you've set your
sights, raise them higher.

— Hillary Rodham Clinton '69
2017 WELLESLEY COLLEGE COMMENCEMENT



Photo by Lester Shaul

Questionnaire

Do you like Scarlet Letters? Do you read it? Can you suggest improvements?

Do you think that SL sufficiently represents the Wellesley Class of 1956?

Can you think of something that we should publish?

Would you like to see something of yours published here? Please write it and send it in.

We welcome suggestions for improvement to SL, to our lives, and to our beloved college.

Let's see if we can make an issue from readers' comments.

claudia.bushman@gmail.com and smonks341@gmail.com

Our own Judith Bruder has published a new book of essays, a collection of the podcasts she sent out weekly during the pandemic. These charming pieces can not only be read, but listened to thanks to modern technology. Each essay has a QR code which can be activated to provide the original listening experience. Judy calls this a hybrid book, available from amazon and Barnes & Noble.

For Memory's Sake

My mother had a button box. It was my favorite thing to play with when I was a little girl. Hers was a big cardboard box with buttons jostling one another inside, all sorts and shapes and sizes, snipped from old and worn out shirts and blouses and jackets before they went into the rag bag. Waste not, want not.

Mine is a round metal tin from a long ago Christmas fruit cake. Mostly its inhabitants are humble nondescript white buttons from my husband's retired business shirts. But there are other more colorful buttons from old blouses of mine, or petite shapes left behind from my daughter's little girl dresses, from the days when little girls, without too much protest, would wear cute little girl dresses.

The aristocrats of my button box, though, are the occasional large embossed gilt buttons, say, from a blazer hopelessly outgrown, or a few exotic buttons left behind from some "good" dress of mine, buttons bigger, bolder, and more shapely than the many workaday small buttons from humbler garments, the USEFUL buttons, we might call them.

When I was small, on a rainy day or at home with a fever from school, my mother could get a respite for herself for quite a while by bringing the button box down from the closet where it lived, prying off the tight-fitting lid, and bringing it to me. I would sift the buttons through my fingers, relishing the cool shapes and the tiny clicking sounds as they fell back into the box, or the rushing sound when I took a fistful and let them cascade all at once back onto the heap of their fellows. I could assemble them into patterns, make designs, sort them by several different categories, and then it was time for lunch, the iconic Campbell's tomato soup for the sick, always with a yellow slick of butter melting into it, perhaps a slice of white bread toast. We may not have had amoxicillin--when I was really little we didn't even have penicillin--but we did have Campbell's tomato soup. To this day, that's my first responder when I have an occasional cold, although I have to admit, it's no longer quite as magical a cure as it was then.

We had cousins, quite an eccentric couple, who were known to be rich. That is, rich by the standards of my family, nothing whatever to do with the riches of everyday millionaires or hedge fund zillionaires. Just rich, comparatively speaking. And the source of this wealth was buttons. Not fancy intricate buttons, mind you, but everyday pearl buttons.

Back then buttons, even ordinary shirt buttons, weren't made of plastic, but of mother-of-pearl. Every neighborhood, every town, had its Woolworths then, the Five and Dime; and every Woolworths had its Notions Department, where they sold needles and thread, scissors and bias binding tape, and, of course, buttons, cards and cards of them, of various types, but mostly utilitarian USEFUL buttons. Many women still made clothes for themselves and their families, and besides, buttons got chipped or lost, and no one would dream of replacing a perfectly good shirt or blouse or jacket for lack of a button!

My husband's mother, it turned out, had also had a button box, which he also played with if he were sick. Pretty much everybody's mother had one, actually. I still have mine, which my kids played with when they were sick, although I can't remember the last time I used it to find a replacement for a missing button. The buttons in my button box, lonely, have lasted much longer than their outgrown or outworn companion garments, long ago thrown away, just gone, no more rag bags in my house.

Only a button box, for memory's sake.

Judith Mandell Bruder, tsarinaxxyz@gmail.com



Jane Reynolds Berkeley and camel.

Me and Archaeology

It was probably a trip to Fort Ancient, a prehistoric site about forty miles from my hometown, when I was about ten, which first aroused my interest in archaeology. By the time I was fifteen, however, I had decided that I couldn't make a living at it, so I switched to physics and math. I ended up as a computer programmer in the earliest days of such.

In 1961, I married, had babies in '63, '64, and '65, went back to work full time in '67, kicked my alcoholic husband out in '69, and divorced in '70. I worked in computers and later in management for Standard Oil/BP. Along the way, I volunteered in the archaeology department of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, going on digs in the summer and doing lab work in cold weather. I kept in shape by exercising and running so I would be able to hop in and out of excavations if I ever had the chance.

In 1989, Claudia Bushman, who lived in Delaware at that time, told me that a professor of archaeology there was organizing an excursion to Egypt to excavate a Roman fort on the Red Sea. I signed up for the project. The crew assembled in Cairo, waiting to get a government permit. I took a side trip to Kenya; did a five day field trip into the Masai Mara, and saw at least twenty-four different kinds of animals.

The crew loaded up and drove to the Red Sea location, and, again, we waited. So several of us ladies drove back across the desert to Luxor to see the Valley of the Kings. I went into King Tut's tomb and took a photo of his casket in which he still lay. By the time we returned to the proposed site, the leader of our trip had given up hope of getting the permit, so we were dismissed.

Having heard that the Red Sea was a prime location for scuba diving, I had taken lessons in preparation for the trip. Many of us then headed for the water, rented a boat, and went to sea. I actually did a dive—to about thirty feet—a beautiful sight and was followed by an elephant fish.

At some point, one of my fellow volunteers left to pursue a Master's Degree in Archaeology. I began to think that I might be able to go back to school, so I watched for my chance. When I was fifty-seven, the company offered me a generous retirement package which I happily accepted. Some of the museum staff suggested that I move to Florida to study with Nancy Smith, a former staffer and an instructor at the University of South Florida. So, I sold my house in Shaker Heights, enrolled at USF, and moved to Tampa.

Working with Nancy as an advisor, I excavated prehistoric sites along the Apalachicola River and Spanish contact sites in Florida and South Carolina. I loved the classes so much that I took many extras, and stretched out my program so I could stay longer, finally graduating after six years.

But I didn't care that much for Florida. If you don't fish, play tennis or golf, there isn't much to do. I had a favorite cousin who lived in Charlottesville, Virginia, and I thought about Monticello. I called them to see if they were hiring archaeologists, but they said the only thing they were hiring was guides, so I became a guide at Monticello. After four years, I didn't care for some of the things they said about Jefferson, so I resigned. I found a part-time job working for the University of Virginia Alumnae Association, and greeted visitors at the front desk for seventeen years. I had time to do some archaeological work with the Fluvanna County Historical Society at the lock-tender's house, the old mill on the Fluvanna River, and the Point of Fork Arsenal, a Revolutionary War site where the army restocked during the French and Indian Wars, among other interesting sites.

But I was getting old, and since my three kids are all in Cleveland, I thought it was time to pack up and go back there. I sold my Virginia house, found a two-family house in Shaker Heights, and moved there in November 2022. My two sons and two grandkids live nearby. At the time, my zoologist daughter Beaux was doing a Fulbright in Zimbabwe, teaching in a university and studying elephants. She returned to take a position with a local environmental organization and moved in with me. She'll probably buy her own house soon.

I returned to volunteering at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, which is in the midst of increasing in size by two or three times. Again I'm working with stored artifacts, repackaging them in readiness for moving into new storage space. I also discovered the Shaker Heights History Museum, which has great exhibits about Shaker Heights History, but nothing on prehistory. So I'm preparing an exhibit about who lived here from 12,000 BC to 1775 AD.

How long will this go on? Who knows? But I have lots of good memories of friends and experiences (including Wellesley), things to do in the meantime, and will take whatever.

Jane Reynolds Berkeley, redhenjrb@outlook.com

Requests from class officers and others yielded the following favorite recipes. Several class members reported that they never cook any more, but we can see that they still remember how.

Claudia's Repeat Favorites

Pink Stuff

Bring two cups of water to a boil in microwave. Pour water over two three oz. packages of raspberry Jello. Stir to dissolve, meanwhile adding two cans of whole-berry cranberry sauce and breaking those up. Stir in contents of one sixteen-ounce container of prepared sour cream and stir until the white spots are minimal or have disappeared. Pour into a pretty bowl. Place in refrigerator. Your pink stuff will be ready to serve in a few hours or the next day.

Baked Pineapple Stuffing

This family favorite can be doubled, tripled, or quadrupled. It should be served with ham or turkey , but the family likes it anytime, for breakfast, dinner, or dessert.

1/2 c butter

1 c sugar

4 eggs

1 can (1# 4 oz) crushed pineapple, drained

5 slices firm white bread, cubed

Cream together butter and sugar. Beat in eggs one at a time. Stir in pineapple. Fold in bread cubes. Turn into a greased casserole. Bake, uncovered, at 350o for an hour or so. Serves 6.

Claudia Lauper Bushman, claudia.bushman@gmail.com

Sheila's Tried and True recipe for Spaghetti Sauce

Spaghetti Sauce

3 T oil

1 onion, sliced thin

1 clove garlic, chopped

Cook until the onion is golden. Add 1 lb. hamburger and cook for five minutes.

Add one can tomato paste, 1 large can tomatoes with juice, salt, pepper, lots of oregano and basil.

Simmer at least one hour.

Sheila Owen Monks, smonks341@gmail.com

Toni's "TACO PIE"
For cocktails!

For a 9"-10" pie plate

1st Layer

Spread 1 15 oz can refried beans (can use fat free)

2nd Layer

Guacamole *I make my own...can be purchased to save time*

3 or 4 ripe avocados

2 T lemon juice or more

½ tsp kosher (or other) salt ¼ tsp pepper

(I also add chopped onion, tomatoes, and jalpeno peppers)

3rd Layer

Sour cream/taco sauce

½ pint sour cream (I use low fat or sometimes low fat yogurt)

½ cup mayo, (I use low fat or Veganaise, or more sour cream)

½-1 envelope Taco seasoning *to taste* (I use low salt)

Top layer

½ sm can sliced black olives

Scallions cut with scissors...green parts only

Cherry tomatoes, thin slices

4 oz grated cheddar cheese

This is aways a big hit...to be used with chips or thin rice crackers.

Trader Joe's sells delicious Blue Corn Tortilla chips with little salt,
good carbohydrate to fiber ratio, no sugar, and great taste!

Toni Holland Liebman, toelieb@aol.com



Anne's Dips

I never really cook anymore. Entertaining is limited to having someone(s) in for drinks before dinner. To make a totally easy and attractive nibble platter with a really pretty aspect, carve out the center of a red cabbage, fill it with your favorite dip (could be just Ranch dressing), and surround it with such crudities as broccoli, carrots, red and yellow pepper strips, and whatever else you like to use.

To make a good dip, throw together crumbled blue cheese, a big glob of real mayonnaise, lots of garlic salt to taste, a little Worcestershire sauce, and some freshly ground pepper. Mix until it looks like egg salad, and then add sour cream to the right consistency for dipping. If it tastes flat, add a little white vinegar.

Here's another appetizer I've used a lot. It looks and tastes good.

Crabmeat Dip

1st layer:

1 oz. pk. cream cheese
1/4 c. mayonnaise
1T. instant minced onion
1 T. lemon juice
few drops Worcestershire

3rd. layer:

1 c. chile sauce
1 T. horseradish
1 t. lemon juice
A few drops Worcestershire
Sprinkle chopped parsley over the top

2nd. layer:

1 c. flaked crabmeat

Anne Sinnott Moore, djasmoore@gmail.com



Toni Liebman's Tagliarini

1/2 tspn ground pepper
1/4 C olive oil
1/3 C finely chopped onion
1 clove garlic minced
1.5 C diced celery
1.5 lbs ground chuck
1 lb mushrooms sliced
1/2 C beef broth
6 oz tomato paste (+ a little sugar)
2, 14 oz cans Italian style tomatoes (serves 8 – 10)
2 tspn salt
1/2 tspn ground pepper
1/2 tspn oregano
1/2 tspn basil
8 oz small elbow macaroni
 cooked/drained
10 oz pack froz spinach
 cooked/drained
1/2 C buttered bread crumbs
1/3 C grated parmesan

- 1) Heat oil in a large heavy skillet, sauté onion/garlic until tender
- 2) Add celery, meat (cook until meat loses color)
- 3) Add mushrooms, broth, tom. paste, tomatoes, S&P to taste
- 4) Bring to boil
 Simmer on low uncovered
 1-1.5 hours.
 Add more broth if too thick
- 5) Mix with oregano, basil, macaroni, spinach
- 6) Top with crumbs and grated cheese
- 7) Bake for 30 min or until bubbly

ENJOY!

This is a great one dish meal for a crowd, though I often cut it in half....Everyone loves it.

Toni Holland Liebman, toelieb@aol.com