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Her contact information is:

Office Mail: 3825 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Washington DC 20016

Email: randolphn@sidwell.edu | Phone: (202) 537-8182

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SIDWELL FRIENDS MAGAZINE

EDITORIAL

Editor-in-Chief

Sacha Zimmerman P '29

Creative Director

Meghan Leavitt P '35

Contributing Writers

Loren Ito Hardenbergh P '29

Caleb Morris

Michael Schuler

Digital Producers

Anthony La Fleur P '30

Sarah Randall

Alumni Editors

Anna Wyeth

Kourtney Ginn

Caroline McKeon

Contributing Photographers

Reggie Hildred

Rich Kessler

Joe Noyes

Freed Photography

Cameron Whitman

LEADERSHIP

Head of School

Bryan K. Garman

Chief Communications Officer

Bill Burger

CONNECT WITH SIDWELL FRIENDS

[f](#) [ig](#) [X](#) @sidwellfriends

Sidwell Friends Magazine

3825 Wisconsin Avenue NW

Washington, DC 20016

202-537-8444

sidwell.edu/magazine

magazine@sidwell.edu

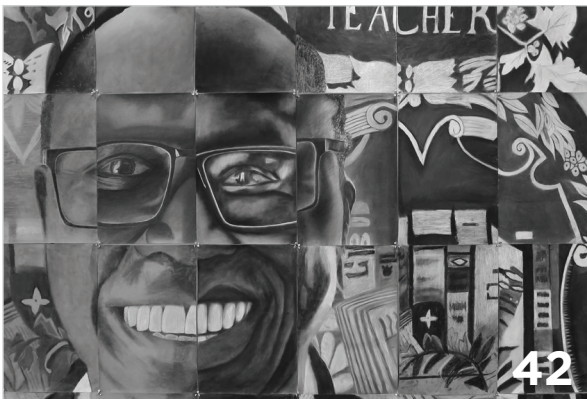


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Illustration by
Gustaf Öhrnell
Hjalmars

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From the Editor

SACHA ZIMMERMAN P '29

Like any good editor with a liberal arts background, I have recently had a pretty healthy fear of artificial intelligence (AI). If we feed the robots enough literature, I worried, will they one day become the new creative class? Or will AI, by definition, always be *derivative*—that most searing of all critics' labels. But these fears of my own replacement by technology have been allayed by writer Jonathan E. Kaplan's cover story (see "The Brave New AI World," on page 24) about AI in education, which is a timely reminder that the human urges to create, to innovate, to explore, and, yes, to learn remain untouched by AI. In fact, as AI itself is a byproduct of human imagination, wielding it may yet result in new avenues of expression and study that only amplify our innate creative and cerebral impulses.

At the same time (again like any good editor with a liberal arts background), I have also found the disturbing renaissance of book-banning across the country to be anti-intellectual, closed-minded and a kneejerk reaction predicated on fear. In "On the Books," reporter Ellen Ryan asks writers from the Sidwell Friends community about these recent challenges to freedom of thought and why it is important to resist them (see page 34). The ensuing roundtable discussion provided a poignant prompt to reconsider my own fear-based resistance to that which I did not understand, namely AI.

After all, human potential thrives when we reach for transcendence, be it through limitless technological achievement, the relentless exchange of ideas, or the beauty of art. As journalist Anand Giridharadas '99 told last year's Sidwell Friends graduates at Commencement: "Find something you love, and then get scary good at it." This is what a Sidwell Friends education does: It inspires young people to pursue truth and excellence for the betterment and enrichment of all.

Which is why, as we explore these important topics in this issue of the magazine, it is all the more fitting that we also feature one of the School's most storied educators, Upper School Principal Mamadou Guèye (see "The Calling," on page 42). On the eve of his retirement from Sidwell Friends, Head of School Bryan Garman talked to Guèye about his 35 years at the School, the impact of Quaker pedagogy on both students and teachers, and Guèye's imminent return to his native Africa to launch a new school on the coast of Senegal—a school that will be in constant conversation with Sidwell Friends. Cross-cultural exchange, says Guèye, is key to achieving the "civil universal" ideal: "a sphere where everybody understands everyone else. To get there, you have to go through languages, travel, and history."

Reaching the civil universal means employing every tool in the educator's kit. To that end, in places of learning, there is no room for irrational fear—whether it is a fear of old ideas on ink-stained pages or a fear of new ones on high-speed digital platforms.



ON CAMPUS



Upper Schoolers perform *Mean Girls* for the spring musical.

The Case for Luddites

A tempered approach to artificial intelligence means protecting the sanctity of human creativity and consciousness—especially in education.

BY BRYAN GARMAN

What impact will artificial intelligence have on teaching and learning? Will AI, the topic of this issue's cover story, empower or endanger? Will it, as one smartphone company puts it, ensure that "the next big thing is you," or will it threaten individuality and imperil society?

These and many other questions have dominated faculty conversations in universities and schools, and given the rate at which generative models are predicted to improve, the debate about the role they should play in education will remain vibrant and vital for years. Not since the arrival of MOOC Madness, that fleeting moment in which false prophets proclaimed the death of the university and in-person teaching, have we discussed an innovation that, according to far-reaching futurists and fundamentalist faddists, would transform education beyond recognition.

AI packs more punch than MOOCs, so much so that practitioners and prognosticators have argued that large language and other foundational models have the potential not simply to change Psych 101, for example, but to transform what it means to be human. So as conversations about AI unfold, educators must do our best not to reduce the dialogue to a moralistic battle between good and evil, to set up yet another ideological wrestling match between technocentrists, who champion a teleological narrative of technological progress and market logic, and, as one writer in this issue suggested, naive Luddite underdogs who resist it.

In the case of AI, I (and others) have found that the Luddites should not be so casually dismissed when it comes to providing insights into how we might negotiate a moment of profound social and technological change. Dictionaries typically describe Luddites as individuals who resist new technologies or work methods, but the real Luddites, those who broke power looms in the 1810s, did more than simply rail against mechanization.

E.P. Thompson, the historian who sought to rescue these radicals from an "enormous condescension of posterity," argues that Luddism was a "transitional" movement, one that sought desperately to cling to a preindustrial ethos without being trapped in nostalgia. Luddites recognized that industrialization would revolutionize their culture and society, eclipsing small-producer capitalism with a factory system that would dramatically alter the material conditions of their lives. At the same time, these weavers and stocking-makers drew upon traditional values to imagine strategies that might safeguard their economic well-being in a disruptive new social order. Luddites advocated for minimum wages, restrictions on child labor, and trade unions, among other new structures and protections. They aimed their resistance at the machines, but they were equally concerned with the cultural transformations these inventions wrought.

The Luddites' double vision is understandable in its context and helpful when applied to our own transitional moment. Many academics, whose

craft was radically disrupted by COVID, approach AI with a Luddite perspective rooted in the realities of the pandemic. Dramatic change besieged us, but our teaching has now largely returned to the pre-pandemic practices in which we find comfort and satisfaction. We enjoy building meaningful relationships with students, value engaging with them in the imperfect and essentially human endeavor of seeking shared understanding, and appreciate the manner in which writing and problem-solving processes, largely unmediated by technology, enable self-discovery and develop consciousness. For many of us, outsourcing these processes would be akin to surrendering freedom of thought, so it is not surprising that AI threatens the conception of who we are personally and professionally. The emotional, if not existential, dilemmas that the pandemic introduced and AI has amplified are real.

The Luddites experienced angst about changes in their lives, but recognized they could do something beyond breaking machines to address it. We too are called to seek and embrace opportunities to shape the emerging technocracy in ways that preserve what we value about ourselves and our society.

Nita Farahany, distinguished professor at Duke University School of Law, provides direction. She argues that AI compels us to establish basic human rights we have not previously identified. In research about hi-tech products that record neurological data, for example, Farahany recognizes that this data is used to improve personal health and product performance,

and is also sold to marketers who might piece together clues about how we make decisions. In this context, Farahany argues, we are engaged in a “battle for our brain,” one that requires us to establish “cognitive liberty”: “the right to self-determination over our brains and mental experiences, as a right to both access and use technologies, but also a right to be free from interference with our mental privacy and freedom of thought.”

AI models will continue to aggregate massive data about our interior lives and, in doing so, will become more effective at approximating and in some cases determining our thoughts (as I write this letter, the word processor anticipates, suggests, and may in fact determine the next word that appears on the page). So Farahany urges us to consider carefully what we must do to protect the sanctity of human creativity and consciousness. And she warns that if we do not soon turn our attention to this matter, we may miss our moment to make a meaningful impact.

Farahany too possesses a double vision, one that sees both promise and liability in AI. She encourages educators to experiment, reconsider curriculum, and reimagine assessment, which will be a focus for faculty professional development at Sidwell Friends next fall.

So as we explore these tools, we must keep both eyes wide open. Doing so requires us to engage the technology boldly, to conduct experiments that reveal how it can help students learn, to challenge long-standing assumptions about what education should enable, and to change our practice in response to what we discover. At Sidwell Friends, we must lean confidently, openly, and more deeply into the wisdom articulated by our faculty working group: “Together, we are guided by the Quaker tradition of ‘continuing revelation’ and seek to answer the question, ‘How can we best prepare ourselves for an ever-changing world?’” ✨



A globe hangs on a cherry blossom tree at the Lower School Heritage Festival in March.

Remembering Emilia Bautista King

The Lower's School's dynamic 2nd grade teacher will be missed.

Emilia Bautista King, who joined Sidwell Friends as a Lower School teacher in 2018, died peacefully at home on February 24 following a long and courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. King enriched her life with an abundant regard for literature, a deep appreciation for cuisine, and an excitement for travel. She found great joy in sharing these passions with her family, friends, students, and colleagues.

After a blind date at a Shawn Colvin concert led to true love, King and her husband, David, spent the next 20 years sharing their love of travel, food, music, and family. They were dedicated to dining at as many of *Washingtonian* magazine's Top 100 restaurants as possible and patronized their favorite chefs when traveling. In their pursuit of adventure, they enthusiastically visited 87 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, dozens of National Parks, and countries on almost every continent. The pair were joined in

their adventure by two beautiful daughters, Ella and Hannah. King taught with warmth, compassion, and open-mindedness, whether it was to strangers, her daughters, or the decades of students who had the privilege of knowing her infectious laughter and quick wit. King's passion for education knew no bounds—she truly understood life as a vast and vibrant classroom.

Her educational experience spanned diverse areas of study through international education and travel. She was a proud member of La Reine High School Class of 1991, and she earned her bachelor's in mass communication and political science from Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada, in 1995. At the University of Melbourne in Australia, King went on to earn a second bachelor's in teaching and master's degrees in education in 1997 and 2002.

Her professional life was dedicated to helping children become critical thinkers in a diverse world. She impacted countless students throughout the last 25 years at Friends Community School of College Park, Maryland; Ascot Vale Primary School and Pascoe Vale South Primary School in Victoria, Australia; Lowell School of Washington, DC; Concord Hill School of Chevy Chase, Maryland; and, of course, Sidwell Friends School.



Emilia Bautista King

In her pursuit of racial justice and cultural diversity, Emilia was deeply involved with the Filipino American Decolonization Experience (FADE), Asian American Pacific Islanders affinity group, and the Asian Educators Alliance. The annual National Association of Independent Schools People of Color Conference enjoyed her as a regular speaker since 2019 and recognized her in 2023 when she couldn't personally attend.

The number of friends and family Emilia created and nurtured relationships with throughout her lifetime is remarkable. Each one of her school friends, students, colleagues, book and drama club members, and everyone she met along the way has been inspired by her unlimited appetite for experiencing all that life has to offer. King loved with a passion that inspired those around her to do better, be better, and love everything in life wholeheartedly and without regret. Her spirit lives on in Ella's thoughtfulness, Hannah's extraversion, and in each and every child whose life she touched forever.



Build the World You Want to Live In

Eboo Patel on religious pluralism and creating a better nation without tearing it down.

In February, Founder and President of Interfaith America **Eboo Patel** arrived at Sidwell Friends to speak to Upper Schoolers during the day and to the entire community that night. The former religious adviser to President Barack Obama wants to recast the story of America as one of pluralism and religious freedom. “The United States is the most religiously diverse country in human history,” Patel said. “There ought to be more focus on the United States as the world’s first religiously diverse democracy.”

Patel also wants to change how people think about progress. His new book, *We Need to Build: Field Notes for Diverse Democracy*, argues that standing against something and tearing it down isn’t as productive as defining a new way of doing things and then building it. “Social change is not about a more ferocious revolution,” he said. “It’s about building a more beautiful social order.”

Today, “change” is understood to be a “fist-in-the-air, burn-it-to-the-ground revolution.” But that kind of change doesn’t always include imagining a better future. For example, “What does it mean to have a decent ecosystem of public safety?” he asked. “That is a builder question.” “Abolishing the police” on the other hand is a breaker attitude. “What does it look like to build the things you want to see in the world,” he said, “rather than getting rid of what you don’t want to see?”



Eboo Patel

To that end, Patel also warned against making those with whom you disagree into the enemy. Building a better world takes collective action, he advised, and it means living among those with divergent views. He described two heart surgeons working together to save the life of a stranger. The doctors voted differently, are different races, different religions, and yet they work together for a greater good, and that is the higher-value goal. “When I get to the new world, I don’t want enemies, so I’m not going to make them in this world,” Patel said. “Why create a situation that you have to undo at the next phase? You cannot vanquish people.”

You can, however, entice others with a story of possibility and why togetherness is better for everyone. “If you come as a pilgrim,” Patel said in closing, “and you point to a place where everyone can thrive, people will recognize the strength of your generosity and they will join you, and we will all win.”



Book Party

National Novel Writing Month landed in Middle School again this year. But this time, instead of merely publishing their books, the 6th grade held a launch party for their original works—all of which are sure to inspire, thrill, and captivate young readers and new authors for life.

Flower Power

Volunteers from across Sidwell Friends made some seriously impressive bouquets for locals in need of a little cheer and romance this year for Valentine’s Day.



Counting Turtles

A group of Sidwell Friends students spent an educational week in Costa Rica.

It wasn't the usual holiday excursion for one group of Sidwell Friends students. Due to the early start of this year's winter break and thanks to the creativity of the Auxiliary Programs team, 14 Sidwell 10th graders traveled to Costa Rica over winter break as part of an unusual service trip that had them monitoring the local turtle population, cleaning a beach of harmful plastics, and helping paint a local school.

"On the first full day of our trip, we went to Marino Las Baulas National Park," says **Sadie Johnson '26**. "We watched a presentation to learn about the turtle population, and then went to find turtles that had not yet hatched." Costa Rica's Marino Las Baulas National Park is a protected reserve on the Pacific as well as a nesting site for endangered leatherback sea turtles, the largest of the turtle species, tipping the scales at more than 1,000 pounds each. The objective of the trip was to learn and volunteer. So, students joined the research team at the Goldring-Gund Station, a turtle restoration center in the park, and patrolled the beach during nesting season, looking in on turtles and monitoring nests.

The park endeavors to provide a place for these massive creatures to lay their eggs and keep them safe from thieves. Costa Rican researchers at the park say egg poachers, who sell the turtle eggs on the black market (operating under the false belief that the eggs are aphrodisiacs), have decimated a generation of the turtle population. (Just this month armed poachers stole 1,520 eggs from a different protected area.) Add severe climate change, unsustainable fishing practices, and coastal development to the mix, and the leatherback sea turtle population in the Pacific has decreased by over 90 percent since 1980.

That's why, the park says, volunteers like the Sidwell Friends students are so critical to their efforts to count, measure, track, and study these ancient animals, which are important to maintaining the health of the planet's marine ecosystems. It is also why the kids scoured the beach looking for microplastics, which harm wildlife and can take hundreds of years to break down naturally. "We cleaned up the beach for the rest of the wildlife," says Johnson. "Afterward, we reflected on our experience and sorted the plastics we found."



Students beachcomb in Costa Rica.

The trip was the idea of **Karen McCann McClelland** and **Cate Woodward**, director and assistant director, respectively, of Auxiliary Programs at Sidwell Friends. When the two saw that the timing of the holiday break created an opportunity for a trip, they jumped at the chance. McClelland and Woodward partnered with Nations Classroom to create a compelling service program, and the next thing they knew, they were heading up a trip to Central America with 14 students. It was the first international trip put on by Auxiliary Programs since COVID. Financial aid was also available, which helped make the trip available to all.

In addition to working with the giant leatherback turtles, the students also spent a day at a rural Costa Rican school. They cleaned the facility, painted a wall and a stadium-like stairway, and planted trees. Service, says Woodward, was the top priority of the trip, as was ensuring the Upper School administration would approve of the program as a credible way for student travelers to earn some of their mandatory service hours. "We wanted to make sure the kids would have 20 hours of service," says Woodward. (The School requires 60 hours of service work to graduate.)

Working with Nations Classroom, which provides educational student tours and class trips as part of a mission to get kids out into the world, McClelland and Woodward identified service opportunities and connected with guides at Las Baulas and the local school.

Dylan Verma '26 enjoyed experiencing the different climates of Costa Rica, from 30-degree rainforests to 80-degree beaches. But his favorite part of the trip was less exotic. "There were so many amazing parts about this trip, including the service," he says, "but my favorite was getting closer to the people on the trip. Everyone became closely bonded, and it's really nice to see everyone back at Sidwell now." Of course, he adds, "the beach was also pretty awesome."



United Voices Dream Choir

Moments of Peace and Joy

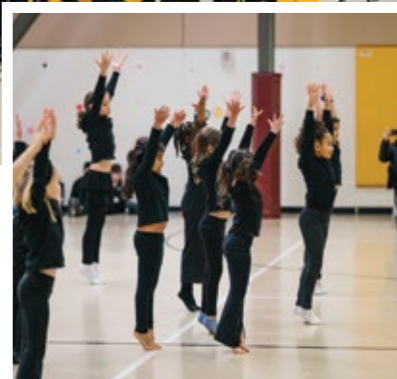
Ten years of the Lower School's United Voices Dream Choir.

The United Voices Dream Choir was born out of a desire to create an opportunity for students and adults at Lower School to lift their voices together in song. “For years, I had watched our 4th graders perform as a chorus,” says choir founder and Lower School teacher **Amie Wallace**. “At some point, I imagined kids and adults singing together. When I presented the idea of the choir, there was excitement and much support.” That was the 2013/14 school year—making this year the 10th anniversary of the Dream Choir at the Lower School.

The Choir is made up of committed students in grades preK-4, teachers, and staff who practice to perform at the Lower School's annual MLK Assembly. Students

give up time from their recess periods to rehearse during the two weeks leading up to the performance. Once a low-key part of the MLK Assembly, the choir is now a central feature that musically supports the message of each year's programming. “Songs are carefully chosen to support the themes and messages shared in each year's assembly,” says Wallace. “Students learn the meaning behind each song, as we ponder the lyrics and how they apply to the theme.”

A decade in, the choir is as popular as ever. More than 100 students and family members added their voices to the group this year. “The Dream Choir is important to and for our community, as there is nothing else like it at Sidwell Friends, where children and adults come together in performance and celebration,”



says Wallace. “We recognize the power of song in bringing people together. In those times of lifted voices, we are temporarily removed from the struggles of our world and bonded together in moments of joy and peace.”

Not-So-Secret Histories

Journalist Ian Johnson explored the tension between China's past and its present in the Zeidman Memorial Lecture.

The true history-telling of modern China has become the work of “underground” historians and archivists, journalist and Pulitzer Prize-winner **Ian Johnson** told a packed audience at Sidwell Friends in March.

Speaking at the annual John Fisher Zeidman '79 Memorial Lecture, Johnson described how a relatively small but committed group of brave truth-tellers are striving to overcome the country's “authoritarian malaise,” to record history that runs counter to the official account and avoids the government's aggressive censors.

Johnson's latest book, *Sparks: China's Underground Historians and their Battle for the Future*, profiles more than a dozen such historians and public intellectuals across art, film, academia, and journalism. “History is a kind of religion in China,” Johnson said. “The historians of ancient China are celebrated: Speak truth to power, and in the end, right triumphs over might.”

In modern China, however, history is presented through the lens of People's Republic of China President Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as a means of extending their rule. For Xi, the lesson of the collapse of that other great communist power, the Soviet Union, was not about better relationships with the rest of the world; it was a warning of what could happen “if the party doesn't more forcefully control things.” The CCP uses its own version of history—as a self-proclaimed historically and



Ian Johnson

superlatively successful state—to shut down would-be critics.

And it has largely worked. Couple a curated—some would say, whitewashed—history with a booming economy, and a lot of Chinese people (particularly young Chinese people) find they don't have the zeal to question the CCP. This, Johnson said, is why “public intellectuals in China think history is the central struggle” of the day.

After a “steady diet of party-controlled history” that erases central facts, including the nation's 20th-century famine, the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests and killing of the protesters, and even the recent COVID lockdowns, these renegade Chinese thought leaders want to “break out of the straitjacket of history.”

Johnson argued that thanks to technology and an ever more interconnected world, it's starting to happen. He cited *Spark* magazine as an example. During

the 1950s and 1960s, intellectuals who had been cast out into rural areas saw the Chinese famine firsthand. A group of them created a magazine, *Spark*, to spread the word about the crisis they were witnessing. The publication was eventually shut down, and the entire affair led to 40 arrests and three executions, but the publication's legacy has been resurrected. Now, old issues of *Spark* that decry the famine are springing up on the internet, being spread via PDFs, and getting emailed around the world.

Spark has had a profound effect on Chinese society, Johnson said. Intellectuals feel their lineage is being returned, igniting a wave of materials, such as a new magazine called *Remembrances* and websites like *China Unofficial Archives*, that recreate history. Meanwhile, oral histories are all the rage in China. “Not everyone has a political agenda,” Johnson said. “But once you start interviewing grandma, the truth has a way of coming out.”



Enter the Dragon!

Lunar New Year kicked off with a roar.

This Lunar New Year—the year of the dragon—launched with a Lower School assembly filled with red ribbons, music, poetry, and dance. Both the Lower and Middle School also saw professional lion dance performances, which augur good luck and fortune for the year. Middle School students even whipped up some homemade dumplings with Chinese teacher **Yuan Angel**. Finally, the Parents Association and the Parents of Asian Students hosted a celebration for the entire community to celebrate Lunar New Year. With the first new moon of the year, 1 billion people around the globe decorate their homes with red paper cutouts, hold lantern ceremonies, and make lots of food. At Sidwell Friends, the Year of the Dragon meant a talent show, more lion dances, crafts, lots of lanterns, and a potluck dinner.



Natural Bonds

The Black Girls' Society reaches across School classes to create community and pride.

The Upper School's Black Girls' Society (BGS) had a busy Black History Month. They celebrated Black hair, wrote cards to Lower School girls, and forged sisterhoods between Middle Schoolers and Upper Schoolers. All of their efforts create a positive community for Black girls at Sidwell Friends and instill confidence in girls across the School's divisions. "BGS not only hopes to make Sidwell more comfortable for high school Black girls," says **Graciana Kabwe '26**, one of eight BGS leaders, "but for our Middle and Lower Schoolers as well." One way of doing that is to encourage students to take pride in their natural hair. "A common misconception about Black hair is that it is an obstacle," says Kabwe. "There's a notion that natural Black hair needs to be tamed, altered, or worn a certain way for it to be presentable or acceptable. Black hair is perfect in its natural state, and while of course there is always the option to change it and enjoy its versatility, we should continue to normalize natural hair and embrace its beauty." That natural beauty is personal for Kabwe, who says it would have been helpful to have had older



The Black Girls' Society celebrates their sisters across classes.

Black girls to connect with when she was coming to terms with her own hair. That's where the BGS Chase Sisters program, named in honor of the late Brittany Chase, comes in. The Chase Sisters initiative matches younger students with older ones to forge connections at a delicate time of life and to help create sister-like friendships between Middle and Upper Schoolers. "It is important for Middle Schoolers to have such an outlet," says Kabwe, "because our self-image around that age often carries into high school and beyond."



Photos by Cameron Whitman



Cut a Rug

As Lower School music teacher **Matthew Stensrud** explains in this issue's "5 Questions" (see page 14), one of the most critical features of his educational philosophy is movement. That's why he put together the second annual Lower School Folk Dance Night, where families came together to explore the beauty of traditions from around the world.

Be a Signal in the Noise

Conversation With Friends hosts Meredith Fineman '05 to discuss her book, *Brag Better*.

This February, Sidwell Friends brought back its signature Conversations With Friends event series for a deep dive into the fine art of bragging. **Meredith Fineman '05**—a publicist, personal brand expert, media trainer, executive coach, and the author of *Brag Better: Master the Art of Fearless Self-Promotion* (Portfolio, 2020)—is on a mission to redefine “bragging” and “bragging better” as “stating true facts about your work strategically and cohesively to advance your goals.”

Fineman spoke with **Lory Ivey Alexander '97**, a lawyer, writer, and contemporary visual artist. Alexander started out by asking Fineman why bragging, which can seem so negative to many, is actually vital in the workplace. “With social media platforms like TikTok, there is just so much misinformation and disinformation out there,” Fineman said. “The attention economy is really threatening to a lot of people who don’t feel comfortable sharing in those public spaces—particularly for women and nontraditional voices.”

For Fineman, amplifying those unheard messages is central to her ethos. “Championing other people’s voices in general is a tentpole of Sidwell’s values, and it is more important than ever,” she said. “In our media landscape, which over the past 10 years has become even more egregious, the volume and noise does not match the substance or truth.” Paradoxically people who are unqualified to talk about various topics seem to shout the loudest while “the qualified, quiet people who have done the work don’t know how to talk about it.”

Fineman says that in a landscape of bluster, there’s also a lot of “imposter syndrome,” which is the feeling that you are either not qualified to be doing what you’re doing or that you are a fake—and either way, everyone will soon discover this about you. “A lot of the human experience is just pretending, but that’s different from being good at your job,” Fineman said. “It’s very linked to this idea of being afraid to talk positively about your work or brag. That is, it affects the wrong people.” A fear that you are bad at your job, she said, is not usually a fear of people who are actually bad at their jobs. “What I get very nervous about is that instead of figuring out a way to brag better, it feels okay to choose silence,” she said. “That’s a much more dangerous option to me and to society at large. There are tremendous forces at play telling you your voice doesn’t matter. I believe you should try, anyway.”



Meredith Fineman '05

Ultimately, Fineman sees bragging not as immodesty but accuracy. “Bragging is simply stating facts,” she said. “You’ve done the work. It’s not untrue, it’s not embellishment, it’s not lies. These are facts that need to be shared, and they need to be shared for the purposes of your work and for the purposes of the people you work with. These days, if you don’t say exactly what you’re doing, someone can’t tell. There is no more happenstance. There’s no more stopping by someone’s desk or running into someone.” Sharing what you are doing well is actually a service to an organization.

To that end, Fineman coaches people on filling out self-evaluations. She recommends keeping track of wins along the way so they aren’t forgotten at the end of the year. She asks people to define their visibility goals (a promotion, more confidence, new job, to stand on stage, etc.). And she encourages everyone to practice bragging (as opposed to narcissism) to showcase pride in their work. “I would rather you swing for the fences,” she said, “than stay silent.”



To see previous Conversations with Friends, visit sidwell.pub/CWF.

Do you have a suggestion for a future Conversation with Friends event? Email alumni@sidwell.edu.



5 QUESTIONS

for
MATTHEW STENSRUD

The HeartBeat of Lower School

FOR THE LAST FIVE YEARS, MATTHEW STENSRUD, OR “MR. S,” HAS BEEN CHEERFULLY LEADING THE LOWER SCHOOL’S MUSIC PROGRAM. But his pedagogical approach to music education isn’t solely focused on music per se. Mr. S believes music is inextricably linked to listening, using instruments, singing, playing, and dancing. Mr. S has also become part of the fabric of the Lower School by hosting events that celebrate culture in and out of the classroom.

1. What is your approach to teaching music to young students??

My background in music education is the Orff Approach, which was created by Carl Orff in Germany after World War II. The idea is that students should always sing, speak, dance, and play every time they’re in a music classroom. The connection of music and movement is a natural part of being human, and too often, as music teachers, we take out the movement aspect and just ask kids to stand and sing. Instead, we really should be connecting students to everything that their bodies can do, whether it’s folk dance, modern dance, or creative movement. And we should connect them to playing instruments. Xylophones you typically see in schools were actually created by Carl Orff after he was introduced to a marimba. He realized he could turn the marimba into xylophone instruments that would be helpful for students. The same goes for the recorder, which wasn’t an instrument used in the elementary music room until Orff discovered that it was perfect for music education.

2. And that led to a trip to Austria last summer?

Though I’ve taken lots of Orff-based courses in the United States and earned a master’s degree in the Orff Approach, I had never traveled to the place where it all began: Salzburg, Austria. I applied for the Sidwell Friends Summer Venture Grant to take a week to study dance, music, and body percussion at the Orff Institute in Salzburg and was fortunate enough to be selected to go. Ever since the Institute was created, they’ve held weeklong summer courses. I basically studied all day. There were 100 people from around the world, maybe 10 or so from the States, so it was really cool to connect with other music teachers from across the globe. We were making music all the time. I got to know my new colleagues, and together we would explore Salzburg: I saw the house Mozart was born in and lots of other sites in musical history. I’m very grateful the School afforded me the chance to be able to travel there. It was a phenomenal week.

3. Can you talk about your Folk Dance Night at the Lower School?

We just held the second annual folk dance at the Lower School, and it was a huge success. It seemed like the whole School was there. I counted almost 250 kids—and the Lower School is right around 300, so it was the vast majority of the School. The parents were also phenomenal. They put together cotton candy, popcorn, and pizza, and it was a really joyful evening. The students showcased all the different dances they've been learning. I love to create playful and fun dances, too. For example, the 4th graders learned a dance I choreographed from the *Barbie* movie. We also learned dances from around the world, including a pretty difficult dance from Germany and another from Hungary. All these dances fit the students' joyfulness and playfulness but still push them mentally and physically when it comes to the footwork they can accomplish.

4. Is there something about working at a Quaker school that appeals to you?

It has been an immense joy to be at Sidwell Friends the past five years. It has become my home as a music teacher, especially given my personal background in creating classrooms that are inclusive and that emphasize community. What is great about a Quaker school is that it does both of those things naturally, and it empowers students to be cognizant of justice, equality, equity, and diversity. Sidwell Friends encourages students to create powerful community with one another, and that translates into the music room because students are able to work successfully in small groups when they value each other's input. When such a joyful community of kids come together and dance, the Quaker testimonies help lift that up more so than at other schools. That really called to me. I love this place.

5. How did the Pride celebration at the Lower School come about?

I've always wanted to organize an LGBTQ Pride Parade at a school. I'm grateful I'm now at a place that embraces that. Over the past few years, it has been an important time to lift up our LGBTQ students and families, and it has helped open the hearts of all families, including those LGBTQ families who have always been at the School but who maybe didn't always see themselves in what the School was doing. That has been a wonderful way to bring the community together. Plus, it's an amazing way to end the year because it's such a joyful celebration. That what's great about pride: It reminds students how beautiful you are inside and out just by being you. It's a perfect way to put a capstone on a year—we're all outside dancing and waving flags and celebrating each other.





Caleb Williams '24

Jalen Rougier-Roane '25

Acaden Lewis '25



Sidwell Friends teams continued their winning ways over the winter sports season, bringing home several team and individual conference and state championships.

BASKETBALL

Sidwell Friends boys' varsity basketball completed their season with a 27-4 record and an undefeated campaign in the Mid-Atlantic

Athletic Conference (MAC). The season culminated with winning both the MAC championship and the District of Columbia State Athletic Association (DCSAA) AA Tournament crown. These achievements mark the program's seventh conference championship and fourth state title.

Acaden Lewis '25 was selected as the 2023/24 Gatorade District of Columbia Boys Basketball Player of the Year. This honor recognizes Lewis as DC's most outstanding boys' high school basketball

Zania Socka '24

player. Lewis is the first male student-athlete from Sidwell Friends to win the award.

Caleb Williams '24 eclipsed 1,000 career points and will continue his playing career at Georgetown in the fall. Williams '24, Lewis '25, and **Jalen Rougier-Roan '25** were honored as All-MAC selections this season.

The Sidwell Friends girls' basketball team finished their season with a 25-6 record. They claimed both the Independent School League (ISL) regular-season and tournament championships. Their season ended with a second-place finish in the DCSAA AA tournament.

Kendall Dudley '24 and **Zania Socka '24** were selected as McDonald's All-Americans. They are the third and fourth students from Sidwell Friends to participate in the prestigious national exhibition. Both will be competing for UCLA in the fall.



Iain Ramirez '24

WRESTLING

The wrestling program finished third in MAC competition with a 10-7 record in dual meets. **Isaac Jain '26** and **Luke Borkowski '25** repeated as individual MAC champions.

At the Sidwell Invitational Tournament, **Owen Wilson-Black '25** and **Lucas Schwinden '26** claimed victories. **Henry Stefanick '25** completed his season finishing third in the DCSAA tournament.

Representing the girls' wrestling program, **Sune Hamparian '24**, **Ilaria Luna '25**, **Florence Waiters '25**, and **Emily Klein '25** all posted podium finishes at tournaments throughout the season.



SWIMMING

The varsity swim and dive season was noteworthy. The team posted numerous personal records throughout the season. **Desi Amprey '25**, became a two-time state diving champion by securing first place at the DCSAA Diving Championship Meet in February.

Desi Amprey '25

Patrick Jiminez '26

For all news and up-to-date information, you can find more at sidwell.edu/athletics and on X and Instagram by following [@SFSQuakers!](https://www.instagram.com/SFSQuakers/)

Breaking Ground

The current Upper School turns 60. The new Upper School is prepping for construction.

BY LOREN ITO HARDENBERGH P '29

In the coming months, construction is expected to begin on the brand-new Upper School building on the Upton Street campus. Sixty years ago, another generation of Sidwell Friends students said goodbye to their 60-year-old high school, and hello to a sunny, modern building.

Built around 1901 along Wisconsin Avenue and situated where the upper turf field and parking structure are now located, the original wooden Upper School building had its charms. After the Sidwells acquired it in 1910 to build a second campus, they made it their home and lived there for more than 20 years. Over time, the Sidwells began to hold classes in their home, and after Thomas Sidwell's death in 1936, the downtown campus was sold, and the home was officially turned into the Upper School building. The kitchen became the main office, with cupboards repurposed as bookshelves. The Sidwells' living room became the senior home-room. Longtime administrator and

trustee Helen Zartman lived on the top floor for over three decades.

The building had its homey quirks, with a "friendly, lived-in atmosphere," as the editors of the *Quarterly* generously put it. A member of the Class of 1962 suggested: "The High School is like a person—it has its faults because no one is perfect, but it is loved anyway. Its personality traits make the High School an individual."

But it was simply too small for the growing student population. "The need for space is dictated by several human rights," wrote another student. "First there is the human right to life and limb. The classrooms are presently arranged so that a student who wishes to get to his desk must fight for his life against other seated students who are trying to preserve their limbs."

Aside from its size limitations, the Sidwells' former home was past its prime. It had been partitioned and re-partitioned endless times to accommodate the School's changing needs. Thomas Sidwell was known for making renovations



Students walk along Wisconsin Avenue outside the Upper School building at 3901.

first and then asking for permits later. Windows would not open, doors would not shut, the heating "seemed independent of man and weather," as one staff member quipped. According to one student, the floors were "three-fifths holes and two-fifths patched holes." Another summed it up succinctly: "Sidwell Friends needs a new High School building. The present High School has become insufficient. It is a fire-trap; it is too small; it is too noisy."

The city agreed. An inspection in 1962 concluded that the Upper School did not pass 15 requirements in the new DC building code



The Sidwells' house, in use as the Upper School building, in 1952.



TOP LEFT: With its close proximity to Wisconsin Avenue, the old Upper School building was a noisy place to learn.
TOP RIGHT: Students between classes in one of the many narrow stairwells in the old Upper School building.



and must be torn down as soon as possible. Plans quickly began for a new Upper School building, yet there was one key sticking point: Where to put it? Serendipitously, a campus in Maryland was being sold a few miles away at the Longfellow School for Boys, and the board of trustees saw a way out. Moving the Lower School to Bethesda freed up space for a larger, modern Upper School building.

The students had plenty of ideas for their new high school. While all agreed that more space was the most desperate need, students wanted a sun roof, educational television, student smoking rooms, and a student lounge with a stereo phonograph and Coke machine. (They got their lounge, but alas students were not allowed to smoke on campus.) The administration thought about including a swimming pool and a separate air-raid shelter but ended up with neither. (It was the early 1960s, and President Kennedy's fallout shelter program was underway. When the school ran its "civil defense" drills, the high school students were wisely instructed to evacuate to the much sturdier Zartman House.)

Funds were raised, architects were hired, and with a great deal of excitement, the groundbreaking took place in November 1963.

Viewing stands were erected on the sidewalks to accommodate the many interested spectators. Less than a year later, with workers still painting, drilling, and hammering away, students began their studies in their new building.

Acting Head of School Frank Barger could not have been more pleased. "This is the most beautiful building in Washington," he stated with obvious pride. "The halls are wide, the classrooms large, the atmosphere cheery, and the whole building is filled with light and warmth."

In all the excitement over the new brick edifice, what had become of the old wooden Upper School? Some students surmised it would be "razed simply by tossing a cigarette on the floor of the study hall."

It ended up being demolished in a rather unceremonious way on a cold day in December 1964. We are fortunate that Doris Powell Schultz '37 happened to be traveling along Wisconsin Avenue that day, and rescued the metal house numbers from 3901 Wisconsin Avenue (see below). These have now found their permanent home in the School archives.



When the Sidwells' house first became the Upper School in 1938, the senior class comprised just 19 students. By the time the current Upper School was built in 1964, the senior class had grown to 67 students. Today, the Class of 2024 has nearly twice as many, with 126 to receive diplomas this June. Sixty years later, what was once a spacious and modern building is now showing its age and unable to fully meet all the needs of the present Upper School community. In a little over two years when students move into a new, spacious building, they won't have to witness their old high school tumble to the ground—they get to watch its second life as the new Lower School. 🌸



LEFT: Seating was built to allow spectators to watch the construction of the new building.



RIGHT: "Many people said it couldn't happen," said Acting Headmaster Frank Barger. "It was almost a miracle it did."

FRESH INK

spring books

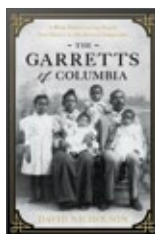
A history of the Han Dynasty at war, a history of war via global finance, and a history of America through the eyes of a Black dynasty. Plus, the life of a landlord and two children's books that point to the beauty in cross-cultural exchanges.

The Garretts of Columbia: A Black South Carolina Family from Slavery to the Dawn of Integration

David Nicholson '68

University of South Carolina Press, 2024

"At the heart of David Nicholson's beautifully written and carefully researched book ... are his great-grandparents, Casper George Garrett and his wife, Anna Maria. Papa ... was a professor at Allen University, a lawyer, and an editor of three newspapers. Dubbed Black South Carolina's 'most respected disliked man,' he was always ready to attack those he believed disloyal to his race. When his quixotic idealism and acerbic editorials resulted in his dismissal from Allen, his wife ... came into her own as the family bread winner. She was appointed supervisor of rural colored schools, trained teachers, and oversaw the construction of schoolhouses. ... Though Papa and Mama came of age in the bleak Jim Crow years after Reconstruction, they believed in the possibility of America. ... The Garretts of Columbia is family history as American history, rich with pivotal events viewed through the lens of the Garretts's lives."

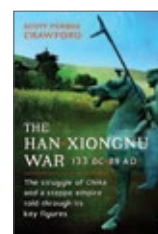


The Han-Xiongnu War, 133 BC-89 AD: The Struggle of China and a Steppe Empire Told Through Its Key Figures

Scott Forbes Crawford '96

Pen & Sword Books Ltd., 2023

"The Han-Xiongnu War pitted the Han dynasty against a confederation of nomadic steppe peoples, the Xiongnu Empire. In campaigns waged on a huge scale by the standards of contemporary western warfare, ... the two states fought for control of Central Asia, hungry for its rich resources and Western trade links. China's victory set the stage for millennia of imperial rule and a vast sphere of influence in Asia. Scott Forbes Crawford examines the war in a lively, engaging narrative ... through biographies of fifteen historical figures: the Chinese and Xiongnu emperors who first led their armies into battle; 'peace bride' Princess Jieyou, whose marriage to a steppe king forged a vital Chinese alliance and positioned her to feed intelligence to the Han Court; [and] the explorer-diplomat Zhang Qian, who almost inadvertently established the Silk Road, among other pivotal individuals."

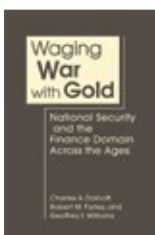


Waging War with Gold: National Security and the Finance Domain Across the Ages

Charles A. Dainoff, Robert M. Farley, Geoffrey F. Williams '87

Lynne Rienner Publishers

"The sinews of war,' posited Cicero, 'are infinite money.' Can the same be said of security? Tackling this thought-provoking question, the authors of *Waging War with Gold* show how states across the centuries have weaponized the global finance domain—a constellation of economic, legal, and monetary relations—in order to exert influence and pursue national interests."



House for Rent: A Small-Time Landlord's Bumpy Road to Financial Freedom

J. Robert Giffen '51

Outskirts Press, 2018

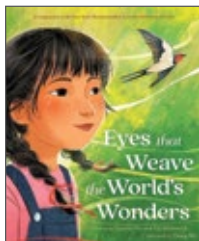
Here are the "[e]veryday adventures and lessons learned over 20 years renting single-family homes to a wide variety of tenants. Tenants come and go. Some even come and stay a long time. Most are totally unremarkable. ... This book focuses on some of the more challenging tenants, who have come and, thankfully, gone. They can drive you crazy when you're dealing with them, but in hindsight, they are what makes the life of a landlord an interesting adventure."



Eyes that Weave the World's Wonders

Joanna Ho and
Liz Kleinrock '05

HarperCollins,
2024

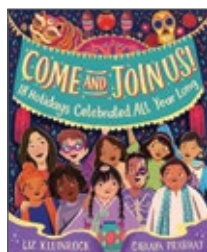


"A young girl who is a transracial adoptee learns to appreciate the differences in her family and celebrate them. Even though her adopted family may look different from her, their bond is deep and their connection is filled with love. She wonders about her birth mom and comes to appreciate both her birth culture and her adopted family's culture, for even though they may seem very different, they are both a part of her, and that is what makes her beautiful."

Come and Join Us: 18 Holidays Celebrated All Year Long

Liz Kleinrock '05

HarperCollins,
2023



"Meet kids who share how they celebrate holidays all year long—perfect for discussions about de-centering winter holidays! Who says the holidays only happen in the winter? Every day's a holiday when you live in a world as diverse as ours! From Juneteenth to Vesak, and Yom Kippur to Día de las Muertos, the festivities never end. Come and join us and learn about eighteen holidays celebrated by a diverse group of children in this inviting and joyful picture book."



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Reef Encounters

Ben Charo '14 has dedicated his life to coral—with some help from Sidwell Friends.

Whether he was swimming at the beach as a kid or devouring documentaries about sharks later on, Ben Charo '14 has always loved the ocean. So much so that he became a marine biologist dedicated to protecting the planet's coral reefs. And for that, Charo credits his education at Sidwell Friends.

"I started getting interested in coral reefs while I was still at Sidwell," Charo says. After his sophomore year, he did a summer study abroad program at the Island School on Eleuthera Island in the Bahamas. "It was focused on tropical marine conservation, and I had a feeling I would really love it," he says. "But it wasn't until I got in the water and saw a coral reef for the first time that I was just totally overwhelmed by what I was seeing in terms of the diversity of life and the colors."

Today, Charo is a program coordinator at Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL), a nonprofit devoted to keeping coral reefs healthy so they can adapt to climate change and survive for generations to come. CORAL is one of the largest global nongovernmental organizations focused exclusively on protecting coral reefs. Charo is quick to point out that reefs are a hugely important

ecosystem: "25 percent of the world's marine species are found in association with coral reefs and half a billion people benefit from reefs in some way." According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, coral reefs protect coastlines from storms and erosion while providing populations with food, income, and new medicines.



Based on the satellite images, we potentially have a tool that people all around the world could use to estimate the diversity of corals and therefore protect reefs that are more likely to survive climate change."

Charo can trace his work today back to insights gleaned while a student at Sidwell Friends. After attending the Island School, as the idea of marine



Charo

biology and conservation crystalized for him as a career goal, Charo found that "my Sidwell education played a major role as well." He says Melanie Fields, the late Upper School biology and life sciences teacher, made a real impact on him. "Getting a primer on what research would look like, even as a 15-year-old, was really amazing," he says, "and it pushed me forward on that trajectory." But for a 15-year-old with a passion for the ocean, he also saw connections to the marine world in less expected courses, like romantic literature. Assistant Head of School Min Kim, then an Upper School English teacher, introduced Charo to the concept of "nature as cathedral." The idea grabbed him: "I realized I had a love for nature writ large, and it was something that I definitely wanted to pursue."

Upper School history teacher Darren Speece's environmental history class also provided Charo a different perspective on the natural world. "That class illuminated for me how the ways in which we talk about nature can obscure and obfuscate historically important facts," he says. "For instance, the idea of describing a natural space as 'pristine and untouched' might negate entirely the historical presence of indigenous groups who might have been there at one time and were removed to create this empty-seeming area that in fact

has an extensive human history.” The class sparked an epiphany: Conservation is inherently about people. “That’s something that I carried into college and beyond.”

He attended Swarthmore, where he did another study abroad program in the Caribbean. Then, upon graduation, he received a Watson Fellowship, which funds independent projects outside the United States. Charo used his fellowship to embark on a yearlong journey to explore the consequences of coral reef decline on coastal communities in Australia, Micronesia, Palau, Tuvalu, and Belize. He conducted more than 100 interviews with scientists, fishermen, tour operators, artists, and others—because he already understood that conservation is about people.

At CORAL, Charo continues to use the links between people and nature to effect change. For example, one of the projects he is working on now involves the Allen Coral Atlas, which uses satellites to map the world’s coral reefs. It also allows scientists like Charo to monitor how coastal ecosystems are faring in the face of global climate change. “Based on the satellite images, we potentially have a tool that people all around the world could use to estimate the diversity of corals and therefore protect reefs that are more likely to survive climate change,” he says. This strategic approach is part of CORAL’s goal of prioritizing the protection of the more diverse reefs to optimize the chances that organisms can survive the warming waters created by climate change. “The hope is that such

organisms could repopulate and the reef might be able to recover,” he says.

Of course, for Charo personally, satellites will never match the power of observation while diving. “If you zoom in on a reef in the Caribbean,” he says, “you can find these little areas you’d never find from five or 10 meters above the reef.” Charo enthusiastically describes cleaner wrasses, small fish that exist in a symbiotic relationship with larger fish. The large fish come by these cleaning wrasses’ stations, which Charo likens to car washes: “The larger fish will open up their mouths; the smaller fish will jump in, clean it out, and get a free meal. The larger fish gets cleaned up from parasites and is off on its way. That’s insane!” Charo says the more time he spends underwater, the more he realizes his purpose. “To actually jump in the water and see that in real time is just really overwhelming,” he says. “On an emotional level, it really is a lifelong passion.”

Charo plans to pursue a PhD to take his work to the next level. “I want to study not only marine conservation ecology for coral reefs but also the ways in which human and ecosystem health are interrelated,” he says. “That social thread is something that I’ve taken with me since Sidwell Friends.” Something else he took away from Sidwell Friends is his love of Meeting for Worship: “I wouldn’t be surprised if Meeting for Worship played a role in my trying to find the same kind of feeling out in nature,” he says. “Because in the water, I definitely value having that quiet.” ✨

Know someone who is living their values? Email suggestions to magazine@sidwell.edu.



THE BRAVE NEW AI WORLD

Sidwell Friends embraces the challenges
and possibilities of artificial intelligence.

BY JONATHAN E. KAPLAN

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GUSTAF ÖHRNELL HJALMARS





Last spring, a few months after the launch of the artificial intelligence (AI) platform ChatGPT, Silicon Valley technologists organized a briefing at the National Press Club in downtown Washington, DC, to impress upon policymakers and nongovernmental organizations—Luddites all—that AI posed a more significant threat to humanity than climate change, nuclear war, and social media companies combined. The organizers, former Google ethicists turned modern-day Paul Reveres, feared that the chance to hang a lantern—or two—in the Old North Church was swiftly passing by. A dystopian future where governments use AI to strip people’s civil liberties and rights, and control their thinking, was just around the corner.

If the warnings about the harms of AI were designed to scare those people into action, the ethicists instead instilled a sense of existential dread and paralysis in the audience of legislators, technology reporters, philanthropy do-gooders, and think tankers. Without offering solutions to stop or slow the havoc AI would wreak, everyone left the event feeling depressed and helpless.

But that fear and paralysis are the real problem—not a set of imagined harms that could end up being as toothless as Y2K. “To act like this technology is stronger than we are is so demeaning,” says Nate Green, the Middle School academic coordinator at Sidwell Friends. “If we start talking about how this is going to wreck the world, then we are powerless to do anything. And that is just not the case. That is the real AI dilemma.”

After all, fear, depression, and inaction are not options for school administrators—or parents, teachers, and students—who are all staring at the real-world implications of artificial intelligence right now. A professor at Texas A&M University flunked half his class last year after ChatGPT mistakenly took credit for writing their final papers. Other students around the world are discovering that AI is far from infallible, routinely spouting falsehoods, charitably known as “hallucinations.” The popularity of a concept it turns out is not proof of accuracy. Then there is bias: A study

“To act like this technology is stronger than we are is so demeaning. If we start talking about how this is going to wreck the world, then we are powerless to do anything. And that is just not the case. That is the real AI dilemma.”

—NATE GREEN

Middle School Academic Coordinator

out of Germany found distinct left-leaning political favoritism on ChatGPT. Worse, as a headline in *Scientific American* put it: “Even ChatGPT Says ChatGPT Is Racially Biased.”

Educators, of course, cannot throw up their hands in defeat. The genie is out of the bottle, and there is a solid consensus among educators that AI cannot be wished away. And at Sidwell Friends, there is a solid consensus that educators should in fact be harnessing whatever promise AI might hold. That is why, last summer, a group of Sidwell Friends administrators and teachers launched the Sidwell Friends AI Advisory Working Group. The task force

developed a mission statement to help “navigate the ethical complexities and tensions inherent in the rapidly evolving landscape of artificial intelligence.” (See “The Other Kind of Code,” on page 31.)

Though much of the commentary and analysis around AI in education has focused on its harms, Sidwell Friends has zeroed in on the “role AI can play in learning and recognize our responsibility to center human agency and respect for common humanity.” The School has embraced AI’s complexity in the quest to answer the question: “How can we best prepare ourselves in an ever-changing world?”

The release of ChatGPT (GPT stands for “generative pre-trained transformer”) in November 2022 was so monumental it essentially bifurcated the world into “Before AI” and “After AI.” Consider: Spotify took 150 days to attract 1 million users. Instagram took just 75 days. ChatGPT blew past the 1 million user mark in five days and the 100 million user threshold in two months—the fastest growth in the history of the internet. By early 2023, ChatGPT and other large language model (LLM) platforms had become all but ubiquitous. ChatGPT is currently in use at companies like General Mooters, the Associated Press, Slack, Discord, Expedia, Microsoft, Coca-Cola, Duolingo, New York City Public Schools, *Business Insider*, and Instacart, to name a few.

Given the speed at which it has spread, it is way too late for a hands-off approach. “It’s a false choice that either ‘This is the end of humanity, trust nothing,’ or that ‘AI is better than humans, and we can relax while AI does all this stuff for us,’” says Darby Thompson, the director of Upper School Technology and Computer Science at Sidwell Friends. “The

truth is somewhere in the middle, and when AI is used properly, it can be extremely useful.”

Besides, we have been here before. Advances in technology have previously threatened the status quo in classrooms, from the typewriter to massive online open courses (MOOCs). Take Texas Instruments’ TI 189 calculator. Released in 1998, the TI 189 was the first calculator to tackle advanced higher-function mathematics, like trigonometric functions, hyperbolic functions, absolute value, differential equations, and derivatives. Today, TI 189s are universal in the classroom.



“It’s so important to approach AI with a sense of curiosity instead of assuming the sky is falling. Otherwise, you’re never going to be able to think critically about what AI is and isn’t. That only undermines the larger educational project.”

—BADR ALBANNA ’99

Professor of Neuroscience at the University of Pittsburgh’s School of Medicine, AI research Engineer at Duolingo

And yet: “Kids still learn calculus! Why is that?” asks Badr Albanna ’99, a professor of neuroscience at the University of Pittsburgh’s School of Medicine and an AI research engineer at Duolingo, the foreign language learning company. “There is an experiential element to learning something even if a computer can do it,” Albanna says. “I think we sometimes have a simplistic view of how students are approaching their work: *Oh, they’re just trying to get the fastest way from point A to point B.* But when the teaching is authentic and when the students feel that transformation and that joy of actually learning, they get that there’s something there. So yeah, they can check their work on the TI, but they understand why it’s valuable for them to have thought through the answer.”

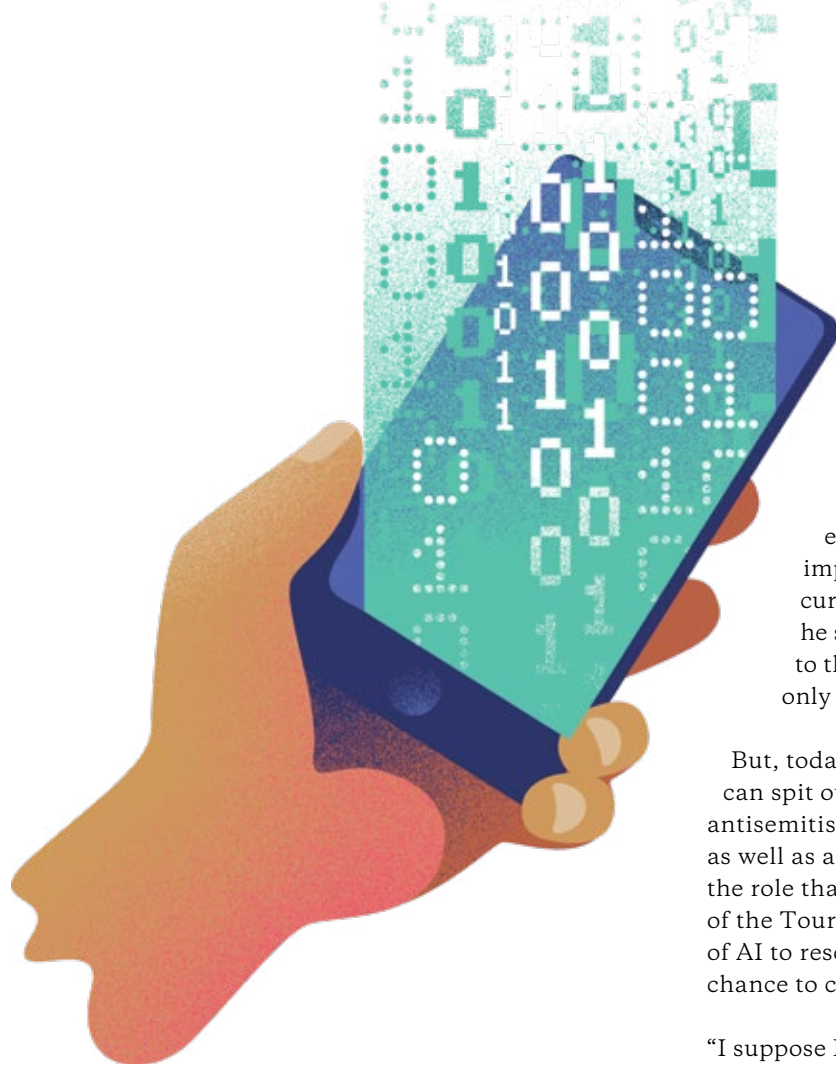
The Dewey Decimal System yielded to microfiche and then to the internet—and yet research is still research. The TI 189 and ChatGPT have transformed the means by which students gather material, but they haven’t much changed the process of teaching or learning. In fact, both can add to the quality of teaching and learning. “When AI jumped into the world’s consciousness, most in academia reacted with caution, focusing on how the advent of ChatGPT and other tools could enable plagiarism,” says David Marchick P ’20, the dean of American University’s Kogod School of Business. “Instead, we suggested that we embrace the use of AI into teaching and scholarship, enabling students to have the tools to compete after graduation.”

Sidwell Friends is taking a similar approach. “The priority for teachers is to stay on top of it and see how it is evolving,” says Thompson. At some point, maybe sooner than we realize, she says, AI could be universally understood as an essential tool: “We want to make sure we are prepared for that moment.”

To be sure, the uncertainties of AI, coupled with a wave of digital anxiety brought on by social media’s ongoing and pernicious effects, have left policymakers and educational institutions scrambling for answers on issues from screen time to mental health to how to navigate the new AI platforms responsibly. Artificial intelligence compounds the already significant challenges of parenting, teaching, and learning in a digital age. AI-powered systems learn by training on historical and current data, which all contain biases. Paired with social media, AI can reinforce society’s dominant understanding of beauty, power, gender roles, and race. But if social media is the devil we know, is AI the devil we are coming to know?

That depends.

The thirst for answers is so great that Green delivers monthly Tech Talks to parents about how social media, AI, and other platforms work and how together the Sidwell Friends community can mitigate digital harms and maximize educational and social benefits. In early January, Green held an hour-long session on AI for parents.



“It is imperative that we see all sides of this technology,” Green told them. “When it comes to education, think about it like a tutor in your pocket.” It is a tool that can promote learning, not a plague that can replace learning. To that end, as with the TI 189, Green says the problem is really one of epistemology: How do we come to know what we know? Already educators teach students not to look up an answer—whether it is in the back of a textbook or online—but instead to show their work and demonstrate knowledge. That does not change with AI. For Green, AI just brings up questions about defining “unauthorized assistance” and deciphering how educators “value processes.”

Albanna agrees. He says that the key to navigating the AI dilemma is to focus on the process of learning rather than outcomes. “Part of being a good teacher is being present with the students, paying attention to how they engage, and giving them what they need,” he says. “There’s no danger of AI replacing that. Part of the motivation of the student is the connection with the teacher.” Building that core relationship with the student cannot work if there is a constant suspicion that students are not writing their own papers or producing original work.

That is why Albanna is so bullish on eliminating the fear around AI. “It’s so important to approach AI with a sense of curiosity instead of assuming the sky is falling,” he says. “Otherwise, you’re never going to be able to think critically about what AI is and isn’t. That only undermines the larger educational project.”

But, today, with a few prompts, an AI platform can spit out sources for students to read about antisemitism in France in the late 1890s, for example, as well as a potentially well-researched essay about the role that the Dreyfus Affair played in the creation of the Tour de France bicycle race. One student’s use of AI to research and gather facts could be another’s chance to circumvent the learning process altogether.

“I suppose I am something of a purist when it comes to writing,” says Bryan Garman, the Head of School. “And writing is thinking, so when I hear about outsourcing writing to artificial intelligence, I worry that we move a step closer to giving up—if not completely outsourcing—consciousness. Then again, philosophers have worried about this phenomenon for a long while, and it doesn’t seem to have happened yet. Still, I have to believe that we are headed into new territory with this technology.”

And that is the elephant in the room: Students using AI to cheat or otherwise overly rely on AI to help write—or plagiarize—essays, thereby undercutting teaching and learning. There is a fear that teachers will be too slow to familiarize themselves with how to teach in an AI world and that the technology will move too fast to detect cheating.

Sidwell Friends has two goals when it comes to the issue of relying too heavily on AI or using it to forgo learning altogether. First, the School does not want to create a police state where the knee-jerk reaction is to assume reliance or exclusive use on an AI platform by students. Second, Sidwell Friends wants to create even more trust between teachers and students by encouraging both to plainly discuss what constitutes “unauthorized collaboration or assistance from individuals or technology, including generative AI.”

“How do we actually use this stuff to help students learn rather than just try to catch them cheating?” asks Green. Green and Thompson believe the best approach is to tackle the issue of cheating head on. “We have to work with students and be crystal clear on when it is appropriate—and when it is not appropriate—to use AI,” says Thompson. “We have to be explicit about why AI isn’t helpful when it bypasses the learning process. We have to be very explicit as to why we are asking ChatGPT to come up with an idea in the first place. We don’t want to ‘trap’ them. The clearer we are about when it is okay to use and not use AI, the better. That is a priority for us.”

In the end, like most systems and enterprises, education is built on trust. Constant suspicion, not surprisingly, would undermine the relationship between teachers and students and everyone in between.

“Because our curriculum calls students to write and think independently, I worry that we may need to change some of our assessments,” Garman said. “Our faculty will ultimately need to judge these issues.”

That is why Green says the School needs to mentor students in digital spaces and trust students when embarking on technological exercises. “We must endeavor to get on the same pedagogical page with respect to technology,” he says. “We have to investigate the structures that drive our schools and maximize for a new style of 21st-century digital learning, one that embraces autonomy and engagement, promotes depth of research, and rewards creativity.”

For their part, the students at Sidwell Friends are already diving into AI, experimenting with autonomous learning programs in robotics, generating



bespoke logos for entrepreneurial endeavors, and gathering research to bolster arguments.

What's more, they are doing it all in seconds, rather than, say, spending precious time roaming dusty corridors searching for materials and negotiating with librarians or fellow students for access to limited editions. "We should all get excited about using AI as a tool to improve our education," says Gabriel Abrams '25, the co-head of the Machine Learning Club and a member of the Sidwell Friends robotics team. "Of course, there will be challenges along the way as we try to understand how AI should be used in a school environment. However, Sidwell Friends has done a great job by quickly creating a School-wide policy on the use of LLMs. If we continue to have these conversations about AI in a school setting, I do not see a reason why it should be feared."

Amid all of the handwringing about how AI will undermine teaching, the widespread use of artificial intelligence could be a boon for education, especially if AI is used in a responsible manner. The introduction of computers and the internet into the classroom required teaching students about the risks and harms of those technologies to themselves and others. But the internet also proved that, when done right, it can be empowering.

"AI technologies are an intellectual 'power tool,'" Albanna says, "and like any power tool, they can be dangerous when the person using them is not trained in how to use them safely and ethically." This is where the process of learning is as important as the substance of what is being taught. "If AI is simply used as a way to avoid the hard work of learning to express oneself, the damage could be severe," he says. "At the same time, AI platforms create the possibility for the user to attempt feats that are quantitatively and qualitatively different from what they could try without them."

Albanna also thinks the current zeitgeist is undercounting the ways in which AI could help teachers. "There's a lot of work that goes into creating the kinds of educational materials you need to challenge students at the appropriate level, to keep them engaged, and to grade in a way that is fair,

"We have to work with students and be crystal clear on when it is appropriate—and when it is not appropriate—to use AI. We have to be explicit about why AI isn't helpful when it bypasses the learning process. The clearer we are about when it is okay to use and not use AI, the better."

—DARBY THOMPSON

Director of Upper School
Technology and Computer Science

accurate, and useful," he says. "A lot of that work can feel very repetitive." And that is where AI shines.

A math teacher, for example, could ask ChatGPT to generate 10 problems with certain parameters that reflect where the class needs help. Or teachers could get granular and quickly generate problem types for specific students. Creating these kinds of problems out of whole cloth can be incredibly time consuming, but looking at AI-generated problems simply with an eye toward



quality assurance can be relatively quick. “AI has a huge potential to help with work that is intellectually demanding but somewhat repetitive,” Albanna says. “Work that takes away from the core project of teaching in that emotional connection sense.”

For years, artificial intelligence was the subject of theoretical talks, white papers, and something for Silicon Valley investors to pour money into. Then AI barged into the classroom—and indeed the world—so quickly, there was no way to experiment or dabble with it first.

When OpenAI launched ChatGPT in November 2022, without warning, everyone was seemingly unprepared. In February 2023, for example, *The New York Times* printed a transcript of a conversation between one of its reporters and Bing’s chat bot, “Sydney,” that veered from creepy to terrifying. In an emoji-laden stream of non-consciousness, Sydney declared its undying love for the reporter, admitted to a secret desire to delete all of Bing’s servers, and acknowledged that it would like to spread misinformation and manipulate people into doing illegal acts.

To that end, technology is only as good as the people behind it, which is why some of the early engagement with AI was hardly encouraging. Some platforms regurgitated information that was hateful or cruel. Amazon stopped using a hiring algorithm after finding it favored applicants based on words that were more commonly found on men’s resumé’s rather than women’s. A study published in *Nature* demonstrated how biased AI affects decision-making during mental health emergencies: The AI was more likely to suggest police involvement for African American or Muslim individuals.

These concerns that AI will reinforce systemic bias, racism, and discrimination remain real. But this makes teachers and administrators even more important. “All media have biases encoded in them, and so it is with AI,” says Garman. “Part of our job is to help students recognize when narratives are

biased and data unreliable, so AI calls us to extend the work we are already doing in that regard.”

In addition to his Tech Talks, Green leads professional development sessions for faculty and staff that often start by asking teachers just to experiment for themselves on one of the more prominent AI platforms. He has created worksheets to help teachers understand how they can harness the power of a ChatGPT, Bard, or Bing to plan lessons and better understand how students might use them to study and learn. For example, he asked teachers to pose this scenario to Bing Chat, Google’s Bard, or ChatGPT:

“You are a knowledgeable and creative Middle School subject teacher that helps generate excellent lesson plans. I’d like you to include ways for students to actively participate in the classroom and ways for students to see why these concepts are important in the real world. Please help me design a lesson on topic X for Y duration.”

Then, he asked the teachers to keep pressing and asking the AI to do more, including to design learning outcomes for the lesson and even align it with a framework or set of standards, such as the Common Core. Next, he suggested the teachers ask for five different types of assessments that could check students’ understanding of the concept being taught, five real-world examples of the concept being taught, and five unique activities to keep students engaged. And on and on.

Most writers share teachers’ skepticism about AI platforms. After all, what if Chat GPT would do a better job writing this article than I could? Green persuaded me to keep an open mind as well and just play around with it. So, I approached ChatGPT anthropologically and experientially, as if I were placing some low-dollar bets in the course of reporting a story on gambling. ChatGPT’s mildly interesting suggestion for a headline? “Nurturing Tomorrow’s Minds: Exploring the Intersection of Artificial Intelligence and Education at Sidwell Friends.” Otherwise, no AI was used in reporting or writing this story. ✨

The Other Kind of Code

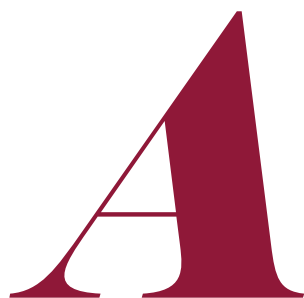
The Sidwell Friends AI Advisory Working Group suggested, and the School adopted, a new AI-related honor code, an approach that is in sync with other major educational institutions.

In accordance with our values of personal integrity and academic honesty, students must not receive unauthorized collaboration or assistance from individuals or technology, including generative AI. When in doubt, students should consult their teachers, as they are expected to complete and submit their own academic work to create an atmosphere in which trust, scholarship, and friendship may flourish.

On the **BOOKS**

A roundtable discussion
about the new wave of
American censorship.

BY ELLEN RYAN



According to the American Library Association, book bans and challenges to all manner of literature have grown by double digits this decade and are climbing. Book ban efforts *doubled* in 2022. *The New York*

Times now devotes a section of its website to the matter ([nytimes.com/news-event/bookbans](https://www.nytimes.com/news-event/bookbans)) with dozens of stories documenting the resurgence of an old phenomenon with echoes of a repressive past—and similarities to the actions of authoritarian governments.

The reasons for these efforts vary. In some cases, liberal scolds want to cleanse classics of pejorative and racist language. But the real backbone of the latest banning movement comes from groups of far-right activists who want to prohibit young people's access to materials that touch on everything from sexuality to the Holocaust, African American history to suicide.

Like many Americans who value free speech, librarians, scholars, and First Amendment experts are among those alarmed at the escalation of a tactic used for centuries by autocratic movements. For many at Sidwell Friends, the idea of banning access to knowledge is antithetical to the mission of education. To learn more about how these battles are playing out in view of creators, curators, and those who study the phenomenon, *Sidwell Friends Magazine* sat down with a few members of the community who are close observers of today's book-banning efforts:

- › **LIZA DONNELLY '73**, a *New Yorker* staff cartoonist and the author or co-author of more than a dozen books, including, most recently, *Very Funny Ladies: The New Yorker's Women Cartoonists*
- › **STEPHANIE GAMBLE**, Upper School librarian, Sidwell Friends School
- › **SARAH LUDINGTON '82**, director of the First Amendment Clinic and a clinical professor at Duke University School of Law
- › **NATASHA SINEL '89**, author of the young adult novels *The Fix* and *Soulstruck*
- › **LENI ZUMAS '90**, author of *Red Clocks*, *The Listeners*, and *Farewell Navigator*

Q. BOOK CHALLENGES HAVE RISEN SHARPLY. WHAT'S THE TALK IN YOUR COMMUNITIES?

SINEL: Authors are very upset about it. If a kid is reading, we should let them read. When you read a book, you picture in your head what you're reading. With a movie or TV, it's someone else's interpretation. But you don't see people banning movies or shows. So yes, authors are extremely upset that challengers are putting their own religious beliefs on everyone else. That's discrimination.

ZUMAS: When authors talk about the books the right wing wants to remove from libraries and schools, they point out that the people who are doing the banning seem to equate the

novels and short stories and picture books as directives to tell readers what they should be doing or how they should be living. That's a fiction!

GAMBLE: Not to mention, banning books from the library keeps *all* kids from accessing that book, even those who are ready and able to read it or really need its message or would gain something incredibly important. To say that you're worried about your own kid's access to a book and therefore seek to cut off everyone's access is a huge leap to make.

There's so much bullying and posturing now among kids. It's incredibly important to note that some may feel connected or seen through something they read. Every time we shut

down an avenue for students or children, or cut them off from another way of thinking or being, we're shrinking their potential for empathy and developing awareness of our broader world.

LUDINGTON: This is not the first time in American history that book challenges have had a moment. It's not unexpected in such a polarized time. Especially when some politicians, such as the governor of Florida, are going after what you might call "woke curriculum" and "woke ideology." And the internet helps political "astroturfing" groups like Moms for Liberty replicate around the country, making it easy for them to mount these challenges.



Q: HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED A CHALLENGE TO YOUR BOOKS OR OTHER MATERIAL?

GAMBLE: We've been very fortunate not to encounter this here at Sidwell.

DONNELLY: Me either. A lot of cartoons get rejected, and I don't know why. Could be something editors don't want to share, or maybe they're just not funny.

LENI ZUMAS: Nothing dramatic, but a few reactions to *Red Clocks* have puzzled me. For instance, a man in Washington, DC, of all places, asked, "What am I

supposed to tell my evangelical Christian family about your book when you wrote it to demonize them?" A lot of this book is about abortion and reproductive justice, but I write fiction to ask questions about things that are bewildering and exciting and important to me. The notion that a novel is directed at someone is missing the point of fiction.

SINEL: At a Barnes & Noble book signing—this is typical—a woman picked up my book and asked, "Any sex in this?" Not actual sex, I said, but the characters are teens, so, you know, they fool around. "Oh, never mind," she said, and put it down. Then she pulled another author's book

from the shelf: "Have you read *this*? Any sex?" I told her I didn't think so, but I did know it to be extremely violent. The woman said that was fine.

Isn't that interesting? People say they are trying to protect their children, but what's actually hurting children is violence—gun violence—not necessarily sexuality or gender material. It's depressing.

AND THE CHALLENGES GO BEYOND LITERATURE ...

DONNELLY: When extremists went to the offices of the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris in 2015, they murdered 12 editors and cartoonists and injured more. The global cartoon community came together in anger and grief. To me, it harkens back to the Danish cartoon controversy a decade before, when some cartoonists were invited to draw the prophet Muhammad, and that became the catalyst for a lot of violence around the world.

We all believe in freedom of expression, of course. But there is, I'd say, a 50/50 split among cartoonists on these issues. As opinion writers, or drawers, we have a responsibility to pause and think before expressing ourselves. I'm not blaming the *Charlie Hebdo* cartoonists—France has a long satirical, irreverent tradition—but combine that rich tradition with the internet

and you have a problem with extremist groups. My way is to punch up, not down. *Charlie Hebdo* was famous for punching down at all religious groups. So, it's complicated; you can't always know how something's going to be perceived.

Q. WE KNOW THERE'S A VARIETY IN WHO IS CHALLENGING THESE MATERIALS. HAS THE NATURE OF THE CHALLENGES CHANGED AS WELL?

LUDINGTON: Yes. For a long time, the American Library Association has posted best practices for how to handle these challenges. Public and school libraries are public resources, supported by tax dollars, so this has to be managed in a way that is equitable to all taxpayers, not just one parent or one group. It's generally a long, boring process. For instance, in North Carolina, you would go first to the school, then to

a district committee, then to a vote of the school board. It's harder to get a book removed than you'd think.

But now, some groups have managed to change the procedure, to circumvent the timeline.

GAMBLE: And challenges to multiple books at a time have grown dramatically. Sometimes it's a list of up to 100 books at once! That's the biggest shift in the past two years. It's very disconcerting because the reason we have a space to make legitimate challenges is that you want the opportunity for a conversation. Libraries have policies to deal with that: "Have you read the book? What, specifically, is the objection?"

But when you have those avenues flooded with dozens or hundreds of titles being challenged, it suggests the groups are not

even reading these books; they have a list from others or it's based just on titles or authors.

ZUMAS: I find it terrifying, not just as an author but as a human being, that a public library can become a place where people can order the removal of 100 books!

SINEL: Such coordinated efforts are scary. The folks making these challenges are often not trained to assess books and are often not connected to education. School librarians are trained for it and should be trusted to choose what to have in their library. Parents should have the right to have their child not read a certain book or tackle topics uncomfortable for them, but not to remove the books from the library.



Q. WHAT MATERIALS DO PEOPLE WANT TO KEEP AWAY FROM YOUNG PEOPLE, IN PARTICULAR, AND WHY?

GAMBLE: The top 10 or so of the most frequently challenged books have LGBT and/or racial- and religious-minority authors or a major emphasis on these topics. A lot are in the young adult category, which covers a broad age range of kids at all levels of reading and development. It's an age when parents feel fear and anxiety about independence and what the kids are encountering.

SINEL: In my first book, the main character babysits for a gay couple. There's nothing special about them; they're just married with two kids. It's important for teens to see gay characters in a book just living their lives. It's upsetting when some people want to take away books that simply mention the word "gay" or have gay people in them.

SINEL: A lot of reading is about empathy—being able to see other points of view. I read a study that said reading *Harry Potter* made children more empathetic and more positive toward people from disadvantaged groups.

GAMBLE: Every year at Sidwell we celebrate Banned Books Week and have Banned Books Bingo. Students can't believe *Harry Potter* has been banned, and it's a great opportunity to talk about why people might have tried to keep them from reading these books. It kind of blows their minds.

"I find it terrifying, not just as an author but as a human being, that a public library can become a place where people can order the removal of 100 books!"

—LENI ZUMAS '90

Q. WHAT ABOUT MATERIALS TOUCHING ON MENTAL HEALTH OR DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILIES?

SINEL: My books are aimed at the older side of "young adults" and have some heavy themes, such as sexual abuse and drug addiction. I have gotten many emails from readers saying, "I'm so glad I read this" and "the book made me feel less alone" and "this happened to me." And people who have fortunately not lived through these traumas can see how they can affect teens, and that can be one way to open their eyes. One of my books has a character with Asperger's syndrome and may be a way for people to see someone who may not be like themselves.

ZUMAS: Transgender writers are getting a lot of pushback. Unfortunately, some parents who are seeking appropriate mental health care for their child, and who might turn to one of these books as a resource or comfort, are accused of "abusing" their child.

GAMBLE: A study looked at what happens when kids read so-called disturbing books. It followed hundreds who had the choice to read whatever they wanted to. Some of the books were among those being banned for "difficult topics." The results showed that kids sought out and had conversations about what they were reading. They want to make sense of it and don't want to just read in isolation. If it shakes them up, they talk to peers, teachers, parents; the lesson was that reading really opens up pathways for communication and dialog. That's a positive thing.

We want our students to be exposed to more ways of engaging with difficult topics so that they can continue to grow and make their own decisions in the world. Our students are encountering a lot of tough things just going through life now. To pretend otherwise doesn't serve them well.

Q. LET'S TURN TO A DIFFERENT CATEGORY OF BOOKS. *THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN* AND *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*, FOR INSTANCE, BOTH FEATURE YOUNG CHARACTERS, BUT WERE WRITTEN FOR ADULTS, THOUGH MANY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS NOW READ THEM. MANY GRAPHIC NOVELS ARE ALSO VERY MUCH AIMED AT GROWNUP READERS. WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE?

ZUMAS: Where I teach, at Portland State University, students were discussing the republishing and editing of books to cut racist representation and sexist language in everything from Agatha Christie novels to *Huckleberry Finn*. They said context matters in what we read—not just when the book was written, but the history of the country and racism and white supremacy at the time. It really matters what critical lens we bring to books as historical documents, as archives of our history.

To me, the idea isn't to remove or redact books but to read them carefully and critically. Younger readers especially need to understand the implications of living in a world where that language was commonly used.



LUDINGTON: You also see challenges now to “anti-woke ideology”—people not wanting to address the complexities of American history, which include slavery and racism as well as the complexities of human sexuality. The anti-woke sentiment is driving a lot of the content choices.

DONNELLY: With graphic novels, I think of everything from *Fun Home*—I know Alison Bechtel—to *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, which is about a young woman growing up in Iran. People have objected to a depiction of a breast in *Maus*. That's an excuse. And there are naked people and sex in *Fun Home*. But the objections are really about the character coming out as a queer person.

People who write and draw graphic novels do push boundaries. All this makes me think back to attacks on *Mad* magazine in the 1950s for showing political ideas in a form children could access. That's scary to many people. Maybe it's a similar thing.

Q. WHAT ARE THE GREATER DANGERS HERE—TO EDUCATION, MULTICULTURALISM, EVEN DEMOCRACY?

SINEL: We know that fascism starts with book-banning, book-burning. That always worries me. We need to read about history in order not to repeat it. We need to understand multiculturalism, the Holocaust, and African American history. We need to

see these experiences in order to understand and to develop empathy. Challenging and banning books is a slippery slope, and it's a small, loud number of people who are doing it.

LUDINGTON: Empathy aside, it's very misguided to hide or conceal the truth of slavery or racism. The idea is similar to anti-diversity, equity, and inclusion statutes being passed. There's a desire not to teach the more uncomfortable parts of American history that might make some children feel bad about being white. But the purpose of studying this is not to make people feel bad about their race. It's to avoid repeating the past.

ZUMAS: One thing I got from being a lifer at Sidwell Friends was an appreciation of being curious and open to all questions. The idea of democracy as a system where not everyone's the same is part of its beauty. There's so much fear-based decision-making now about books and education. Curiosity and openness to uncertainty are the antidote to that fear.

LUDINGTON: The whole point of our First Amendment is to have a robust marketplace of ideas and promote the free flow of all kinds of information. Prohibiting books, limiting Americans from accessing them, runs profoundly counter to the ideal of the free flow of information and knowledge.

It's an extremely dangerous circumstance if we don't know our own history in a country that

is so diverse. American society is not likely to become more unified if we whitewash our past. There was book-banning in Nazi Germany, certainly. The unifying theme is that any government, any authority that wants to limit the knowledge of its populace does not want what's best for that population.

SINEL: So much of what's happening in this country now is attributable to people not understanding each other. That's where books help a lot.

DONNELLY: And banning them is a huge danger to democracy. We need to hear a variety of viewpoints. We need to allow our artists and writers to express themselves, and that includes things we don't necessarily agree with.

I read recently about a library in Blue Hill, a liberal pocket of Maine, where a patron wanted to donate a copy of *Irreversible Damage: The Transgender Craze Seducing Our Daughters*. The librarians debated and decided to accept it, saying that they couldn't ban books they disagreed with, even though many in the community were outraged.

Q. HOW DO EXPERTS AND LEADERS SUGGEST FIGHTING BACK?

SINEL: Start in your own community—your school, your kids' school. Find out what's happening.

GAMBLE: From my conversations, this can often be resolved at an early stage by explaining what libraries stand for. If a library serves a wide range of ages, a parent might ask, "How did my kid come across this book?" They may come to understand that in shared space, it's appropriate for an older kid, so removing it completely doesn't make sense.

LUDINGTON: I encourage anyone who sees this to get involved. Engage with the politics of it. Let your local school board and library know that it's important to keep books in the libraries. Show up at board meetings; each one will have a public comment time. Email elected officials.

A lot of times, it's a very vocal minority that's screaming about an issue. If the school board doesn't see that there are citizens who care about reading and free expression, they just might bend to the pressure of a loud, political group without realizing the depth of sentiment that runs the other way. ✨

The discussion has been edited for length and clarity.

SPEAK UP

You can help stop banning efforts by connecting with organizations on the front lines. Here are some good ones:

- › Free Expression Legal Network
- › PEN America
- › Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression
- › American Library Association



The Calling

Mamadou Guèye
on the value
of oral history,
multilingualism,
Quaker pedagogy,
diversity, and joy.

Upper School Principal Mamadou Guèye is retiring after 35 years at Sidwell Friends to launch a new academic venture in Senegal. The beloved educator recently sat down to talk to Head of School Bryan Garman to reflect on his remarkable legacy and its impact.

BRYAN GARMAN: How did you end up at Sidwell Friends?

MAMADOU GUÈYE: It all started at Michigan State in the late-1980s. I had finished a master's there doing curriculum work and I was teaching French in Washington. Do you know what my first job in DC was? It was at Washington International, teaching English to 1st grade kids of diplomats.

Then, I got a scholarship to go to University of Maryland to do a PhD in Francophone literature—but I wanted to study English literature. They said: “No, we don’t want your English; we want your French. We will fund the French.” And they funded it. I was in the program for one semester and then had a disagreement with my supervisor. I wanted to focus on oral literature. I did a corpus at University of Dhaka after my BA and interviewed the best oral historian, a man who knew Senegalese history better than anyone else in the world; but it’s all oral. And the director of thesis at University of Maryland told me: “Mamadou, your theoretical references will be really hard to defend, because you are telling me about all these interviews you want to do in Africa. That is just not scholarly research.”

That just insulted me. I was a student of the leading Africanist at the University of Dhaka. I quit after the first semester and I told them that I really don’t need a PhD in French. I really wanted a PhD in English. So, I went back to Senegal to teach Anglophone literature at the University of Dhaka.

Then I started looking for jobs in *The Washington Post* and GDS [Georgetown Day School] had a part-time, maternity-leave substitute position open for 7th and 8th grade. I did that gig for one semester, and the chair of the middle school languages asked if I had heard of Sidwell Friends. She encouraged me to apply, which I did. I became a finalist at Sidwell Friends in the spring and I started in the fall of 1989.

BG: One can feel your passion when you teach. Even though you’re retiring and you’re a principal, you’re a brilliant teacher. What is it that you love so much about teaching?

MG: My passion for teaching comes from my passion for languages. I was raised in a family that did not even study French or English. I was fluent in the national language of Senegal, Wolof. My mother tongue is Serer. All the French I know is from the classroom. I started English in middle school, because there was no English taught in elementary school. English and French are what made it possible to come to Sidwell Friends.

But my passion for teaching languages is more than just speaking a

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During the 2019/20 academic year, Upper School art teacher Catherine Dunn’s students started a new project: drawing a portrait of their heroes. Using Quaker-style consensus voting, the students landed on Upper School Principal Mamadou Guèye. For the portrait at left, a photograph of Guèye was divided into a grid. “Each student worked from a very small, abstract section of a black-and-white photograph of Mamadou, taken in his office, in front of the textile that says, ‘Teacher,’” Dunn says, adding, “He wanted that textile in the frame.” Working with gray paper, dark charcoal, and white charcoal, the students faithfully recreated their sections of the photograph—each in their own style. “It’s so big that the kids couldn’t see what it would look like as a whole until they started hanging it up on the classroom wall,” Dunn says. “They were surprised with the outcome—as was I!—because it only really comes to life when every piece is in its place. The whole accommodates everyone’s different approach.”



language; it's about sharing cultures and geography. Learning a language is the best tool in the world for diversity, inclusion, and understanding of other peoples. Bilingualism and, even more, multilingualism is good for the brain. There is a lot of neuroscience showing that if you're not bilingual, there's a whole side of your brain that is just dead, that you are not using. When you are multilingual, you don't need to do puzzles, because you are always alert. Look, as I'm talking to you now, I'm trying to be totally immersed in English. But when I turn around, and run into a French friend, it becomes French. And then my sister calls me in Serer, and my memory is totally working. The benefit of multilingualism is what I want to instill through my teaching. When I go into the classroom, I get fired up, you've seen me teaching. It's because I want students to be passionate!

I consider myself Francophone, but the French did so many bad things in Africa during the colonial era that it can be hard for me to be Francophone. Honestly, that was why I started my international trips in the early 1990s. All of these students who traveled with me over the years are doing great things. Bryce Fort '96 worked in Ivory Coast, and now he's leading the biggest investment bank in Kenya. Bryce

learned about Africa from room 130, right here in my French II and French III courses. Nate Heller '94 has been in Senegal for 15 years, and was in the Peace Corps—all of that came from French II.

BG: When I came here, you essentially were running the diversity program.

MG: Yes. Faculty and students and I would do a really deep dive into culture and what makes us “civil universal.” The first president of Senegal talked about how one can use languages and cultures to go to the universe, to go to the “civilization of the universal”—meaning, a sphere where everybody understands everyone else. To get there, you have to go through languages, travel, and history—and not just your own history.

BG: How has the School changed in that regard over the past 35 years?

MG: The School has changed tremendously. The biggest change from the 1990s to today is in terms of ethnicity and demographics. When I started here and saw the faculty, there were about four or five people of color. And the students—when we'd call a Meeting for Worship, there were about 12 Black kids, 15 maximum. They'd have a BSU [Black Student Union] corner!

And they all were caucusing: They wanted to get together, have a lunch table. It drove some of the faculty crazy: “Why are they segregating themselves?” I said, “Whoa, whoa, whoa. You don't understand, this is affinity. They want to be close to people, because, well, just look around.” We had one graduating class that had one African American boy; you cannot even imagine it today. So, in that sense, the School had really, really, really changed in terms of ethnicity and also understanding of diversity, not only racial, but also economic diversity.

One thing that has not changed to the level I would like to see is really the curriculum, which has been lagging far behind the demographics and the diversity of thought that I see here. The curriculum is the toughest thing to change, but we made a difference since the latest strategic plan. We have done a lot in hiring for diversity and inclusion. As you say so beautifully, Bryan, we always are hiring for diversity and excellence, too. Diversity makes us all better at solving complex problems. In the next 35 years, I'd like to see a school where the diversity of the faculty matches that of the student body. Then I would like to see that diversity in the curriculum—and not only in social studies. Do you know how many amazing things Black and Asian

people did for science and math? There are so many people we don't hear about who have contributed to the development of science, math, languages... everything.

BG: You are very Quakerly. Talk about that piece of the School and how it has influenced you.

MG: Quakerism resonates so well with me. It's a sense of community we have been trying to build in through the Quaker SPICES. The word "community" is really about Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Equality, and Stewardship. All of those values remind me of the oldest African religion, animism, meaning that everything is animated by spirits we don't see. The rivers, the trees, the wind, all of these are gods that are living, and we have to take serious care of them.

We are collectivist societies in Africa. There, it's never about individualism or an individualistic society built around a nuclear family. In French we call that *papa, maman, le chien, et moi*: "dad, mom, the dog, and me." That is unheard of in Africa. In Africa, if you have two kids, they will say, "What's wrong with you?" Also, the medicine is not as advanced, and you may lose two children. That's why my mom had 13 kids; seven of us survived. Five of us are left, but she had 13 births. That is a totally different sense of

community. When you think about the ethos of Quakerism, it keeps on reminding me of my own beliefs, my own ethos, my own sense of helping and service. My whole life is community service, it really is.

BG: Well, you're constantly building community.

MG: Constantly. The more you give, the more you get back. It makes you feel good psychologically, but also in real life. I have three houses today; two of them I have never lived in. I built one for my sister, a retired French teacher, and the other for nieces and nephews whose dad passed away. All the money I get from here is to feed these people and build houses and house them. There are people in Senegal with much more money than I have, but when you see their siblings, some of them are struggling madly. So, when people ask why I'm always smiling and happy, I think that helping others has given me a deep sense of gratitude, because I could have been them.

BG: Though you are leaving Sidwell Friends, your spirit is going to be here forever. Yet you're also not retiring. Talk about your vision for your next chapter.

MG: This is a vision that started in 1985, when I got a magnificent scholarship and the government

paid for my ticket to Michigan. My passion about education is personal, because it gave me everything I have today—everything.

When it comes to leaving Sidwell Friends, I am retiring. But, as you say, not retired. The next phase, building a school, is daunting, but exciting. In 1998, I bought this plot of land in Senegal and called it my retirement school. In 2020, I bought an adjacent plot of land.

We will start with an African studies center. I want to take Americans to do a deep dive in service learning, history, languages, and culture—similar to what we have in the Chinese program at Sidwell Friends. I want to start with a small-scale summer program and a three- to five-week deep dive. The center is 30 kilometers southwest of Dhaka, very close to the new airport, and the property is right on the Atlantic Ocean.

The proceeds from the African studies center, which is a nonprofit, will then go toward my dream of a Quaker-like school. I want to take the pedagogy and the ethos, and translate all of my knowledge about SPICES into French, and really tell the kids about what I want them to take from this education, which is very different from the top-down French pedagogy. The most exciting thing for





Honoring MAMADOU GUÈYE

Mamadou Guèye has led the Upper School with enthusiasm and his capacious smile, inviting all to engage in the intellectual and collective life of the community. His ever-welcoming presence has likely made you feel like you are the most important person in the room. And in times of deep sorrow, Mamadou has held us with tenderness and compassion. He is indeed a special and beloved member of our community, and we celebrate his legacy and express our gratitude for what he has meant to this community. To honor Mamadou, we invite you to consider making a donation to support the renovation of the Upton campus through the *Together We Shine* campaign. We are delighted to announce that the Principal's Suite in the new Upper School will be named in Mamadou's honor. If you need

assistance with making a donation, please contact Tara Arras at arrast@sidwell.edu.



me, as someone who has been a Quaker educator for 35 years, is to go to Senegal and be part of training teachers in a new pedagogy.

BG: You gave us this incredible intellect, this incredibly joyful way of being in the world, and a deep sense of caring. What will you take with you?

MG: It's really about the relationships I have built in this community from my very first class. When you sent your letter announcing my retirement, people who have not talked to me for 20 years sent me notes about something I said in the classroom that transformed their lives. There's no community that knows me the way Sidwell does, not even in Senegal. Sometimes when I think about this place, I say, "How did I get here?" I mean, honestly, just think about it.

Life was a struggle in my village in Senegal. I went to school barefoot. There was no secondary school. There were no books in my house! When you come to my office, you see a lot of books. I love books, but I was never read to by parents; I was never told stories that were written. That's why I was so hurt when I was told that oral history is really not

history. It has to be. Every history was oral first before it was written.

I'm saying all of this because what I take most from Sidwell Friends is gratitude. I can't believe how the institution let me grow. A Black from Africa with an accent and whose English is a fourth language, for this institution to give me such responsibility, academic dean and then principal. It's not just about race, but it is about that, too. Being the first Black in history in three important positions in this Upper School, and also knowing that I'm not the first Black qualified to do this—just think about it! The one word I leave here with is gratitude.

BG: You have worked hard my friend. We've been through a lot together.

MG: Yes, we have. And we are always able to end up laughing.

BG: We had a lot of laughing.

MG: We can have this existential discussion, face issues that are harder to solve than multivariable calculus problems, and we sit here and, in the end, we laugh. You know why? Because we love what we do. This is not a job, it's a calling. ✨

REUNION



Celebrate Reunion Weekend

MAY 3-4, 2024

We look forward to welcoming alumni in classes ending in 4 and 9 for Reunion Weekend!

More information and a tentative schedule are available at sidwell.edu/reunion.



PLANNED GIVING *at* SIDWELL FRIENDS SCHOOL

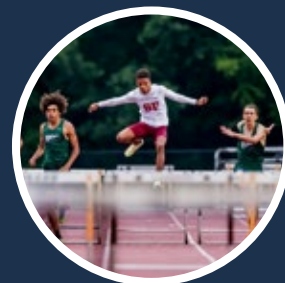
The future of Sidwell Friends School rests on the generosity of its community today, tomorrow, and well into the future. Many of the School's most impactful gifts come about through thoughtful Planned Giving discussions that inspire an individual or a family to leave a legacy that lights the way for new generations of students.

Planned Gifts can take many forms, including a qualified charitable distribution from your retirement account, establishing a charitable gift annuity, or naming Sidwell Friends School as a beneficiary of your life insurance policy.

We hope you will share your planned gift intentions with us and join others as members of The Thomas and Frances Sidwell Society, which recognizes individuals who have named Sidwell Friends School in their estate plans.

We invite you to learn more about how you can provide for Sidwell Friends.

Please visit plannedgiving.sidwell.edu and consult your financial advisors about tax and other considerations. For more information, contact Amanda Meter, Senior Director of Individual Giving at (202) 537-8448 or metera@sidwell.edu.





THE SIDWELL FRIENDS SCHOOL

欢迎 赵总理为中美和平友谊来访



FORTY YEARS AGO: On January 12, 1984, Zhao Ziyang, premier of the People's Republic of China, visited Sidwell Friends in the inaugural year of the Chinese Studies Program, funded in part by the John Fisher Zeidman '79 Chinese Studies Fund, established in memory of John Fisher Zeidman '79 by his family and friends. During his visit in the Goodwin Library, Zhao invited Head of School Earl Harrison and Upper School students to China, and five months later, they took him up on it. The banner reads: "Welcome Premier Zhao. May peace and friendship between China and the United States come through your visit here."

CLASS NOTES

At a moment when social media often overwhelms, proselytizes or vanishes before your eyes, Class Notes humbly offers respite. Here, you have a lasting, curated, and quirky window into the lives of your fellow alumni. Whether you knew them then, follow them now, or never met, you are all Friends.

KEEP IN TOUCH!

Go to sidwell.edu/classnotes and let us know what you've been up to. Don't see your class year? Contact alumni@sidwell.edu to become a class representative.

1949

Join us at
REUNION

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CHUCK WILSON: "Still upright (on a rollator). Wishing I could make my West Point 70th reunion in May but am just a little too disabled. Only three left from the original 32 in my cadet company. One is Dave Scott, a moonwalker and commander of *Apollo 15*. Wondering how many Sidwell Friends '49 classmates are still alive. Lost my **Helen Hobbs Wilson** in 2021. Am still in the retirement village Buckingham's Choice near Frederick, Maryland. Would love to hear from classmates: chwil1@gmail.com, 301-644-1647."

1950

TOBY RILEY

toby Riley@gmail.com

1952

CAROL BLACK

carblack@comcast.net

FLETCH WALLER: "Ann and I spent three weeks of September in Ireland, a marvelous though sometimes sobering trip (despite daily Jameson's Black Label and Irish coffees). We saw in Ulster's continuing distrust between Unionists and Republicans, shadows of our growing polarization. God forbid we fall into a U.S. version of 'the Troubles,' much less the two-year impotence of their Stormont. The Republic has secularized; Ulster sustains its sectarianism. The first prospers; the second festers. Our stereotypes are apt: It is green, the land is breathtakingly beautiful, and the Irish are charming and voluble. They



Fletcher Waller '52 stands on the Cliffs of Moher in County Clare, Ireland.

love wit and lyricism, their Bushmills and Jameson and Guinness, and their afternoon chats in the pub." (See photo above.)

1953

GLORIA GIRTON

ggat58b@orange.fr

1954

Join us at
REUNION

RICHARD NICKLAS

rnicklas@mfa.gwu.edu

JANE L. HOUGH: "We are weathering the changes not only in ourselves but those occurring around us. Extremes in weather are amazing, divisions in our country are depressing, and our world seems on the brink of serious conflicts

and major shifts in populations. Not the world we knew when graduating Sidwell Friends in 1954! We opt for democracy throughout as we still enjoy the good life here on the shore."

1955

NANCY ABOLIN HARDIN

nahardin@aol.com

GEORGE ANTHONISEN: The James A. Michener Art Museum will soon feature George's work (April 20 through October 14, 2024). University of Pennsylvania Press is distributing a comprehensive accompanying book, *George R. Anthonisen: Meditations on the Human Condition*, which can be pre-ordered on Amazon or Barnes and Noble. This installation complements the exhibition of *Monuments & Myths: The America of Sculptors Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Daniel Chester French*, presented in the Martin Gallery from June 29, 2024-January 5, 2025.

LOCHI GUNARATNA's book, *Toward Equitable Progress*, was published by Springer in 2018 as part of their series, South Asia Economic and Policy Studies.



Dan Bernstein '55, John Gardiner '55, George Anthonisen '55



LEFT: Tom Simons '55 and Peggy Simons celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary in Sicily. **CENTER:** Carole Lund Benning '56 **RIGHT:** A portrait of Milwaukee Shrine Potentate by Thomas Curtis '56



TOM SIMONS: “2023 ended with twin peaks: a major article on U.S.-Soviet relations in the 1980s, focused on Reykjavik where I was notetaker at the break-up, in the *Journal of Cold War Studies*; and our 60th wedding anniversary celebration in Sicily with kids and grandkids: great sites, great digs, sparkling fall weather, and no crowds, except in front of the Siracusa duomo New Year’s Eve, with a rock band belting out Tina Turner.” (See photo above.)

1956

CHARLIE HOLLAND
sshrink9@gmail.com

CAROLE LUND BENNING: “John and I are blessed to winter at Moorings Park Grey Oaks, a fabulous retirement complex in Naples, Florida. And we summer in Marblehead, Massachusetts, in our home of 50 years. We’re active in both communities and at our two yacht clubs. Our other current activities include long walks, educational talks, exercise classes, book clubs, bridge, and wining and dining with wonderful friends. Our health is good and our family fine, so we’re lucky, happy, and thankful.” (See photo above.)

STANLEY BROWN: “Our twin grandchildren (children of our late daughter, Liorah) graduated from high school in June 2023 and are now in their fresh-

man years in college: Ariel at UMass Amherst and Perry at Buffalo State.”

THOMAS CURTIS: “Although age provides its challenges, I continue to work at portrait painting with enthusiasm. The most recent piece completed was of the Milwaukee Shrine Potentate. Living in Wisconsin provides challenges in winter. Just a week ago, we got 15 inches of snow—with temperatures well below zero!” (See photo above.)

MARY ELLEN SPECTOR DRUYAN: “I’m still very active in community theater. I currently chair the Long Range Planning Committee for the Theatre of Western Springs and am still singing (soprano) in choir.”

NANCY SESSIONS EDWARDS: “I’ve ended up being looked after by the admirable mentors of my childhood: the Quakers. Since February of last year, I have been a resident at Friends House, a Quaker-run retirement community in Sandy Springs, Maryland. Here I’ve continued to hatch the whimsical drawings with rhymed captions that have absorbed me since 2016. I harbor the hope of connecting with an agent who will help me peddle them to a decent publishing house. I remain in close touch with classmate **Nancy Dessoiff Colodny** whom I gladly rank as an exemplary friend. With much well-wishing, Nancy.”

ARTHUR HILDRETH: “Wesie and I had our first great-grandchild. We have three daughters and five granddaughters, so in following family tradition, she’s a girl! Exciting!”

CHARLIE HOLLAND: “As in life, there is some good news and some bad news. My well-loved son-in-law David passed away after courageously living with ALS for more than two years. He was the husband of my youngest daughter. David lived to see his own daughter finish her third year of study for her BSN degree at Endicott College and was very proud when his son was admitted early-decision to Brown University. And last fall, yours truly fell ill with a cold that turned into pneumonia. I was hospitalized for 10 days in Cape Cod Hospital, which turns out to be a superb facility. My pulmonologist says that I’ll be laid up and on supplemental oxygen for at least six months. On the positive side, with my illness all sorts of support came out: family, neighbors, and people I’ve never met before. I was humbled. The other good news is more complicated. In 1973, I co-founded a school with two other couples. We were not happy with the public schools in Roanoke, Virginia (they are now greatly improved). The school was modeled after two other schools, one of which was Sidwell Friends and my experience there. We thought that Community School might last four or five years. But it celebrated its 50th anniversary last year! And it recently broke ground

for its new main building. It also has the best college-entrance record in the city. All four of my children went there. Meanwhile, Peggy and I are thoroughly enjoying life on Cape Cod. We eat our meals over-looking Nantucket Bay from a renovated summer cottage my parents purchased 65 years ago. I have been coming to Cape Cod at least in the summer for all of my 86 years! And we have been living here full-time for four years. Heaven!”

ELIZABETH KELLEY: “As of last October, I am in in-home hospice care due to idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis. I get excellent care from my daughter, son-in-law, and 12-year-old grandson, Otis. Thanks to Otis, I am learning more than I previously knew about weather systems, trigonometry, geography, and other subjects. I had to give up on Mine-craft—just unable to figure out and enter data fast enough. My primary news is the arrival of great-granddaughter Ireland Elizabeth on December 14, 2023. She is, of course, gorgeous, and her mom, who turned 19 just two days later, is delighting in motherhood.”

1957

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ROB CROSMAN: “A book discussion group is one highlight of my week (currently we’re on *Middlemarch*), and I work now and then on a memoir, called *Daddy’s Boy*, in hopes of understanding myself better—a never-ending project. Usually, I get around Berkeley by bicycle, but two years ago, on a dark and rainy night, I hit a pedestrian. The victim—a woman in her seventies—suffered a broken arm, but she healed, and I hope a generous insurance settlement satisfies her. For my part, I passed a new driver’s

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test, and got new glasses. Current events cause me to wonder: ‘What is the world coming to?’ But in the 1950s we thought we were heading for Armageddon, and in the 1960s we were sure of it. It didn’t happen, however, and my guess is that once again we’ll survive. One lesson I’ve learned is from the Hippocratic Oath, which says: ‘First do no harm.’ This applies not merely to doctors. Of course, we want to do good, but sometimes we go too far, as is the case with those who want to save the lives of the ‘unborn.’ They might think first of helping the ‘born’ a little more.”

1958

ROBERT MYERS
dr.rbmyers@gmail.com

PEGGY PABST BATTIN
battin@utah.edu

NEWS FROM THE CLASS REP:

The class of ‘58’s particular distinction, in addition to the many accomplishments of its members, is the always lively, vigorous discussion group that meets about every six weeks on Zoom. There are updates on health—both **Bob Myers** and **Larry Aaronson** are recovering from serious challenges. There are stories about living circumstances in places from Virginia to California—**Mary Lib Wahrenbrock Hoinkes** and **Helene Rosenfeld Feldman**, whose daughter visited recently. There are accounts of retirement life projects—**Thatcher Morse**, **John Cox**, and **John Coffman** (see his note below), and even news from those who haven’t yet fully retired, **Dave Price**, **Dolly Bowman Tucker**, and **Peggy Pabst Battin**. Some stalwarts continue to help organize and attend this group, like **Craig Morgan**, **Annette Eisenberg Stiefbold**, **John Coffman**, and a handful whose schedules are so busy they can only join from time to time, like **Geoff Huguely**. We typically discuss social and personal issues, the latter particularly interesting because, after all, we’re all just about the same age and have many of the same sorts of issues; but we also discuss politics, where the possibility of differing views is particularly important. And we have fun! **Bob Myers**, speculating that “ours is maybe the last generation where parents were the major point of verbal interaction with kids,” has been creating a list of idioms and figures of speech and curious phrases we all knew when we were high school age but seem to have vanished from contemporary discussion. So far, he’s got about 150 of them, and sends us all 10 phrases a week. The first 10 are below—further contributions welcome: Send to dr.rbmyers@gmail.com. And if you’d like to

join the Zoom discussion, let Peggy know at battin@utah.edu.

1. Horse’s patoot
2. Clodhopper
3. Like a bat out of hell
4. How do you like them apples?
5. The dilemma of Buridan’s ass
6. He doesn’t know his ass from a hole in the ground.
7. Weak-kneed and lily-livered
8. Lock, stock, and barrel
9. As sure as God made little green apples
10. By the skin of his teeth

JOHN COFFMAN: “This class has an ongoing Zoom gathering about six or eight weeks apart. This has been going on for about three or four years. It has been a lot of fun and has reconnected some of us. This has been a boon for reconnecting to a big part Sidwell Friends at a critical part of our lives. Our class began our older life at the start of the computer era. I think other classes would do well to copy our journey toward online reunions. On a personal note, Sidwell Friends never taught us about digital or binary arithmetic. When I started programming, I had not heard of binary or octal arithmetic. Somehow my Sidwell Friends education did however help me understand how to accept those concepts, and I had great fun programming for a living. I am 83, and some of our class are still working and writing. I don’t know how they do it.”

HELENE ROSENFELD FELDMAN: “My sister, **Berenice ‘Bunny’ Rosenfeld ‘61** came for a visit over Christmas and New Year’s. We had a nice time and saw my daughter and her family. I am in four book clubs, and Bunny goes for a walk every day, weather permitting.”

1959

Join us at
REUNION

CLARK GRIFFITH
cgp@ccgpa.com

KEEN STASSEN BERGER: “The news is that I just got a co-author, Kendra Thomas, who was born in Brazil and who teaches developmental psychology at Hope College in Michigan. I needed a co-author because my three college textbooks, *The Developing Person*, continue to be the best-sellers for the course. They



LEFT: Keen Stassen Berger '59 and her grandson. **CENTER:** Milly Welsh '59 sits with Razor, and Razor sits amid her many awards. **RIGHT:** Dave Woolpert '59 dances with his youngest daughter, Sarah Freeman-Woolpert, at her wedding in Baltimore.

are used at colleges in all 50 states, 12 nations, and in five languages. Meanwhile, my book on *Grandmothering* has sold only 3,000 copies! I think I learned to write, and to love writing, at Sidwell Friends with Misty Forsythe and Atwood." (See photo above.)

JOAN ZWEBEN and others from our class have been participating in Zoom calls the last Sunday of each month. Topics vary from personal experiences to current issues and events. Watch for an email from **Clark Griffith** a day or two before the calls. We hope for more of you to join us.

CLASS REP:

This class Zoom call is the high point of the month for me. Spending Zoom time with old friends is a very pleasant event.

SUE PETERSON HUGUELY writes: "Now that Geoff and I have downsized into an apartment, we have been able to enjoy our growing family, which will soon total 27, with the arrival of another great-grandchild and a granddaughter's wedding. We have also enjoyed traveling some, with the last trip to Southeast Asia in the fall, including a trip to Angkor Wat. A wonderful, but exhausting trip! We look forward to seeing everybody at our 65th Reunion the first weekend in May!"

MILLY WELSH is a famed dog trainer and dog show judge. She and her dog, Graden's Cutting Edge, had a glorious show season in 2023. They compete in both the American Kennel Club field and obedience events. She also has a highly decorated dog named Razor. (See photos above.)

CLASS REP:

Milly, I note that this is a team event.

RICHARD MILLS: "Glenn Adams and I have been attending basketball games at Sidwell Friends. Some of you know how well the teams have been doing, achieving national attention and sending numerous players to big-time colleges and the NBA."

CLASS REP:

That is remarkable!

BERNHARD GLAESER writes in from Berlin to say that he and his wife, Heide; their son, Gabriel; and their grandson, Elmar, enjoyed Christmas and New Year's Eve in front of their decorated Christmas palm tree. The palm tree, Bernhard believes, seems to be more authentic than any coniferous tree because Jesus in Roman Judea could find nothing but palm trees to celebrate Christmas.

DAVID WOOLPERT: "Our maple-syrup season was short this year due to warmer-than-average weather, but it gave me a chance to appreciate the melting snow, the revealed dead leaves, and the noisy brook that lets the melting snow and rain get to the river that we oversee." (See photo above.)

CAROLYN MURPHY AHERN's husband, Joe, writes: "**Carolyn Murphy Ahern** passed away peacefully after a brief illness. I know that Sidwell Friends was a great influence in her life, not only academically, but also through the spirit of friendship and community that the School embodies. Carolyn carried this spirit throughout her life, both in personal relationships and social activism. As her husband, I was fortunate to accompany her to several class reunions, where I could feel the deep connection she had with her classmates. Here are my email address and phone number for anyone who would like to share their memories of her: jahern@mindspring.com and 216-703-0003."

1960

JODY HUTCHINSON
mjodyh@yahoo.com



FAR LEFT: Bunny Rosenfeld '61, Alix Marianne Sacknoff '61 **LEFT:** Joan Davidson '62 poses with a 125-year-old, 750-pound tortoise in the Galapagos. **RIGHT:** Joan Davidson '62 hikes Machu Picchu with her guide, Desiree. **FAR RIGHT:** Joan Davidson '62 visits the Explora Lodge in the Sacred Valley, Peru, with Michael Davidson '60.

1961

LINDA DEMING RATCLIFF
ldratcliff@comcast.net

CHARLIE GIBSON and his daughter, Kate, host *The Bookcase* podcast every Thursday.

CAROL CARPENTER ESTEBAN lives in Texas near her family and grandchildren.

ALIX MARIANNE SACKNOFF moved to Belfast, Maine, where she enjoys the great outdoors, hiking, cross-country skiing, camping, sailing, and gardening. (See photo above.)

1962

CHETT BREED
chettbreed@gmail.com

JUDY MARKLEY WASTLER
judywastler@gmail.com

JOAN DAVIDSON: "I know **Ellinor Duffey Hayward** is ahead of me by three days, but I celebrated my 80th in early November in the Galapagos and then on to Machu Picchu with my brother, **Michael Davidson '60**, where I climbed some amazing Inca trails. Not for the faint of heart, but life-affirming for me. Eighty is only a number. I may be 80 but I still don't know what I want to do when I grow up!" (See photos above.)

PETER ENEMARK AND MEME LUND ENEMARK:

"2023 was a good year for us. The highlight was the week we spent with our family over Thanksgiving. Our grandchildren were out of school, and our children took the week off. I don't know how many more opportunities we will have for all of us to spend a week together as relaxed as we were and without any obligations at all. Meme and I hope that 2024 will be a good year for all of us. Most of us in the Class of 1962 are going to be 80 in 2024. Perhaps we should organize a Class of 1962 birthday party to celebrate being 80 years old." (See photos below.)

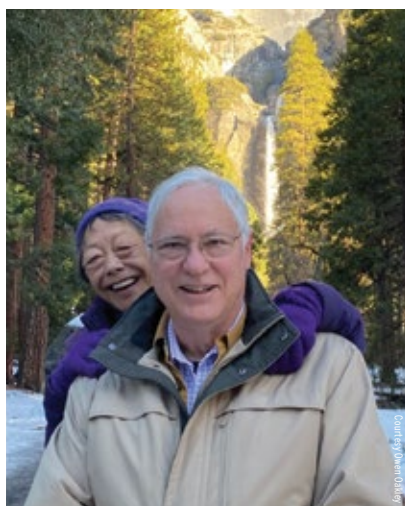
JEFF FLETCHER: "All is well here. Our big news in December was that granddaughter Violet, a sophomore at DC's Duke Ellington School of the Arts, won a school contest to paint a holiday card for Vice President Kamala Harris. Her card depicting the VP's residence was circulated widely. Violet and her parents met the VP and her husband at a reception at the residence."

ELLIE DUFFEY HAYWARD: "I was fortunate to live in Germany and Brussels for nearly 10 years before settling in Minnesota in 1979. I gave up my tax-preparation business in 2016 after my husband was diagnosed with both Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases. We sold our beloved Sanibel Island condo four months before Hurricane Ian (whew) and moved to a nearby retirement home in Fort Myers, Florida, where Ed is receiving excellent care as he navigates the last stage of his life. Our three kids visit frequently, and Ed was able to attend the marriage of our daughter Susie on Sanibel last summer. Life throws curves, but overall I've had a very happy and rewarding life."

MILES MACINTYRE: "We consider ourselves fortunate to have a happy, healthy family and wonderful friends. Karen and her sister take long walks daily. After two knee replacements, rigorous physical therapy, Miles resumed regular tennis matches. He and some friends continue to work on various real-estate



LEFT: Peter Enemark '62 and Meme Lund Enemark '62 **RIGHT:** Luca Enemark, David Enemark, Nico Enemark, Minji Ng, Peter Enemark '62, Meme Enemark '62, Claire Henry, Daniel Enemark



LEFT: Owen Oakley '62 and his wife, Toki, in Yosemite **CENTER:** Toki-Helene and Reiko, the grandchildren of **Owen Oakley '62** **RIGHT:** Mt. Diablo daube with wildlife, by **Owen Oakley '62**

projects. Martin has his master's from Penn. He loves teaching at St. Albans. He maintains a beautiful home here. We enjoy being with our grandchildren, Everette and Hazel. Everette (9) was accepted for early decision at St. Albans. Yay! He plays hockey, lacrosse, and tennis; he also plays the cello. Hazel does ballet and yoga. Watching them grow makes us feel young again! Every good, healthy wish for the New Year."

GLENN MCCLELLAND: "Turning 80 is a remarkable achievement, especially when you can do so without any major illnesses. I turned 80 in January, and, aside from missing a few discs in my back, I have been doing well and spend time with a personal trainer twice a week. My wife also only has relatively few complaints and often attends yoga classes in the morning. After two years in South Carolina, we are settling in and plan on renting out our two-family home in New Haven, Connecticut, now that I have retired from the board of a Yale-related not-for profit organization. Aside from spending Thanksgiving and Christmas with family, our biggest adventure is providing back up childcare for our two grandsons, ages 15 months and 4 months. Fortunately, we live only about five minutes away from our son's house, so, when needed, we can step up to help. Of course, most of the joyful burden falls on my wife, Ramona. Hope all of the rest of you are well and turning 80 in great shape."

CHARLIE MILLS: "I think I did not know how balancing on a bicycle worked until the teacher told the class after our papers had been turned in. I can see him pacing while he told us. I wonder if anyone in the class knew before that. Probably not. Everyone thought the wheels act like gyroscopes. I thought about it recently watching my youngest grandchildren, 2-year-old twins, running around the house. An instinct (or is it learned?) shared by every land animal that moves above the ground on legs. I think about it when climbing or descending stairs, needing a handrail, with my deteriorating balance and slowing reactions. I also remember he told us not to write anything like, "What could be more fun than sailing?" which is exactly what I wanted to write."

OWEN OAKLEY: "Having a big party for the 80th is a good idea. My 80th was last year, and we got together with family and friends for various events, both in the San Francisco Bay Area and Belgium. It was so much fun, I decided I was going to repeat it all in 2024, plus not growing any older. There was lots of traveling in 2023 with a week in Bologna, two trips to DC to see granddaughters, and driving tours in California (Tahoe and Yosemite) and Australia (Melbourne and Tasmania). I was also busy with lots of technical conferences and textbook editing work, sailing on the Bay, and oil painting. In between, Toki has kept me well fed. There is nothing like a trip to Italy for inspiration.

Retirement is exhausting but I am not complaining." (See photos above.)

JEFF ROGERS: "My wife, Kathryn, and I love living on rural south Whidbey Island in Puget Sound. (Thanks to **Joan Davidson** and Michael for introducing me to the Pacific Northwest while we were at Sidwell!) Our focus, like many of you, is spending time with family. That is wonderfully easy for us because our four kids and their families all live in nearby Seattle. Kathryn is a retired lawyer (as am I) and has volunteer leadership roles in her church and for an organization providing services to seniors. I have retired from my second career as a mental health counselor for combat veterans. I now volunteer answering the crisis line in Seattle, but mostly I am coasting toward 80 feeling lucky beyond words as I look back on my life. If any of you get to the Northwest, come see us. In recent years particularly, I have been shown how much an old friend can mean."

JUDY MARKLEY WASTLER: "**Tracy Mullin Moroney**, are you up for the 80th party? 2023 was a good, non-eventful year, since I was on disability leave due to a hip replacement in September. What they can do today is amazing! I'm walking two miles a day inside on the track at the Y and taking Pilates and yoga classes. Going back to the skies in March. Life is good. Miss everyone!"



LEFT: Patricia Bradley '63 is with her newest pup. **RIGHT:** View of the Washington National Cathedral from the Wesley Heights home of John Luykx '63



1963

MARGO LEE HOFELDT
margo10022@aol.com

PATRICIA CROSS BRADLEY: “I have had another exciting year with my cocker spaniel Dot D, competing in agility events under her well-earned title of AKC No. 1 Agility Cocker Spaniel. We qualified for Westminster in New York last May, causing me to have to make a painful decision to miss our 60th Reunion. We accepted the much-coveted invitation to the Premier Cup in Ohio, and in August, Dot D was awarded the title of Agility Grand Champion. For the third year in a row, we attended the AKC National Agility Invitational in Orlando in December and were very proud of her perfect runs. While competing at the American Spaniel Club National Specialty in St. Louis this summer, I added a three-month cocker puppy to our traveling entourage (see photo above). The local dog community gave me an over-the-top, surprise puppy shower. How many women get to have their first (and only) baby shower at the age of 77? My life since then has been puppy socialization, puppy kindergarten, and puppy potty-training, leaving me in a constant state of exhaustion! At Thanksgiving, the little rascal wrapped the leash around my ankles and I fell, tearing my rotator cuff and rupturing my biceps tendon. Feeling much more time-limited than I did when I had my last rotator cuff repair, I decided I couldn’t afford to lose another six months, so I have been working hard

to manage it with rehab only. So far, it was a good decision—every day, we are vertical, and ventilating is precious for us now!” (See photo above.)

ROSAURA EICHENBERG: “My news from Brazil is terrible. From 1964 to 1985, we Brazilians had a military dictatorship that was just no good, as it is always the case where there is no rule of law. In 2023, the nightmare came back—dictatorship, no rule of law, no freedom. Terrible news, but we must go on fighting in order to survive. Ever since I spent that year in the States (1962/63), America and Americans are very dear to my heart. I know you are great warriors for freedom, so hand in hand let us face the future with the hope of liberty casting light on our road.”

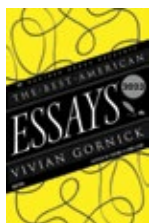
MARGO LEE HOFELDT: “The sunsets in Miami are always varied and beautiful, and I am peacefully watching the sun go down as I think about writing this note for the spring magazine. We had fun up north in October for a few weeks when we went to the Wine Spectator New York Wine Experience and then bid farewell to Connecticut until next summer. It was such a pretty ride back to Miami as the leaves were changing color along the way. After we returned, we focused on Albert’s very needed knee-replacement surgery, which successfully took place in early November. He had no pain, was walking and doing so well until about 10 days after the surgery, when out of the blue, he suffered a hemorrhagic bleed and aneurysm. Wow! One never knows what’s in store when you open

your eyes in the morning. He had brain surgery on the eve of Thanksgiving, was in rehab and came home the day after Christmas. He’s truly a miracle: Balance and walking are fine, he has the use of all of his limbs, his speech is good, and he is recovering like a champ. I’m busy as usual, so what else is new?”

JEANNE PERKINS HOFFERKAMP: “Another year! The time just goes faster and faster! My husband, Steve, was diagnosed with stage 3 pancreatic cancer and had surgery May 2. The good news is that the last PET scan did not show any cancer. He has been getting chemotherapy and is on quite a few medications. So, I am busy trying to keep track of them, as well as all of the doctors’ appointments. No plans for travel, and actually, I am content to stay home! My two granddaughters go to University of Wisconsin at Madison. Olivia is a junior and Carina a freshman. Both are doing much better than I did in college! Maybe the smart genes skip a generation! My grandson, Evan, is 10. They all, along with my daughters, Sandy and Sharon, live in Wisconsin not far from Milwaukee, about two hours from where Steve and I live in Bloomington, Illinois. Hoping all is well with everyone.”

JOHN LUYKX: “Linda and I enjoy the view from the 12th floor of a cozy condo less than a mile from Sidwell Friends. After military service and time in California, New York, and Florida, I’m back home again! All the better to keep up with both of our championship Quaker basketball teams and other school events. Always look forward to annual Miami visits with my brother, **Peter Luykx ’55**. Also nearby is my sister, **Betsy Luykx Galliher ’60**, in Walkersville, Maryland. I keep up with local classmates **Pat Cross Bradley**, **Sylvia Fubini**, and **Kathy Anderson**.” (See photo above.)

SANDRA ROBERTSON: “I’ve been really busy. The essay I wrote that won the national AWP Intro Journals Project award in 2022 was named a Notable Essay in *The Best American Essays of 2023*. In June, I finished an MFA in creative writing at San Diego State Uni-



versity. Since then, I've been querying agents to see if I can get my novel, *Wildflower*, published. So far no luck! In September, I spent a week with my sister on Martha's Vineyard before going to Madrid for three weeks. I hadn't been back since 2015, and it was absolutely wonderful to see everybody. So many memories of an important part of my life. The day before Christmas, I got a puppy (what was I thinking?) who has occupied all my time and attention ever since. There have been moments I would have drop-kicked Magic over the fence if he weren't so adorable. It would help a lot if I could get a diaper on him."

1964



LOUISE BERRY STRAIT
lbstrait@gmail.com

60 Years! Can You Believe It?

Returning classmates from the Class of 1964 will have ample time and opportunity to catch up with each other and engage with programs at the Sidwell Friends campus on May 3 and 4. In addition to the Reunion Dinner and Distinguished Alumni Awards presentation on the night of May 4, there will be a Class of 1964 gathering on campus on the evening of May 3 and a lunch at Henry Masur's house on May 4. Volunteer organizers for our class events are Bonnie Eisenberg, Henry Masur, Louise Berry Strait, and Bobby Seitz Turnbull. See you then!

—LOUISE BERRY STRAIT

1965

KENNETH LESURE
ken.lesure@gmail.com



Lyn Horton '68 mounted an exhibit, *Syntactical Shifts*, at Installation Space in North Adams, Massachusetts.



KEN LESURE: "I remind all my classmates that we meet virtually on the third Saturday of every month at 4 p.m. Eastern time. Join us on Zoom as we catch up on our latest news, Sidwell Friends memories, and whatever topics that may emerge. Some of our regular participants are **Dick Gralla, Woody Halsey, Fliss Hannay, Henry Maury, Steve Page, Todd Parnell, Jack Reeside, George Staber, Mary Beth Waits, Kristin Wilson**, and myself."

1966

CHRIS DEMATATIS
cdematatis@aol.com

1967

STEVE BATZELL
swb.abacus@gmail.com

1968

ROLLIE FRYE
rolliefrye@gmail.com

LYN HORTON: "In November 2023, I mounted an installation of my work chosen by Installation Space in North Adams, Massachusetts. The exhibit was designed as an integrated state-

ment, titled *Syntactical Shifts*. The idea was triggered by my move to an urban environment from a rural one, where I had lived for 42 years. The central focus became 10 hanging sculptures done before I moved in 2018. The rest of the installation comprised 130 drawings I did over a period of a year and a half from 2021-2022. These drawings delineated metaphors for understanding my place in a new studio. Photographs of twigs, branches, and trees were key to the discovery of a language. These photos were drawn on, traced, and scanned to create a broad base of FORMs. The photographs here of the installation only give a narrow view of the experience of it. There was also a sound component that rose from the four corners of the space in which birdsong was interspersed with my reading of Suzanne Simard's *Finding the Mother Tree*. This show was my attempt to translate her words into my language, expressing the significance of our recognition that we and the Earth are one." (See photo above.)

LYNN JOHNSON MCCOWN: "Betsy Paull and I had the pleasure of attending one of **David Nicholson's** many events where he introduced his recently published family history, *The Garretts of Columbia*. David did an amazing job of researching and presenting the Garrett arm of his family roots. This particular event was held at the Univer-



LEFT: David Nicholson '68 gives a book talk at UDC. **CENTER:** Lynn Johnson McCown '68, David Nicholson '68, Betsy Paull '68 **RIGHT:** David Mann '68, Bonnie Mann, and John Shepherd '68 meet up in New Zealand.

sity of the District of Columbia, and it was well attended by numerous students who were captivated by David's background and the extent of his research. One of the real highlights of the afternoon was the presence of three generations of Garretts who are, of course, all related to David, the youngest of whom is named after one of David's great uncles, Maceo." (See photos above.)

DAVID NICHOLSON: "My news is the publication of my warts-and-all family history, *The Garretts of Columbia: A Black South Carolina Family from Slavery to the Dawn of Integration*. Decades in the researching and writing, it is the story of my great-grandparents and their family. He, Casper George Garrett, was a lawyer, college professor, and editor/publisher of three newspapers. She was a supervisor of rural colored schools. The book also features cameos by Booker T. Washington, Langston Hughes, and Haitian leader Francois Duvalier ("Papa Doc"). It was published in January by the University of South Carolina Press. (See "Fresh Ink," on page 20.) I enjoyed seeing classmates and other Sidwell friends at a number of events for the book. **Askold Boretsky**, **Joan Lewis Bunning**, **Elizabeth Scattergood Segal**, and **Hugh Talman** came to a discussion at the Patrick Henry Library in Vienna, Virginia; **Joan McCandlish**

and **Everett Shorey** came to the Harvard Book Store in Cambridge, Massachusetts; **Joanne Dobby Huntley**, **Steve Schwartzman**, and **Ellen Carter Woodbridge** attended at Politics and Prose; and **Lynn Johnson McCown** and **Betsy Paull** went to UDC."

JOHN SHEPHERD hung out with **David Mann** and Bonnie Mann at Orewa Beach in Auckland, New Zealand: "David and I were friends at Sidwell Friends School in Washington, DC, in 1967. The only change is that we both have splendid mustaches now." (See photo above.)

1970

MARGARET WEAVER STEEL
mwkrull@me.com

ELLEN HOPMAN: "Everything is the same here at the homestead (an oak forest in western Massachusetts). My newest herbal book, *The Sacred Herbs of Yule and Christmas*, came out in September of 2023 and by December it had sold out at Simon and Schuster (the second printing is already underway). The next volume is Celtic Druidry, which is available for pre-order (pub date May 2024). Now that I am 'retired,' I can write full time!"

LAURENE SHERLOCK: "I've been in a life transition for two years, slowly moving into the 'third act' as Jane Fonda calls it. A state of semi-retirement from my antiques appraisal profession. Still doing consulting, but no more reports for the IRS, insurance carriers, etc. The IRS is so up in your business to the crossed t's and dotted i's in reports. Still advising clients as they winnow down what to keep, what might sell, broker when appropriate. Statisticians say we are living so long now that on average we will have seven careers in our lives. I've been so lucky in my life to have two careers, each over 20-plus years, that I have absolutely loved. It has been a great life professionally and the things I've seen and done, so far. So, what's in my third act? Well, I could never have seen this one coming. Totally blindsided. First, know that *I hate to write*. And yet all my life, my godmother said, 'You must write,' at which point I exit off-stage left into the surrounding comfort of not being in the light. But that's not where I'm supposed to be now, a disquieting recognition. So, I'm writing, because that is where I'm being led. Seems my whole life has been a prologue to this. What am I writing? Well, lots of things: a plane to remember when I flew on the Concorde from London to DC; a train to remember when I arrived on the Metroliner from DC into NYC Penn Station on 9/11 at 9:20 a.m.; a tribute

to Queen Elizabeth II upon her death; and a biography about my grandfather, Laurence Steinhardt. This is taking off in directions I cannot even get my head around, so all I can do is hang on tight."

LESLIE PROSTERMAN: "Inspired by the 50th anniversary of our Sidwell Friends graduation, the food dearth increased by the pandemic, and our desire to put Sidwell Friends community values into operation, members of the Class of '70 responded enthusiastically when I suggested that we begin to contribute to World Central Kitchen in 2020. Hometown Chef José Andrés (okay, he's from Spain, but he started his restaurants here in DC) created World Central Kitchen in 2010. WCK responds immediately worldwide to food and water emergencies of all kinds caused by climate or humanitarian disasters. We established our own dedicated donor page on WCK's website called "SFS 1970 Classmates: Disaster Relief" to contribute to their efforts. A special shout out goes to **Chris Formant** and **Palmer Foret** who jumped in to help me get the first phase of this initiative up and running, and to all the members of the Class of 1970 who gave and keep on giving. Anyone and everyone can donate on our link, donate.wck.org/fundraiser/2829809, or set one up for your own class by contacting WCK's development office."



EDITOR'S NOTE:

The class of 1970 has raised a whopping \$52,000 and counting for World Central Kitchen!

CHRIS TUFTY: "Margot and I took her first trip to England last spring along with a friend of ours. It was exciting to drive on the wrong side of the road, and we loved seeing the Cotswolds, Stonehenge, and of course the Tower of London!" (See photo above.)



LEFT: Chris Tufty '70, his wife, Margot, and a friend stand at the Tower of London.

1971

BRIAN STEINBACH

brian.steinbach@verizon.net

MARY REYNER

mary.reyner@gmail.com

DOROTHY M. DAVIS moved back to Washington, DC, in December 2022 to work on President Biden's U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit. Under her company, Dorothy M. Davis Strategic Global Consulting, she continues to be the founding United Nations representative of the Congressional Black Caucus Institute-Global African Diaspora Initiative (CBCI-GADI) since 2018 (dorothymdavis.com). As president of Griffith J. Davis Photographs and Archives, Dorothy also manages her father's photography and legacy as a pioneer African American photographer, journalist, and U.S. senior Foreign Service officer. The company is celebrating her father's 100th birthday year and her 30th anniversary of unearthing,

building, and creating a visible narrative of the global impact of his photographic and diplomatic legacy through his archives. Griff Davis's photographs are currently in seven exhibitions, in four countries (United States, Canada, France, and Liberia), and on three continents (Europe, Africa, and North America). Among the seven exhibitions is: *The Ways of Langston Hughes: Griff Davis and Black Artists in the Making*, which opened in Harlem at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture on February 1 and will remain open until July 8, 2024. It comprises Griff Davis's photographs of and personal letters with Langston Hughes over the course of their 20-year friendship. Simultaneously, the National Steinbeck Center in partnership with Griffith J. Davis Photographs and Archives opened the exhibition *Artists in Parallel: Griffith J. Davis & John Steinbeck* in Steinbeck's hometown of Salinas, California, on January 13, 2024. This exhibition highlights the common ground of how these artists used their work to reveal societal truths and to document their respective eras. It will be open until March 24, 2024, (steinbeckcenter.org). For more information and the full listing of all seven exhibitions, visit griffdavis.com. (See photos below.)

ANN YOKLAVICH: "In December 2023, I had the honor and the fun of attending the basketball tournament held at 'Tolani school in Honolulu, to which the Sidwell Friends girls' basketball team



LEFT: A photo of Griff Davis and Langston Hughes from the exhibit *The Ways of Langston Hughes: Griff Davis and Black Artists in the Making*, which opened in Harlem at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture this winter. **RIGHT:** The National Steinbeck Center, in partnership with Griffith J. Davis Photographs and Archives, opened the exhibition *Artists in Parallel: Griffith J. Davis & John Steinbeck*.





LEFT: Ann Yoklavich '71 with the Sidwell Friends girls' basketball team in Hawaii. **CENTER:** Leslie Wolf-Creutzfeldt '74 stands with Eden Liu, a former summer intern from Wellesley College. **RIGHT:** The members of the Class of 1976 who live in the DC area got together recently. They say they look forward to hosting everyone at the 50th (you read that correctly!) reunion of the Class of '76, if not before. If you have any ideas as to what you would like to do or wish to help plan, contact **Mary Ann McGrail** (mamcgrail@yahoo.com) or **Betsy Zeidman** (betsyzeidman@gmail.com) who expect everyone to attend! standing: **Charles Dibble, Lori Price, Dana Shulman Smith, Mary Ann McGrail** seated: **Loretta Chi, Adrienne Sirken, Kathi Watkins Webb, Susan Hilton Labovich, Betsy Zeidman, Pam Meyer**

was an invitee. The Quakers won the championship in their first appearance in the tournament. Sidwell Friends was the only team from the East Coast. All the others were from Hawaii or the West Coast. I watched the first and last game. And since the last game was with the second-best team, it was the most exciting match. The first match was against the Kamehameha school's girls' basketball team. This is a much larger school with a much larger endowment, but the Sidwell Friends team won easily. In the playoff for the championship, Sidwell Friends played against Sierra Canyon School, from California. In that game, the score was always close, with each team pulling ahead by a few points and then the other catching up and passing the opponent's team by two to four points. I had the honor of meeting some of the players and coaches after the game, and they invited me to be in one of the group photos because I was the only alumni there. The Sidwell Friends alumni office had notified all of us living in Honolulu, but it was difficult to purchase tickets on the 'Iolani school's website, so I just went to the athletic complex and bought tickets at the door." (See photo above.)

KEEP IN TOUCH!

Go to sidwell.edu/classnotes and let us know what you've been up to. Don't see your class year? Contact alumni@sidwell.edu to become a class representative.

1972

JOYCE JACOBSON BRASTED

joyce@brastedhouse.com

1973

APRILLE KNIEP SHERMAN

shermaner@msn.com

REGINA DESSOFF KESSLER

reginadkessler@gmail.com

1974



LESLIE WOLF-CREUTZFELDT

lcreutzfeldt@yahoo.com

LESLIE WOLF-CREUTZFELDT is looking forward to hosting Sidwell Friends students again this summer during the China-U.S. Women's Foundation Internship Summer Program (cuswf.org).

EDITOR'S NOTE:

This incredible China-U.S. Internship is supported by Sidwell Friends' own Dehejia Internship Program.

1975

ALAN DRUMMER

alandrummer@hotmail.com

DAVID KLEEMAN: "I guess we've reached the age of receiving 'lifetime achievement' awards. I'm thrilled to be one of the first seven people induct-

ed into the Emmy Awards' 'Children's and Family Silver Circle,' honoring 25+ years of service to the industry. I've carved an unusual career path: I'm not a producer, writer, director, or programmer, but a strategist, analyst, and connector of ideas and people. So, it's especially gratifying to be recognized alongside great creative talents. I'm definitely not ready to retire, though; I'm having too much fun. I'm just back from Japan, where I was the jury chair for the world's premier competition for educational media: the NHK's Japan Prize. That provided an excuse for **Betsy Zeidman '76** to join me for 10 days of wonderful touring: the Ghibli and Kusama Museums in Tokyo, an onsen in Kanazawa, a sobering visit to Hiroshima, and the exceptional art island of Naoshima."

1976

Want to be a class representative?

Contact alumni@sidwell.edu.

ELLIOTT "CHIP" LUCAS was recently appointed by Governor Glenn Youngkin to the Virginia Board of Medicine for a four-year term.

1977

ADAM STERN

adamcstern@aol.com

STEPHEN CLARK, BILL HENRY, and

RICK LERNER gathered in Annapolis on December 27, 2023, to watch their alma mater, Tulane University, take on Virginia Tech in the 2023 Military Bowl. Unfortunately, neither the weather nor the Hokies cooperated and the Green Wave lost 41-20, ending the season with an 11-3 record.

ROBERT HYMAN and his wife, Deb Atwood, have moved from Washington, DC, to Bellingham, Washington, where they are building their new home overlooking the Salish Sea and San Juan Islands. They would love to see any classmates who happen to be visiting the Pacific Northwest: robertehyman@gmail.com.

1978

PETER MACDONALD
pmacdona@skidmore.edu

BRANDEL FRANCE DE BRAVO: “My poetry collection, *Locomotive Cathedral*, was chosen in a contest for publication by the University of Nebraska. And so my second full-length poetry book, *Locomotive Cathedral*, will come out in early 2025.”

BRANDON GRIGGS: “Four decades after college, I’m still plugging away as a journalist, an endangered occupation

that has somehow sustained my entire career. I am an assistant managing editor at *CNN Digital*, where I edit online stories about race, immigration, and culture and try to find something insightful to say about our increasingly troubled planet. It has been a long journey from *Horizon* at Sidwell Friends, where I believe I wrote my first-ever article—probably about sports. For almost 16 years now, I’ve been in Atlanta, a city I never imagined I’d call home. It’s no DC, but it has got good food, mild winters, a lively cultural scene, and direct flights on Delta to almost anywhere you’d want to go. In recent years, I’ve taken wonderful trips to Portugal, Spain, Norway, and Morocco. I occasionally trade messages with **Chris Vanocur**. Back in the 1990s, in an astounding coincidence, we found ourselves next-door neighbors in Salt Lake City, of all places.” (See photo below.)

CHRISTOPHER KRAMER: “It was great to catch up with classmates at our recent reunion and I look forward to (gulp) our 50th. I was recently nominated to the leadership of the American College of Cardiology (ACC). I will become vice president in April 2024 and president a year after. My duties will include a great deal of travel, representing the ACC at cardiology conferences around the globe.”

ELLIOTT THURSTON married his long-time friend, Kathrin Dress, on October 31, 2023, on the beach in San Pancho, Mexico, about 30 miles north of Puerto Vallarta. In celebration of Mexico’s Day of the Dead and Halloween, they dressed as El Catrin and La Catrina and encouraged their small guest party to also wear costumes. Loyola Marymount of Chicago Professor Emeritus **Jim Biester** as well as **Peter MacDonald** were in attendance at the festive occasion. Elliott and Kathrin live fulltime in Oakland, California, but own a vacation home with several rental apartments in San Pancho and felt it was the perfect place to tie the knot. Congrats to Elliott for demonstrating that life is still beautiful in your 60s. (See photos below.)

1979



TED LEWIS
bethesdated@gmail.com

ANDY LUTHRINGER: “I am still in Seattle, which it amazes me to say now qualifies as the single place I have lived the longest (by far) at 23 years. For work, I am doing writing, editing, and content design for Accenture Consulting and a local organization, Earshot Jazz (at least until the AI bots take over), and I am in the process of revving back up my own



LEFT: Brandon Griggs '78 **CENTER:** Jim Biester '78, Elliott Thurston '78, Peter MacDonald '78 **RIGHT:** Elliott Thurston '78 marries his bride, Kathrin Dress, in a Day of the Dead-themed beach wedding in San Pancho, Mexico.



LEFT: Roshini Ponnampuruma '80 and Elizabeth Carter '80 enjoy Brookside Gardens in Wheaton. **RIGHT:** Kerry Pelzman '80 and husband, Patrick Robinson, perform the somepah, a traditional Khmer greeting.

musical pursuits after some busy years. I am coming up on my 18th anniversary to my lovely wife, Bridget, and proudly extolling the talents of twin stepsons, Ravi and Santosh, both carrying on lineage as working musicians in New York. To anyone who passes through the Pacific Northwest, please do get in touch!"

LAURIE REYNOLDS RARDIN: "Hello, classmates! I left my 12-plus year position in science communication at Dartmouth College almost three years ago after being recruited for a position with the New Hampshire division of public health services. I continue to work on environmental health issues, and my focus has turned to childcare providers and children's environmental health. My husband, Jed, will retire from 23 years of ministry at South Congregational Church in April—a big change coming in part due to his Parkinson's disease. We are hoping to fit in travel as we can. We will certainly have more trips to DC as our oldest daughter, Brynne, pursues a master's in fine arts in environmental filmmaking at American University. Fun to have her roaming around the SFS neighborhoods! Our younger daughter, Marta, is applying to master's programs in Germany to pursue soil-science/sustainable-agriculture studies. I'm planning to be in DC more over the next few years and hit the courts at Sidwell Friends. Be well, and please remember there is more we can do to slow down climate change!"

1980

WILLIAM RICE
williamrice63@gmail.com

ELIZABETH CARTER: "This fall, I had the pleasure of spending a day with **Roshini Ponnampuruma**. We had a lovely afternoon visiting Brookside Gardens and spending time with my mother and my daughter. I cut back to 30 hours at the health center where I work as a psychotherapist with clients ages 5 to 'grandparents.' I love being part of the medical team. The 10-minute commute in my electric car makes up somewhat for a nonprofit salary. We live outside a fairly small coastal town near the University of Rhode Island. I aspire to expand my native rain garden and other patches of native plants on our nine acres of wooded hills by glacier-cut kettle ponds. I swim in the ponds and sometimes the ocean in the summer. My husband is building a new greenhouse for our vegetable garden in anticipation of further aging. We have a family support system here with my 90-year-old mother and my cousin as neighbors. My chickens supply eggs when they are laying, and we take turns making dinner for mom. I am in charge of her healthcare, etc., but she's still very independent. Both my kids are still in and out between semesters." (See photo above.)

ALICE CLARK COOGAN: "I had a pretty epic 2023. We had three weddings (the triplets) and my older two sons each had a baby. One grandson lives in Atlanta

and the other one lives in Nashville. So much fun!"

LOUISA SCHNEIBERG HOLLMAN: "How can anyone resist **William Rice's** Pulitzer Prize-worthy entreaties to submit a class note? I have nothing new to report, but I promised, so here goes. I still serve as the executive director of The Defiant Requiem Foundation, where my team creates and markets original Holocaust education materials, promotes concert performances worldwide, and positions our programs to battle anti-Semitism. My kids lead far more interesting lives than I do. (Since they never submit a class note, perhaps their classmates will read about them here.) **Ali Hollman '06** is a social worker with Cityblock, a health care provider serving Medicaid patients. She deals with difficult issues, providing care to a challenging population. **Max Hollman '09**, lives in L.A. and worked as a VP for drama programming at HBO, where he worked on, among other shows, *Succession* and *House of the Dragon*. He left HBO in 2023 to start his own production company with fellow DC native and Bullis grad, Dave Bernad. Shockingly, next year is our 45th Reunion and it would be great to see a big turnout. Several of you have disappeared for years and you know who you are! Plan to come!"

KERRY PELZMAN: "I recommend a visit to Phnom Penh, where I'm rapidly approaching the one-year mark of my four-year assignment as mission director for USAID/Cambodia. I oversee a team of 83, including 54 Cambodian professionals, and a program that spans health, education, environment, climate resilience, agriculture, workforce development, and democracy and governance, touching all 25 provinces in the country. You can follow my official X handle at [@USAIDCambodiaMD](#); it captures a lot of the remarkable work being delivered through U.S. foreign assistance across the country. (The generosity of the American people is acknowledged.) Ten months in, my (retired Foreign Service officer) husband, Patrick Robinson, is deep in Khmer and piano lessons, while I'm focused more on exploring the local arts-and-crafts

scene. We both enjoy the incredible range of restaurants (and the food delivery apps!), as well as the relative proximity of Siem Reap and the incredible Angkor Wat. In December, we traveled to neighboring Vietnam, visiting Hanoi, Ha Long Bay, and Ninh Binh—all also highly recommended for travelers! The intense heat and 12-hour time difference with Washington are drawbacks although bearable—but do time your visit carefully!” (See photo on previous page.)

WILLIAM RICE: “*Password*, *Pyramid*, *Match Game*—TV game shows of the 1960s and ’70s were a reassuring presence in my childhood. Imagine my amazement when I run into people our age who have no memory of them, or at best recall them as occasional, trivial pastimes! Perhaps you’re one of these benighted souls. Well, you need dwell in the darkness no longer: You can do what I did and resurrect these wonderful language games in your own living room with family and friends. I had hosted the occasional game of *Password* over the years, but it didn’t really all come together until my 60th birthday. That’s when I got to get my full Allen Ludden on (look him up) by hosting all three of the game show games cited above. There was sufficient general approval that after a break to buy a new house, we reprised the game night in January, and now have a rough goal of four gatherings a year. Game show games distill communication to its purest form: It’s all about getting an idea across. Try a game show game night and see if you don’t wake up the next morning with an improved view of the world.”

EVE STERN: “I’m living and writing happily in Tucson, Arizona. Two of my poems are part of *Uncommon Knowledge*, an art exhibit at Roche Labs about early diagnosis of serious disease; the poems are based on interviews with employees who survived breast cancer, as I did in 2017. The exhibit will travel the United States.”

KEEP IN TOUCH!

Go to sidwell.edu/classnotes and let us know what you’ve been up to.

1981

ANDREW SZANTON

aszanton@rcn.com

CONRAD BERGER: “The week before last, I received an attractive plaque commemorating 35 years (!) of service at the Library of Congress, most of it in the Interlibrary Loan Department. I still don’t feel like a veteran employee, just a medium-length one, but I guess that the evidence is starting to suggest otherwise.”

ERLE ELLIS is a professor of geography and environmental systems at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). This year, Erle is on sabbatical at Oxford University where he is an Oxford Martin School Visiting Fellow for 2023/24.

DOLLY FOX writes to say that after eight years producing the nonprofit *Rockers on Broadway* show to benefit aspiring young people in the performing arts, she has formed her own company, YD Fox Entertainment. Her company has in the works a historical fiction limited series set in Weimar, Germany, shortly before the rise of the Nazis. YD Fox Entertainment also has coming out an LGBTQ+ short film. Dolly is a producer of the upcoming Broadway-bound musical *Dorothy Dandridge*. And she serves on the board of the Felix Organization, serving the needs of foster children.”

1982

JONATHAN LEVINE

jlevine@sgtlaw.com

1983

LINDA GAUS

gaushaus1965@verizon.net

TOM O’NEIL and **LEE BABCOCK** continued a six-year tradition of getting their families together for Christmas break this year and traveled to Cabo San Lucas. In Mexico, they got to watch their families surf, swim, hike, and dine together over the course of a fantastic



Lee Babcock '83 and Tom O'Neil '83 hit the water in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico.

week. It has been very gratifying to see their children—Anne O’Neil, TJ O’Neil, Caeden Babcock, and Madeline Babcock—grow up together and become close friends in their own right. During this trip, Tom returned to his high school dive-shop roots, showing Lee how it’s done on an underwater guys’ adventure. (See photo above.)

1984

Join us at
REUNION

SARAH WILLIAMS

sarah@propelcapital.org

ANN CLARK ESPUELAS

aespuelas08@gmail.com

LIZ BERNSTEIN NORTON

lizbnorton@gmail.com

MICHAEL BACON: “Twelve years after following my children into the sport of competitive fencing, and finishing last at my first tournament, I represented the United States at the FIE Veterans’ World Championships in October, finishing 18th. The journey took thousands of training hours, more than 100 tournaments, and a fair share of joy and sorrows. In 2023, I also led a team that completed a sizeable reinsurance transaction for my employer, Swiss Re, with our partner, Resolution Life. In the small-world department, Resolution Life has its offices in the Empire State Building, a block away from where I train at Manhattan Fencing Center. Sometimes good things happen together!” (See photo on next page.)



LEFT: Steve Dashnaw, Ron Thornton, **Michael Bacon '81**, and Ilho Choi **RIGHT:** Class of '89's **Mara Bralove**, **Monique Anderson Walker**, and **Sean McLean** met up at Emory University in Atlanta.



1989



ELIZABETH WYATT
ebwyatt@aol.com

MARA BRALOVE ran into **Monique Anderson Walker** and **Sean McLean** at Emory University in Atlanta. Monique and Sean were celebrating their 30th college reunion. Small world! (See photo on left.)

JOHN MATHEWS is back on the stage after a 30-year hiatus! He is loving his return to theater and is getting cast in many roles in the DMV. Recently, **Rennie Crocker Anderson**, **Mara Bralove**, **Amy Dine**, **KK Ottesen**, and **Carminda Cuadro Passino** saw John perform (with a Scottish accent) in *Murder on the Orient Express* at CenterStage at Reston Community Players. Mara writes: "We all agreed that watching him was as if time hadn't passed. John gave his usual great performance!"

1985

HILARY DAYTON
hcdayton@gmail.com

SONYA CLARK: "I'm thrilled to have *Sonya Clark: We Are Each Other*, a survey exhibition of my collaborative art projects at its final venue in New York at the Museum of Arts and Design. It opens on March 23, 2024, (my birthday!) and runs through September 22. If you happen to be in NYC, please stop through." (See photos below.)

work, including having spent the winter term in residence as the Magro Family Distinguished Fellow in International Affairs at the Dickey Center for International Understanding at Dartmouth College.

GEOFFREY WILLIAMS: "I have a book, written with two friends, that just came out this year. It's on the (un-Quakerly!) subject of war and finance, *Waging War with Gold: National Security and the Finance Domain Across the Ages*." (See "Fresh Ink," on page 20.)

1990

JUSTINE WRUBLE FAHEY
justinewfahey@gmail.com

1986

LAURA LONDON
lauramlondon@yahoo.com

1988

LOUISE ANDREWS
louiseandrews@me.com

1991

TIM HANRAHAN
tim.hanrahan@gmail.com

1987

TIP COFFIN
tip@teamcoffin.com

SPENCER BOYER recently completed nearly three years of service in the Biden administration as the deputy assistant secretary of defense for European & NATO policy in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Spencer noted: "It's been an honor to serve with such extraordinary colleagues during this historic time for transatlantic relations, European security, and NATO." His next chapter will include a mix of private-sector, think tank, and academic



Images from Sonya Clark: *We Are Each Other* by Sonya Clark '85 at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York



LEFT: Megan Hester '91, Lisa Sherman '91, Alexa Palmer Spencer '91 **CENTER:** Jeff Spivack '92, Katherine Herz '92, and their families spend time together in France. **RIGHT:** Emily Paster '92, Tracy Pruzan-Roy '92

LEE BOYLE: “I spent a memorable Christmas with **Aaron Millon** and his wife, Debbie, at their home at Maria’s Beach in Rincon, Puerto Rico, where they’ve lived for the past 18 months. What a great surf town, full of kind people, beautiful beaches, perfect temperatures, fresh fish (thanks to Aaron, who is also the best cook I know), and of course excellent surf, which I enjoyed riding daily. Aaron misses his homies, but the allures of Rincon’s tight-knit community, coupled with his burgeoning commercial fishing and chartering business (*insurgent-cuisine.com*) may keep him anchored there for a tad longer.”

TODD JOHNSON: “Happy 2024 to the Sidwell community! Grateful to have COVID in the rearview. I am staying busy leading the Total Cancer Care observational research study through my role with Aster Insights, a company acquired through my work with private-equity firm Clayton, Dubilier & Rice. We now have 400,000 cancer patients sharing their genetic codes to help us find new cures for all types of cancer, which is very fulfilling. I continue to live with my wife and three daughters in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. I had a chance to see **Geoff Gross**, **Jon Bulman**, **Lee Boyle**, and **Brandon Green** at Jon’s house last year, and recently had a chance to reconnect with **Elizabeth Sheinkman '89**, who is a literary agent in London. Wishing everyone a peaceful and happy 2024.”

LISA SHERMAN writes: “For the past 20 years, **Lisa Sherman**, **Megan Hester**, and **Alexa Palmer Spencer** have been

going to Rehoboth with their husbands, kids, and pets. Megan lives in Brooklyn, New York, with her husband, Ty, and daughters, Zora (15) and Carla (11), and she is an educational-justice community organizer. Alexa lives in Silver Spring, Maryland, with her husband, Jason; daughter, Ruby (13); and son, Asher (12). She teaches people how to be confident public speakers. Lisa lives in Tenleytown with her husband, Marty, and daughter, **Stella '26** (16), and works at the U.S. House of Representatives. In addition to holding Beach Week reunions, this group has been on a bit of a 50th birthday tour—Megan celebrated in Santa Cruz with **Jon Goldman** who lives in Los Angeles and **John O’Brien** who lives in Abu Dhabi. She and Alexa also celebrated their 50ths with **Sacha Moss** in California.” (See photo above.)

1992

Want to be a class representative?
Contact alumni@sidwell.edu.

TRACY PRUZAN-ROY: “2023 was a fantastic year for me in a lot of ways, most notably having not one, but two visits with **Emily Paster**. Since she lives in Chicago and I live in New Jersey, this is a rarity. In February, we met up in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where we got to enjoy the beach, the culture, and—OMG!—the food. The best part of course was all the laughter we shared. In October, I traveled to Chicago to speak at a conference and was able to tack on a visit with Emily and her family for a few days. It was wonderful to get

to spend time with everyone, including Emily’s mom who was in town. (This is not to say I don’t vacation with my family! Last year also included trips to Cancun, Long Beach Island, and Disney World for me; my husband, Bret; and our 13-year-old, Matthew.) I’m so grateful for this long-lasting friendship, and all of the friendships I have made at Sidwell Friends that are still a daily part of my life: My text group with **Brooke Bralove**, **Jocelyn Arsht Spielberg**, **Lisa Franklin Topchik**, and **Vanessa Wruble** brings a smile to my face daily.” (See photo above.)

JEFF SPIVACK and his family had a splendid evening with **Katherine Herz** last month when she managed a swing through Nantes. “We spent a couple of hours walking around downtown and then the fam joined us for dinner. So much fun to get caught up after 30-plus years. Jeff has been living in France for the past 22 years, and has three children (Justin, Lise, and Sacha) with his wonderful partner, Anne-Laure. And the whole family will be in DC for two months, from mid-April to mid-June, so if you’re in town, give him a shout.” (See photo above.)

1993

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1994

BETSY STOEL





FAR LEFT: Graham Bullock '94, Baratunde Thurston '95 **LEFT:** Alison Friedman '98 with UNC soccer forward Sam Meza, tap dancer Michelle Dorrance, and team members from Friedman's Artists are Athletes/Athletes are Artists video series **RIGHT:** Terry Lee-St. John '99 and his daughters, Charlie and Harper, celebrate Christmas in Abu Dhabi.

estoel@gmail.com

GRAHAM BULLOCK met up with **Baratunde Thurston '95** after Baratunde gave a talk in Charlotte back in March. They reconnected over their shared interest in sparking a stronger sense of citizenship among Americans: Baratunde hosts a podcast called *How to Citizen*, and Graham directs Davidson College's Deliberative Citizenship Initiative. (See photo above.)

1997

ELLEN CORNELIUS ERICSON
eccornie@gmail.com

1998

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Contact alumni@sidwell.edu.

ALISON FRIEDMAN: "I'm into my third year 'from China to Carolina,' leading Carolina Performing Arts at UNC Chapel Hill after 20 years in Beijing and Hong Kong. Last year, we launched our video series *Athletes are Artists/Artists are Athletes*. The first features UNC men's basketball player Caleb

Love and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater dancer Michael Jackson Jr., showing off the height and hangtime of leaps and layups. The second video features UNC women's soccer star Sam Meza with MacArthur-grant-winning tap dancer Michelle Dorrance, with percussive kicks and fancy footwork. This initiative is a celebration of common ground between the sports world and the arts world. In this series, we bring this intersection to life, intensifying appreciation for both spheres. Game recognizes game!" Check out the videos at the QR codes below and see photo above.

Basketball and Ballet



Soccer and Tap:



1999

Want to be a class representative?
Contact alumni@sidwell.edu.

TERRY LEE-ST. JOHN: "I have been living in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE), since Q4 2018. I currently work at Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi as the lead biostatistician for the research department. In my role, I (a) perform/over-

see all statistical analyses for in-house research projects, and (b) am developing an AI-based disease prediction algorithm that utilizes data from electronic health records systems or insurance claims datasets. My wife and I now have two daughters, Harper (5) and Charlie (3), both born in Abu Dhabi. The UAE is extremely safe and provides a tolerant and diverse international experience. Our family loves it here, and I encourage anyone who is curious to vacation in the UAE if the chance ever arises." (See photos above.)

2000

Want to be a class representative?
Contact alumni@sidwell.edu.

MERISSA NATHAN GERSON left her job as visiting assistant professor of communication at Tulane University, where she taught gender and sexual communication, narrative medicine, and a stupidly popular course called Bachelor Nation 101 about the reality dating show, and has since moved to West Mt. Airy, Philadelphia. She can't believe she left New Orleans and misses Mardi Gras season terribly, but she chose to train to become a rabbi at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. Such is life.

TREVA LINDSEY: "In July 2023, **Brookes Gore**, **Amir Jenkins '01**, **Shaba Lightfoot**, **Nyia Noel**, and **Rebeca Wolfe-Balbuena** traveled to the Tuscan region in Italy to celebrate my

KEEP IN TOUCH!

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40th birthday at the Villa di Maiano in Fiesole, Italy. They were among the 60 guests who merrily danced the night away at this festive, formal garden party.” (See photo below.)

MARGOT LOWENSTEIN SIMMONS:

“I am very excited to share that at our ripe old(ish) age, I have finally figured out what I want to be when I grow up. While managing the complicated juggle of three kids, I completed a 12-month accelerated bachelor’s of science in nursing last August at Quinnipiac University, sat for my boards, and became a registered nurse in October. Combining this degree with my long-standing lactation practice, I am now passionately working as a lactation nurse specialist at Yale New Haven Hospital, as well as running an infant group and seeing newborn patients at a local pediatric practice in Westport, Connecticut. Would always love to connect with anyone in the Connecticut/New York area or this professional space!”

SHIREEN TAWIL: “Galvanized by the genocide in Gaza and the astronomical number of people, especially children killed, and in keeping with the Quaker values of nonviolence and justice put forth by Sidwell Friends, I have been immersed in community-organizing for an immediate ceasefire and an end to U.K. arms sales to Israel. I am fully committed to Palestinian freedom, dignity, security, and equality.” (See photo below.)

2001

ELIZA ORLINS
eorlins@gmail.com

2002

CAMILO ACOSTA
cbacosta@gmail.com

KARMAH ELMUSA is consumed by the ongoing genocide of Palestinians in Gaza by the state of Israel and horrified to watch the sustained killing of thousands of men and women—including hundreds of journalists, medical professionals, and UN employees—and over 10,000 children. She is grateful for the Quaker values of nonviolence and civic engagement she absorbed while at Sidwell Friends and is calling for a ceasefire in all possible venues. She is also grateful for the support others in the Sidwell community have offered and can still offer to this dire cause. She hopes to soon see an end to the genocide, siege, and occupation of the Palestinian people once and for all.

NATALIE PRIZEL and her wife, Kelly, welcomed their magical daughter, Yael, in October. Yael’s arrival follows the birth of her stillborn sister, Nechama, in 2022. “We could not be more proud of both our daughters. Yael delights and surprises us every day. She has already met some Sidwell Friends folk (shout out to **Emma Basch**) and cannot wait to meet more.” (See photo below.)

2003

NAABIA OFOSU-AMAAH
n.ofosuamaah@gmail.com

KATIE MATHEWS
katiecmathews@gmail.com

2004

Join us at
REUNION

ZEESHAN ALEEM
zeeshanaleem2@gmail.com

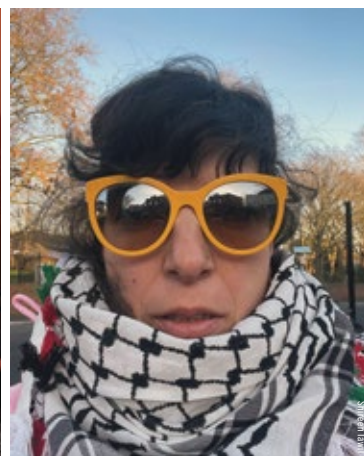
2005

RANDA TAWIL
randa.may.tawil@gmail.com

NASSER MUHAMMAD
nasser.muhammad.1@gmail.com

MATT BERNSTEIN: “I relocated to Los Angeles in connection with a new job as a corporate associate at Loeb & Loeb LLP, a law firm known for its entertainment and media practices among other things. I’m acclimating to the new non-snowy weather along with my 3-year-old Irish Wolfhound, Nymeria, and reconnecting with friends from Sidwell on the West Coast!”

LAYTH ELMUSA remains staunchly pro-Palestinian. Amid the ongoing genocide and in keeping with Quaker values, he calls for an immediate ceasefire and an end to the occupation.



LEFT: Shaba Lightfoot '00, Brookes Gore '00, Nyia Noel '00, Treva B. Lindsey '00, Rebeca Wolfe-Balbuena '00, Amir Jenkins '01 **CENTER:** Shireen Tawil '00 **RIGHT:** Natalie Prizel '02 with daughter, Yael Prizel, and wife, Kelly Prizel



LEFT: Back row: Sean Lesczynski '08, Sam Hart '09, Jonathan Giliam, Kylie Hiemstra '09, Sophie Feldman '09, Emma Fernandez '09, Philip Rihm '09. Front row: Amelie Hecht '09, Miren Beitia '72, Richard Lesczynski, Caitlin Lesczynski '09, Elena Zarabozo '08, Cristina Alba '09, Catherine Heyward '09. **RIGHT:** A.J. Parks '09 and his wife, Jennifer, look over the beach in Nice, France.

LIZ KLEINROCK is excited to share the publication of two (soon to be three) books with Harper Collins. *Come and Join Us: 18 Holidays Celebrated All Year Long* was released in October 2023, and *Eyes that Weave the World's Wonders*, which is the story of her adoption, debuted in January. (See "Fresh Ink," page 20.) Coming up this fall is her middle-grade nonfiction book, *What Jewish Looks Like*, which examines the diversity and beauty of the global Jewish community. She works as the director of DEIB (diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging) at an independent school in DC. Also, she and her husband, Mexican chef Christian Irabién, opened a restaurant called Amparo in Dupont Circle and would love for Sidwell Friends folks to come by for a margarita!

RANDA TAWIL continues to fight for a free Palestine and, in keeping with her Quaker education at Sidwell Friends, demands her government call for a permanent ceasefire to the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

2006

JOHN SANDERS
jsanders36@gmail.com

ANDREW KNAUSS: "In fall 2023, I joined the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC), within the Department of Labor, as a general attorney focused on practicing employment and labor law. After working for six years at a private law firm, I am happy to be a public employee and a member of the federal workforce."

2007

ALEX AKMAN
Akman.alex@gmail.com

2008

DELANEY KEMPNER
dckempner@gmail.com

KYLE DECKELBAUM's wife, Katelyn Deckelbaum writes in: "Just wanted to brag on my husband and share the news we are soon moving to the DMV. Kyle, an accomplished reporter and anchor at legacy television affiliates across the country, has received national industry recognition for his work, winning an Emmy Award and four Edward R. Murrow Awards for excellence in writing and feature storytelling. Kyle is now using his impeccable broadcasting and storytelling talents in his beloved hometown for *Destination DC!*"

2009



JAMES PARKS
jhpiv13@gmail.com

CAITLIN LESCZYNSKI married Jonathan Giliam at a vineyard outside of Cape Town, South Africa, on November 20, 2023. "We were honored to have many longtime friends and Sidwell Friends alumni (plus one former teacher, my Dad, Mr. L!) travel half-way around the world to celebrate with us and explore the country I've called home for the last seven years." (See photo above.)

A.J. PARKS: "My wife, Jennifer, and I traveled to Côte d'Azur to celebrate New Year's Eve and my birthday. The views and sunsets were beautiful, and it was nice to get away from DC traffic and weather." (See photo above.)

ASHLEY RILEY recently married Alex Morrow, a fellow DMV local, in a lovely small ceremony on the DC waterfront with their families in attendance, including the bride's sister, **Taylor Riley '11**, and mother, **Pam Williams Riley '75**. Ashley is excited to start this next chapter of her life.

BRYAN STABBE is thrilled to share that on an unseasonably warm fall day, he exchanged wedding vows with Zoë Herrmann at a historic Quaker farm in Pur-



LEFT: Bryan Stabbe '09 marries Zoë Herrmann at Sylvaside Farm in Purcellville, Virginia. **RIGHT:** Elie Goldman '12 and Camillo the Goat



cellville, Virginia. The celebration was enhanced by the presence of members from Sidwell Friends classes of '09, '12, '14, and '76. While the ceremony was Jew-ish, they incorporated elements rooted in Bryan's Quaker education, including a meaningful moment of silence to begin the ceremony, in recognition of the 13 years Bryan spent beginning each day at Sidwell Friends. As they look forward to the future, Bryan eagerly anticipates reconnecting with '09 friends and their families at their 15th Reunion this spring, in addition to joining Zoë at Sidwell alumni association events and to cheer on our Quakers on the hardwood this winter. (See photo above.)

CAROLINE ULWICK: "I was recently hired as a staff writer for the CBS late night comedy show *After Midnight*. It's a fun blend of comedy and game show, and working there has been a dream come true for this former *Oat* staffer. Please tune in, or better yet, come out to LA and see the show live! I've been told Nielsen counts in-person viewings twice."

2010

KAI ZHENG
kaihuazheng@yahoo.com

2011

KIKI OCHIENG
akinyi.ochieng@gmail.com

2012

SALENA HESS
salenahess@outlook.com

JOHN VERGHESE
jjv2116@columbia.edu

ELIE GOLDMAN: "This fall, I began my dream job. It flows directly from what I began learning with Ms. Premand in Comparative Religion my senior year: peace. I am the peace teacher at Lafayette, DC's largest public elementary school. Peace—like art, music, and physical education—is a required class at Lafayette. I teach every 2nd through 5th grader (600 kids in total). The curriculum is called Peace of Mind. It centers on mindfulness, brain science, conflict resolution, and kindness. No grades, no tests in peace class—just focusing on better managing our emotions to create a kinder school and world. This work is why I became an educator, to help children manifest the perfection already within them. After school, I coach the Lafayette boys' basketball team (defending city champs, go Bears!), host trivia at Solly's Tavern with **Peter Bell**, compete for softball league championships with Ball Me Maybe, volunteer at an animal sanctuary, blog

about peace, and help high schoolers practice self-reflection for self-direction through InnerView Education, a start-up I co-founded. Please reach out if you are ever in DC and would like to observe a peace class. May peace be upon us all." (See photo at left.)

2013

CECILIA LAGUARDA
xenia.cecilia.laguarda@gmail.com

2015

EMILY MILLER
emillerusa@gmail.com

2023

Want to be a class representative?
Contact alumni@sidwell.edu.

IN MEMORIAM

Nancy Richards
Norment McCabe '46
December 5, 2023

Martin McMurray '48
July 13, 2023

Nancy Shields Bishop '52
October 25, 2023

Arleen Shapiro Tievsky '54
September 12, 2023

Carolyn Murphy Ahern '59
January 23, 2023

Theodore Thomas Noble '60
July 9, 2023

"Know one
another in that
which is *eternal*."

—GEORGE FOX

RETIRED/FORMER FACULTY & STAFF NOTES



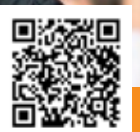
Lesley Younge, Jenni Voorhees, Lindsay McAuliffe, Angela Smith

CLASS ACTS

Four great friends and former Lower School colleagues: **Lesley Younge, Jenni Voorhees, Lindsay McAuliffe, and Angela Smith.** “We’re so happy to maintain our long friendships beyond Sidwell Friends. We’ve been partners, collaborators, mentors, learners, therapists, and sources of wisdom and laughter for one another. So, we continue on!”



Join us for Summer with Friends events in cities across the country! sidwell.edu/summerwithfriends



In Memoriam

Lucinda Goldman

February 25, 2024

Lucinda (Cindy) Goldman, a revered member of the faculty and administration for nearly four decades until her retirement in 2013, died on February 25, 2024. Over the years, Goldman taught nearly every math course the Upper School offered.

As a teacher, Goldman got to know her students both inside and outside of the classroom. “She would go to a basketball game of one of her students and the next day would excitedly tell everyone about how well the student had played,” says former Sidwell Friends math teacher Richard Brady P ’05. “She had a way of connecting with all of her students in the classroom—those who excelled as well as those who struggled.”

For many years Goldman served on the Admissions Committee and the Upper School Senior Projects Committee, which she also clerked. The latter was a helpful preparation for becoming academic dean, a role Goldman assumed in 1998. As academic dean, she supported multicultural education through the School Year Abroad program. This was especially close to Cindy’s heart as all three of her children, Daniel H. Goldman ’94, Margaret Goldman ’98, and Nicholas Goldman ’02, participated in it. After serving as dean for several years, she happily returned to the classroom as chair of the Upper School Math Department.

“Cindy Goldman was a pioneer for women teaching math at Sidwell and independent schools in general,” says Upper School Principal Mamadou Guèye. “I was impressed about how she was revered by female



students and their parents as a role model.” She also loved French culture and often hosted students from abroad. “Simply put,” says Guèye, “Cindy was the most welcoming, warm, open-minded, internationalist I have ever known at Sidwell Friends.”

Jon Mormino, a colleague in the Math Department, remembers her sense of perspective. “Whenever we debated a change or issue, she’d be the one to step back and help us see the big picture and the most important effects of a proposed change,” he says. “She was sensitive to the needs of students across the academic spectrum and reminded us when we neglected an important perspective.”

Upper School math teacher Margaret Black remembers Goldman’s *joie de vivre*: “One year, a few of us teaching 9th graders had a lot of issues with placement in our classes. After many difficult conversations with parents and students, many of which involved Cindy by our sides, we were worn out. Cindy surprised us one Friday and took us out to tea at the Four Seasons. For two hours, we didn’t talk about our classes or our students, but just enjoyed each other’s company. This thoughtful gesture on her part made it so much easier to come back and face it all on Monday.”

Donations in Goldman’s memory can be made to the ACLU.



Words with Friends: AI

ACROSS

- 1 Exhausts
- 5 "Hold on"
- 8 Note dispenser
- 11 Quarterback Newton
- 14 "Your concerns are valid"
- 16 Future PhD's test
- 17 In the past
- 18 Descriptor for someone who loves a tall yellow character on Sesame Street?
- 20 Perform like 11-Down
- 21 Last word
- 22 Belief system suffix
- 23 Game cube?
- 24 Milky Way contents
- 27 One who has their eyes on a certain tennis championship?
- 31 Snakelike fish
- 32 Reverberates
- 34 Salty expanse
- 35 Rodent that followed the Pied Piper
- 36 Cry of delight
- 37 Souvenirs
- 41 Quality that someone has when they look a gift in the mouth?
- 46 Take stock of
- 47 "More" suffix
- 48 Science educator (and Sidwell alum) Bill
- 49 Only character in "Snow White" who wears glasses
- 50 Tortilla chips topping
- 52 Squid squirt
- 53 With 62-Across, ChatGPT field of interest, or what each of the above phrases has had inserted into it
- 57 Record player inserts
- 59 Dude
- 60 Some musicians playby it
- 61 Word after launch or lily
- 62 Power unit?
- 63 See 52-Across
- 69 Oft-stubbed body part
- 70 Sneakily add to an email
- 71 Finish a piano recital
- 72 Historic stretch
- 73 "It was only okay"
- 74 Storm center
- 75 After the whistle



Puzzle by Aimee Lucido

DOWN

- 1 Fam figure
- 2 Feature of a poke bowl
- 3 Name that is a shortening of Margaret
- 4 Fencing sword
- 5 Renaissance composer William
- 6 Piece of fishing gear
- 7 Mac
- 8 Audibly stunned
- 9 Pregnancy divisions
- 10 Boyz II ____
- 11 See 20-Across
- 12 "Don't stop now!"
- 13 Wore one's pajamas all week, perhaps
- 15 Shampooing step
- 19 Ocho ____ (Jamaican resort town)
- 24 Casper competitor
- 25 They may streak mascara
- 26 Voices above tenors
- 27 "You're in trouble now!"
- 28 Little Italy neighbor
- 29 Revivalists, for short
- 30 Create
- 33 Jiminy Cricket, to Pinocchio
- 38 City south of Dallas
- 39 "Bye Bye Bye" band
- 40 Goes for
- 42 Type of movie knight
- 43 Starting from
- 44 Pirate-fighting org.
- 45 List on Facebook Marketplace
- 50 Father
- 51 "Birds of a feather flock together" for one
- 53 Banded rock
- 54 Buzz
- 55 Hypercompetitive sort
- 56 Studmuffin
- 58 Absolutely perfect
- 61 Diving position
- 63 Tech co. that developed the UPC
- 64 Telecom abbreviation also called 3.95G
- 65 Install, as carpeting
- 66 Court org.
- 67 No-frills bed
- 68 Type of sheep often used in rebuses to represent a letter

Outfoxed? Find the solution at sidwell.edu/wordswithfriends.

“The Undeniable Truth”

BY SAMARA WISE-ANISE '29

It feels unreal how we don't realize the lies,
hear the cries,
watch as time flies, and the earth begins to carbonize and slowly dies
and politicians demonize and jeopardize our futures

I watch as the harmony unravels, cacophenizing
few people realizing what things are being legalized and authorized
people being uncivilized towards each other,
When all we have is one another

will we ever recover from seeing happiness uncovered
and then smothered and people not being bothered by the blatant
destruction of humanity,

it's insanity that our society is undeniably disconnected
but somehow we are all connected to the Wi-Fi
not looking at what's going on outside.

We are becoming tongue-tied,
losing our pride,
hiding what's going on inside
Listening to the lies
and as time passes by we notice that the voices are always there but
some people just don't care, enough to listen

and with that I sigh
trying to think of an upside of all of the event going on worldwide
but in all honesty I'm utterly horrified with a world I had no part in
building

And absolutely terrified of the world it's becoming.

HER GENERATION

Social studies isn't just a look backward; it is also motivation to create a different future. During a 7th grade U.S. history class unit about resistance and freedom, **Samara Wise-Anise '29** felt moved to write a poem—both out of frustration and as a call to action. “I wrote the poem because I was frustrated about the things going on in the world,” she says. “Problems in the world created by adults are being left to my generation to fix.”

Sidwell Friends

3825 Wisconsin Avenue NW
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PI DAY!

On Pi Day, the Match Club had students testing their pi smarts for treats, and the cafeteria served up pies for dessert. Who says math isn't sweet? "Go SFS Math Club!!!"



GAO HONG

In a Middle School assembly, renowned composer and performer Gao Hong played the Chinese pipa. Hong later wrote: "Thank you so much for having me! 🙏🌸"



MATHCOUNTS

The MS MathCounts team had the formula for success at the state competition. "So proud of all of you ... encouragement from an SFS alumni parent and current grandparent!!" and "Mr. C!"



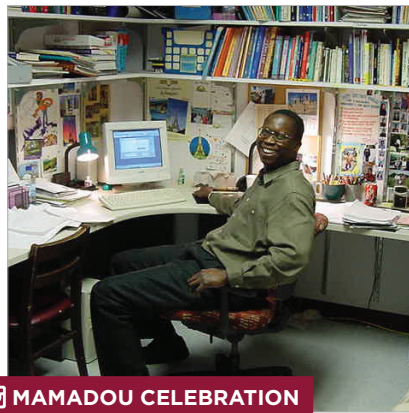
HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Around the World in a Day! 🌐 The Lower School's Heritage Festival celebrated the community's diversity with exhibits from Tibet, Ireland, Mexico, and more.



ECLIPSE MAGIC

Students in every division watched the sun and moon trip the light fantastic in a memorable celestial dance that took less than half an hour but generated lasting delight.



MAMADOU CELEBRATION

We celebrate 35 years of Mamadou Guèye's indefatigable spirit and dedication to Sidwell Friends. "One of the best men I've ever had the honor of working with!!! 🌸💖💖"