

Groton School

The Quarterly • Fall 2021

**Celebrating
More than
Five Decades of the
*Circle Voice***

PRIZE DAY 2021



When COVID protocols prevented singing indoors, Open Mic Night moved outdoors. Students sprawled across the Circle on a warm May evening, enjoying both the music and a spectacular sunset.





Groton School

The Quarterly

Fall 2021 • Volume LXXXII, No. 3

Full Circle

The *Circle Voice* began in 1969, and Groton's young journalists have been chronicling life on the Circle and beyond ever since.

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Prize Day 2021

This year's very special Prize Day will be remembered for its joy, exuberance, and careful pandemic protocols.

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Mitch Weiss

Message from the Headmaster

KEEPING SCHOOL in the midst of a pandemic is not something for which any of us were prepared. We were never required to study Pandemic Education 101 or Principles of Hybrid Teaching. And yet we learned. We learned that keeping school requires science, a gut feeling, heart, and a strong spine. It also requires acceptance that leadership is not a popularity contest.

The pandemic has made abundantly clear that it is the signal and not the noise that matters. In committing to a full year of in-person classes, we signaled the importance of real rather than imagined inclusion. As we adapted to the pandemic, we learned that we are stronger when we are together as a community than when we are individuals in our respective environments.

Acknowledging that exclusion is antithetical to the idea of an open Circle, we spared no effort to keep school open. That required not just financial resources, but also the commitment and understanding of our entire community, who rolled up their sleeves to do more, and then even more. Every student and employee lined up for weekly COVID-19 testing. To reduce density, we capped the number of students per class last year, asking faculty to teach one more class than usual. Inside the Circle, every member of our community worked together, understanding the importance of our numerous safety measures.

The pandemic underscored that students from diverse backgrounds do not have a level playing field—whether regarding access to the Internet or even a quiet place to learn remotely at home. Members of our community gave generously to support our local interventions, which included returning tuition dollars to families for terms spent off campus. We thank all of you for responding with your time, talent, and treasure in support of our efforts.

We thank you too for understanding why the open Circle we value suddenly became closed. Last year, we shuttered the

gates to all visitors, including parents, alumni, and trustees, all in the name of safety. This was not always easy: parents and students found themselves adjusting to a lack of direct access to each other; alumni lamented the postponement of reunions; and trustees adapted to the challenge of meeting virtually.

We deviated from Groton constants such as handshaking, sit-down dinners, all-school chapel, Parlor, Parents Weekend, and Reunion Weekend. Thankfully, we were able to have as close to normal an in-person Prize Day as possible. When faced with the occasional complaint, we focused on our priority—keeping school and doing so safely. Fortunately, due to a fully vaccinated campus, we are gradually bringing back many traditions this year.

Early in the pandemic, I asked our archivist and recently retired faculty member Doug Brown '57 what Endicott Peabody did during the influenza pandemic a century ago. He said: "The Rector locked the gates and kept the campus closed to outsiders. And he did not allow the students to go home for the holidays." We often speak of the similarities of Groton today and Groton at its founding—generally referring to the school's enduring core values. Who would have thought that a crisis handled by Rector Peabody would feel so familiar?

I cannot sufficiently thank Groton's faculty and staff, who had to do more than ever before to keep all of us safe, as well as parents, students, trustees, and alumni, who supported the school as they learned to live with and lean into discomfort and uncertainty themselves. *Cui servire est regnare.*

Temba Maqubela
Headmaster

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CORRECTIONS

The profile of Jonathan T. Erichsen '68 ("Scientific Vision," Spring 2021 *Groton School Quarterly*) erroneously stated that his scientific papers have been cited hundreds of times. They have been cited more than six thousand times.

The 1981 Groton boys crew did not lose to Shiplake in the first round of the Henley Regatta ("The Boys of '64," Spring 2021 *Groton School Quarterly*). The crew beat heavily favored Hampton School then lost to Shiplake in the second round.

GROTON ENVIROTHON TEAM #4 in All of U.S.

Groton's Envirothon team placed fourth in the national environmental science competition, a noteworthy accomplishment for a novice team among more experienced competitors.

Competing in the national competition for Groton were Amelia Lee '22, Alice Liu '23, Amy Ma '23, Aidan O'Connell '23, and Aisling O'Connell '21. Challenged to present a solution for nitrate contamination in groundwater, they faced forty-two teams, most representing U.S. states but also including three teams from China and four from Canada.

"Many of these teams had participated multiple times in the past," said Dr. **David Black '80**, environmental science teacher and Envirothon advisor. "Doing so well in the first year testifies to the effort that the Groton team put into

preparing for the event."

Envirothon challenges high school students to tackle pressing environmental issues facing their communities and the world, emphasizing "hands-on, team-oriented problem-solving and community involvement that prepares young people for environmental careers and active citizenship," according to massenvirothon.org.

"This achievement points to how relevant the study of the environment is at Groton and recognizes David Black for championing this important work for decades," said Headmaster Temba Maqubela.

The national competition included five tests and a virtual presentation; Groton's was entitled "Managing Nitrate Levels in BGMA." BGMA is the Bazile Groundwater Management Area,

continued on next page

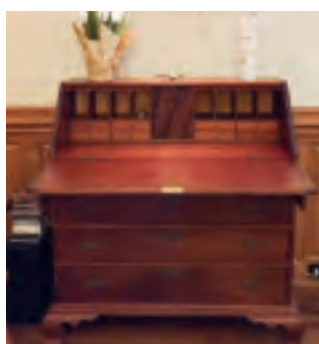
LETTERS

I REALLY enjoyed the extensive tribute to shopmaster Doug Brown in the spring issue of the *Quarterly*. I only wish I had known that you were collecting photos and stories from former students capturing the beauty of these treasured pieces, the hard work that went into building them, and the close relationships enjoyed with Mr. Brown along the way.

Mr. Brown was a one-of-a-kind faculty member at Groton. I remember him as having boundless energy and enthusiasm. He moved at a brisk pace and was all business in the shop. He maintained very high standards for students' work. Electric sanders were verboten. It was all hand planing and sanding and good, old-fashioned elbow grease. Students marveled at Mr. Brown's ability to come up with ingenious solutions to students' woodworking gaffes and miscalculations. He did so with a generous resolve and a dry wit.

While I am at it, I would like to dispute the assertion of Larry Chao '76 that he "was not great at" shop. I would venture that Larry and Ralph Giles '75 were two of the best from that mid-1970s era.

Brian Neligan '75



Brian Neligan's slant-top desk, built during Sixth Form

CONGRATULATIONS on your articles about Andy Reyes and Doug Brown.

I had the wonderful experiences of knowing Andy first as a student and then as a member of the faculty, and Doug Brown as a colleague and friend for twenty-six years.

In those days, long gone, chapel was four mornings a week. For over two decades I sat in the same pew with Doug, most years next to him. What most people don't know is that before the service began each morning, Doug was reading the Bible cover to cover. How many of us have read the entire Bible? I know that I have not accomplished that feat. I also had the opportunity

to see Doug in action building the school archives—a treasure for the school, thanks to his outstanding work.

As for the article about crew, in 1994, I had the privilege to be at the Henley Women's Regatta and witnessed the unexpected (to some) victories of the girls fours and eights crew. When I attended the awards ceremonies, unlike all of the other women's races, there were no cups to record their victories and to be a part of the HWR history. So with Bill Polk's blessing, I approached the HWR leadership and offered to find the funds necessary to create suitable cups for the girls' events. They accepted my offer. The cups were then created by

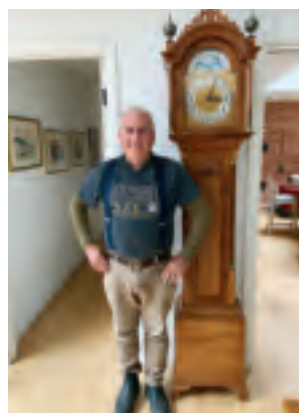
a silversmith in Henley, with Groton inscribed as the winner of each event. Sadly, the one thing you overlooked in the list of contributors was that my wife Jane (now deceased, and an honorary Groton School alumna) contributed 25 percent of the funds, as did Maureen Beck, Rogers Scudder, and I. The HWR gave us the naming rights, and I had the pleasure to present the newly created cups to the winners in 1995.

Richard Fox P'79 '81, GP'03, former faculty

I VERY much enjoyed the recent tribute in the [Spring] *Quarterly*. My work in the wood shop remains one of the most pure and positive experiences of my life, which I shall always treasure.

This clock (left) has been with me since 1980 and is on the Pacific Coast at Muir Beach, California. I believe it was the first clock made at the school. Of course, it hasn't kept time in decades, and probably fifteen years ago one of my children managed to lose the cabinet key inside it so we can't open it!

David Taylor '80



David Taylor, keeping time

an area in Nebraska known for high nitrate contamination. Envirothon, a program of the National Conservation Foundation, was hosted this year by the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts.

Placing first was a team from New York, followed by teams from North Carolina and South Carolina. The Groton team qualified for nationals by outperforming Massachusetts teams in May, with a presentation on the Nashua River.

Amy Ma '23 and Amelia Pottash '23 assembled and led Groton's Envirothon team, under the guidance of Dr. Black. In addition to the students who competed nationally, Wally Capen '22, Georgia Gund '23, Robin Huntington '22, and Aryan Mago '24 helped the team to its state title.

At the Massachusetts level, students were scored on a natural resource challenge and a current issue, submitting video presentations for each. Will Snyder of the Massachusetts Envirothon Steering Committee called Groton's contestants "a tenacious and creative team."

For the Natural Resource Challenge, competitors assessed a fictional proposal for a school built on woodlands and wetlands, using geographic information system (GIS) mapping and addressing questions about soil, the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, carbon sequestration, drinking water regulations, and wildlife.

For the current issue challenge—this year, Water Resource Management and Climate Change—teams focused on something in their backyard, in Groton's case, the Nashua River.

Envirothon encourages students to engage with people from varying perspectives, such as professionals at state and federal agencies, in local government, and at NGOs and corporations. Groton's team tackled the topics of drought, manganese, and stormwater infrastructure, interviewing experts from the Town of Groton Water Department, the Groton Stormwater Advisory Committee, the Massachusetts River Alliance, the National River Watershed Association, and the Wild and



National competitors: Aisling O'Connell '21, Amy Ma '23, Amelia Lee '22, Alice Liu '23, and Aidan O'Connell '23, with advisor David Black '80

Scenic Rivers Committee.

Dr. Black said that the students' efforts and approach earned praise not only from the competition's judges, but also from the people in the Town of Groton whom they interviewed. "Groton's first entry into the Envirothon competition was the result of significant student initiative and diligent effort to learn a challenging body of material and to develop presentations that accurately reflected that knowledge," he said.

The young scientists had a great time with the

enviro-challenge. "Not only did we have a lot of fun learning about the intricacies of environmental science and policy as a team," said Amy, "but we also enjoyed hearing the varying perspectives and solutions of students who are equally passionate about environmental issues such as groundwater contamination."

Groton's environmentalists are already assessing their performance and looking forward to qualifying for next year's national competition, in Ohio.

GROTON AWARDS Recognize Distinguished Alumni



Groton School presented its highest alumni honors—the *Cui Servire Est Regnare* Award and the Distinguished Grotonian Award—at a virtual ceremony Wednesday, May 12.

The event, a placeholder until reunion can resume in person (June 10–12, 2022), honored *Cui Servire* winner **Marichal**

B. Monts '81, founder of the Citadel of Love church in Hartford, Connecticut, and Distinguished Grotonian **Joseph B. Cheshire V '66**, an esteemed attorney and civil rights advocate. Headmaster Temba Maqubela presented the awards and shared highlights of the awardees' inspirational life stories.

Mr. Monts provided a lifeline to his community, hard hit by the pandemic, when his church and two others fed the hungry, many of whom had lost employment due to shutdowns. Volunteers handed out some 15,000 meals.

Mr. Cheshire has been instrumental in cases that exonerated wrongly accused death row inmates, has written and lectured throughout the U.S. on criminal law and ethics, and served with a group in his home state of North Carolina that led to establishing the Indigent Defense Services Commission, which ensures legal

representation for all.

He experienced a pivotal moment when then Headmaster Jack Crocker invited Martin Luther King Jr. to visit the Circle in 1963 and arranged a one-on-one meeting between promising young Joe and Dr. King. The meeting inspired a life of civil rights advocacy and led to his career in law.

The *Cui Servire Est Regnare* Award honors a graduate who embodies the school's ethos of service, while the Distinguished Grotonian recognizes a lifetime of work that reflects the essential values of the school.

The May presentation, hosted by Groton School Alumni Association President **Merrill Stubbs Dorman '95**, also included remarks by Board of Trustees President **Ben Pyne '77, P'12, '15** and Groton Fund President **Crista Herbert Gannon '81, P'11**. The Reverend **Alan McLean '51** delivered a blessing.

"SHE ALTERED TRAJECTORIES"

The Wanda C. Hill House, the first Groton location named for a person of color, was dedicated September 19 with Ms. Hill present. Family, friends, residents of the new faculty housing, and adults who benefited from Ms. Hill's Project Match gathered to celebrate her life accomplishments.

Project Match helped hundreds of children of color attend boarding schools. "While 475 students went through her Project Match program, it doesn't come close to recognizing the thousands of students she impacted directly and indirectly as well as the generational effect of her work," said Ms. Hill's son, Groton School Board of Trustees Vice President **Gary Hill '83**. "She altered trajectories."

He added that while Ms. Hill worked with more than eighty schools, "Groton has always been her boarding school 'home' and having her name connected to Groton School in physical form in perpetuity is truly special." Ms. Hill was a Groton School trustee from 1990–2002, and her son, **Stephen Hill '80**, was on the board from 2005–17.

"Project March," said Stephen, "did nothing less than break the cycle of poverty in hundreds of families."

Right, with Wanda Hill are Stephen Hill '80, Yvette Ross Kane '93, Thomas Jones '86, Gary Hill '83, Nii-Ama Akuete '96, and Kevin Griffith '80, a current trustee. Below: the Maqubelas unveiling the plaque on the Wanda C. Hill House, and the faculty residence's exuberant namesake.

Adam Richins



FACULTY RETREAT Focuses on Inclusion in the Classroom

Eighteen teachers representing all of Groton's academic departments spent the week of July 19 discussing inclusion in the classroom and sharing ideas for equalizing the student experience.

Members of the Curricular Working Group and the Residential Working Group held an on-campus retreat, covering topics from inclusive pedagogy and equity in grading to gender inclusion in the classroom and how to facilitate conversations about race.

After a welcome from Headmaster Temba Maqubela, faculty members shared what Director of Diversity and Inclusion Sravani Sen-Das called "cultural identifiers that

marked our journey."

For example, Ms. Sen-Das, who organized the retreat, described her British education in India and the realization that she "hadn't encountered anyone in my books who was anything like me... and did not have the lens through which to look at my country and my life." Groton students' similar stories made her realize: "Belonging just doesn't happen, it has to be deliberate and intentional."

The following days of the retreat focused on "Inclusive Pedagogy," "Courageous Conversations," "Equity and Assessments," and reflection. Throughout the retreat, teachers offered presentations—on topics

including concrete steps to make students feel included, how to handle controversial subject matter, how to make all students comfortable approaching teachers for extra help, and how to give and receive feedback.

The look at assessments brought up questions about grading class participation. "Does that allow for all learners and learning styles? Are introverts equally validated or recognized?" asked Ms. Sen-Das.

Other presentations included: Classics teacher Amy Martin-Nelson on equity in the classroom; Chinese teacher Shannon Jin on racial language barriers; English teacher Gareth Hadyk-DeLodder on gender-inclusive curricula; history teacher Eric Spierer on interdisciplinary teaching; Academic Dean Kathy Leggat on assessing culturally responsive teaching; Ms. Sen-Das on metacognition; Classics teacher Mary Frances Bannard on self-care for teachers; and science teacher Nathan Lamarre-Vincent on the self-examination needed to cultivate an inclusive classroom.

The relaxing weeks of summer freed people to think and brainstorm. The voluntary retreat capitalized on the expertise of faculty members who have been doing individual training and professional development related to inclusion. Said Ms. Sen-Das: "Faculty across departments are eager to collaborate."

A summer retreat: the Curricular Working Group and the Residential Working Group



Christopher Temerson

GROTON WELCOMES New Trustees

Groton School has welcomed three new members to its Board of Trustees — **Kun Deng P'20, '24** of Princeton, New Jersey; **Kevin M. Griffith '80** of Chicago; and **Allison Chin Hays '03** of San Francisco. The new trustees bring career expertise important to a successful board, the uniquely helpful insights of alumni and parents, and a deep dedication to Groton.

Mr. Deng, the new president of Groton's Parents' Association, is a managing director at Lazard Asset Management LLC; he currently serves on the board of directors at the Peking University Education Foundation and formerly was an advisory board member at the World Policy Institute. Mr. Deng holds master's degrees from Peking University and Columbia University. He and his wife, Jen, are parents of a Groton graduate and a current student and have been Groton School Parent Fund volunteers since 2016.

Mr. Griffith is the founder and president of Glenmore Capital Group, a firm focused on investing in and growing lower middle market businesses. He holds an MBA from Stanford University and a bachelor's in economics from Yale University. A standout in boys crew at Groton, Mr. Griffith was inducted into Groton's Athletic Hall of Fame in 2014.

Mrs. Hays is managing director at The Riverside Company, a global private equity firm. She earned an MBA from Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business and a bachelor of arts from Bowdoin College. Prior to Riverside, she was an executive director in the Private Funds Group at UBS Investment Bank, a research analyst at Venespie Capital, and an investment banker at Cowen and Company.

In addition to the three new trustees, **Grace Song Park '86, P'19, '21**, former head of the Parents' Association, has ended her ex officio status but will

continue her tenure on the board. The parent of three children, including two Groton graduates, Dr. Park holds degrees from University of Chicago's Pritzker School of Medicine, Harvard's School of Public Health, and Brown University. She chaired Groton's Parent Fund from 2017–21 and was vice-chair of the Fund from 2016–17.

Groton School welcomed four new trustees in 2020 as well: **Ellen Curtis Boiselle '85** of Boston; **Crista Herbert Gannon '81, P'11** of Wilmington, Vermont; **David Porter '72, P'20, '24** of Fort Worth, Texas; and **Alfred Winkler '85, P'23** of Hempstead, New York.

Dr. Boiselle is associate director of the Learning Disabilities Program at Boston Children's Hospital; she holds a PhD from Tufts University, a master's from Columbia, and a bachelor's from Yale. She also serves on Angell Animal Medical Center's advisory council.

Ms. Gannon, a former longtime marketing manager for IBM, holds a bachelor's from University of North Carolina/Chapel Hill; she chairs the Southwestern Vermont Medical Center's regional advisory board. Ms. Gannon is president of the Groton Fund.

Mr. Porter, founder and president of the PNL Companies in Dallas, a real estate investment firm, holds an MBA and AB from Harvard and a master's from Northeastern University. He also serves as a trustee for the Amon Carter Museum and the STAR Sponsorship Program.

Dr. Winkler is chief of urology at NewYork-Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital and Lower Manhattan Hospital. An assistant professor of clinical urology at Weill Cornell Medicine, Dr. Winkler earned his MD at SUNY Stony Brook School of Medicine, an MBA at NYU's Stern School of Business, and an AB from Princeton.



Kun Deng P'20, '24



Kevin Griffith '80



Allison Chin Hays '03



LIBRARY, ART DEPARTMENT Choose Bookplate Winner

Congratulations to **Zoe Park '21**, who won the Groton School library's annual bookplate contest. Each year, the McCormick Library and the Art Department co-sponsor the competition, asking Sixth Form artists to design a bookplate for the upcoming year.

Bookplates identify books as part of a library's collection, and Zoe's winning entry will appear on the inside cover of each of the library's book purchases during the 2021–22 school year.

Her design, inspired by the Schoolhouse's entrance, showcases her printmaking skills, while also reflecting her creativity and sense of whimsy. "I wanted to capture somewhere on campus that I appreciate, but that I didn't think many stopped to look at," Zoe said. Sparked by her winter term Archaeology class, she began to see Greek influences around campus, including on the Schoolhouse entrance.

"I didn't really notice the details of the entrance of the Schoolhouse until the end of the winter, but once I did, I realized how intricate and beautiful it is," she said. She also considered a bookshelf essential to a design for the library, and she filled it as she would one of her own. "No bookshelf of mine is complete without little tchotchkes, especially animal tchotchkes," she said.

Librarian Mark Melchior and art teacher Jennifer Ho began the annual bookplate contest in 2019. The inaugural winner was **Sophie Park '19**, Zoe's sister. **John Donovan '20** won last year's contest. All three framed originals are on display in the library.

Zoe said she was excited to be chosen to design the bookplate for two reasons: "The first, I love any excuse for printmaking. The second, my sister created the first bookplate her senior year, so now it's a limited Park tradition, and as we know, Groton loves traditions."



Christopher Temerson

PREFECTS' "BOLD LEADERSHIP" Brings Chapel Outdoors

To uphold tradition, Groton School broke with tradition on September 14 and held the opening chapel service—gathering the full community—outdoors.

Originally, the plan had been to hold chapel virtually at the beginning of school rather than gather a large group inside. It was an extra dose of COVID-related caution in a fully vaccinated community.

But the senior prefects were determined to preserve as many traditions as possible despite strict pandemic protocols. "We were discussing how important chapel talks were to us and how important it is that the whole school is at weekday chapels because these services are essential to our Groton

experience," said Senior Prefect Maya Varkey '22. "We knew that Prize Day had been outside and had been able to have a lot of people, so we thought we should consider moving chapel outside."

Senior Prefect Anthony Wright '22 agreed. "We felt like this was a great way to bring back chapel in person and still continue to be safe on campus," he said.

They took their idea to Associate Head Andy Anderson, who brought it to Headmaster Temba Maqubela. "In less than twenty-four hours, all pitched in to make for a wonderful opening chapel," Mr. Maqubela said. Chaplain Allison Read and other speakers were on the Webb Marshall Room's

terrace, behind the Dining Hall, with students and faculty on the terrace, the lawn, and in two tents.

"Since we could not gather inside the chapel as a full community, your four senior prefects asked that we experiment with this new format. Hence this pivot to outside chapel," he said. "This is an exemplar of risk-taking and bold leadership."

School opened this year without remote learning; students were required to be fully vaccinated, to provide a negative pre-arrival test for COVID-19, and to test upon arrival.

The headmaster likened the senior prefects' "determination and resolve to keep us together" to the essence of *Ubuntu*, a term used in his native South Africa that refers loosely to an ethical code for humanity. "You are because I am, and I am because you are, and our humanity and togetherness are inextricably linked to one another," he said, explaining the concept. "This is the year when we focus like a laser on *Ubuntu*—our common humanity. Togetherness, school spirit, and unity."

During the opening chapel talk, the headmaster also read from the letter he wrote to President Biden, asking for his contribution to Groton's collection of letters from American presidents.

He concluded with advice for students: "While we do not encourage you to take risks when it comes to safety, health, and wellness, do take risks in the classroom, on the athletic fields, singing and playing music, or trying out for a part in theater. Don't dwell on the errors; take corrective action," he said. "Taking risks and making mistakes are critical parts of the learning process."



Gail Friedman

BLAST-OFF! Groton School Rocketry Club Competed in Nationals

Groton's Rocketry Club blasted its way to the national competition in The American Rocketry Challenge (TARC), the world's largest student rocket contest.

A team of eight students, led by Samuel Winkler '23, met regularly to design, build, and test rockets, aiming to launch them high enough and fast enough to qualify for TARC. The rockets also were required to transport a raw egg and land with it unbroken.

After two successful qualifying launches, the Groton team headed to nationals on June 12 in Syracuse, New York, one of eleven U.S. locations. Groton's Rocketry Club was among one hundred teams from twenty-seven states and the U.S. Virgin Islands that were chosen from among 615 competitors; Groton placed sixty-eighth nationally.

To qualify for nationals, teams had to launch rockets to about eight hundred feet that returned to earth in forty to forty-three seconds. At the national competition, the team was required to fly twice, once at 775 feet for thirty-nine to forty-two seconds and once at 825 feet for forty-one to forty-four seconds.

So how can a rocket shoot nearly eight hundred feet in the air, carry a raw egg, and land safely without it cracking? Jack Sperling '22, who studied virtually during the 2020–21 school year, was up to the challenge. "Being remote made collaboration with others in Rocket Club difficult," he said, "but when they needed to create a reusable egg carrier for the rocket, I knew I could design something." Summoning his experience with 3D printing, Jack used a semi-flexible filament to print a reusable device to cushion the egg inside the rocket.

Congratulations to Sam and Jack, as well as fellow rocketeers Elyse Cabrera '22, Jasmine Garcia '22, Robert Hong '23, Robin Huntington '22, Mei Matsui '23, and Lidia Spada '22—and to chemistry teacher Dr. Sandra Kelly, who ably guided the team.

LITHIUM-ION BATTERY Reduces Carbon Footprint

It was a hot summer, which meant that Groton's **John B. Goodenough '40** Solar Battery Farm was busy easing the burden on the region's electric supply.

When people crank up their air conditioners and strain the grid, the school's lithium-ion batteries can release extra power. The Groton Electric Light Department (GELD) tells Groton School when peaks are expected. Our batteries supplied power on seventeen days between May and August, keeping GELD from reaching peak usage that can require backup from dirty diesel generators.

The batteries, designed to recharge overnight when demand (and electric rates) are low, reduces the carbon footprint of the school, the town of Groton, and New England by releasing energy to the campus when it is most needed. Just twelve peak hours a year—one each month—account for more than a third of the town's electrical transmission costs, said GELD General Manager Kevin Kelly.



Christopher Temerson

Lithium-ion battery during installation

"When you can discharge the battery during one of those twelve peak hours, it substantially lowers costs."

The John B. Goodenough '40 Solar Battery Farm is named for the alumnus and Nobel Prize winner who pioneered the science behind the lithium-ion battery.



Adam Richins

Husayn Ladha '24 and, right, Kritka Aryal '24 and Daisy Adinkrah '24

ANOTHER RECORD-BREAKING Summer for GRACE

Forty-seven rising Fourth Formers spent four weeks on the Circle this summer for the GRACE summer program, the largest group since the program's start in 2016, with the exception of last summer's fully remote program, which attracted fifty-six.

GRACE is designed to propel students to advanced courses and fill

preparation gaps during the summer before Upper School. Most GRACE Scholars take two courses, choosing among math, chemistry, English, and Latin. Besides several hours a day of classroom learning, students enjoy relaxing afternoon activities on campus and weekend excursions such as ziplining and whitewater rafting.

All GRACE classes are led by Groton School faculty, and this summer's teachers included Headmaster Temba Maqubela, who taught chemistry, and Vuyelwa Maqubela, who taught English. The seven teaching assistants were all Groton graduates: three from 2021 and four from 2020; four of the seven were GRACE Scholars themselves.

GROTON DEBATE CHAMP Qualifies for World Competition

Groton's Debating Society reached an important milestone at a September debate tournament hosted by Roxbury Latin School.

By placing first in the individual speakers category, Society co-president Steven Pang '22 qualified for the world championship, clinching that opportunity for a Groton debater for the second year in a row. Last year, Jiacheng Kang '22 competed in the World

Individual Debating and Public Speaking Championship.

Previously, a Groton student had not qualified for about fifteen years: **Stephen McCarthy '06** competed in the 2005 World championship in Cyprus, and **Sebastian Osborn '06** competed in Worlds in Connecticut. The 2021 competition, hosted by South Korea, was held virtually; the 2022 championship is scheduled for Lithuania.



Jiacheng competed globally in 2021; Steven heads to Worlds this year.



Perfect scorers (top) Brianna Zhang '23, Eric Ge '24, Max Fan '25, (bottom) Tzion Shamsu '24, and Bridget McAvo '24

CLASSICS SCHOLARS Earn Honors on National Exams in Latin, Greek

Groton's young Classicists excelled once again this year on the National Latin Exam, with 84 percent of the 135 students who took the exam receiving honors. Likewise, of eleven Groton students taking the national exam in Ancient Greek, nine earned accolades.

On the Latin exam, 35 percent earned *summa cum laude* distinction for a gold medal, 28 percent scored *maxima cum laude* for a silver medal, 15 percent *magna cum laude*, and 6 percent *cum laude*.

Five students had perfect scores: Eric Ge '24, Max Fan '25, Bridget McAvo '24, Tzion Shamsu '24, and Brianna Zhang '23.



A SPECIAL WEEK for Sixth Formers

Even before Prize Day, Sixth Formers had a most unusual end to the 2020–21 school year.

To help with pandemic protocols, the end-of-year schedule changed: to reduce density at Prize Day, Second through Fifth Formers left campus on June 2, four days before Sixth Formers graduated. That left time for some extra Sixth Form fun.

Right after Baccalaureate on Tuesday, June 1, while underformers were packing, the Sixth Form headed out on a Boston Harbor cruise. The following night, they took over nearby lanes for a bowling party. Thursday was spent

on campus, with the pool open in the afternoon and the traditional Sixth Form-faculty dinner that evening, followed by a casino night. On Friday night, the Circle had a carnival atmosphere, with giant video games on the grass, bonfires on the Dining Hall patio, and students lined up for a fried dough vendor. Finally, on Saturday, after watching the virtual athletic and underformers' awards ceremony, the soon-to-be graduates had their own Sixth Form formal.

Nothing, of course, compared to Prize Day itself, but Sixth Formers made the most of a few days when they had the Circle to themselves.



Christopher Temerson

WELCOMING NEW FAMILIES to "A Place of Belonging"

"This is a place of belonging, from the moment your children set foot here."

With that simple sentiment, Headmaster Temba Maqubela summed up Groton's role as an oasis in an uncertain world, as he welcomed new families to campus on September 11.

He then went on to explain four longstanding pillars of the Groton experience—service, scholarship, spirituality, and globalism—noting how they continue to resonate today. The pillar of service plays out constantly in a community that is fully vaccinated, working

together to protect—and thus to serve—one another.

Scholarship, integral to Groton's mission, depends on dedicated teachers. "They are truly essential workers," he said of Groton's faculty.

The pillar of globalism was front and center as school opened, with students arriving from around the world, from Botswana to Beijing, New York to Costa Rica—many having to struggle through various countries' pandemic protocols to get to Groton. Their determination, said the headmaster, points to our connectedness in the global

village that is Groton School.

Finally, spirituality was exemplified in an opening moment of silence, honoring the lives lost twenty years before, on September 11, 2001. Breaking the silence, Mr. Maqubela named two of his former students at Phillips Andover, Stacey Sanders and Todd Isaac. "Your children never leave us," he said, capping the solemn introduction.

Mr. Maqubela's talk celebrated the mere fact that parents were gathered before him. A primary lesson from the pandemic, he said, is that education flourishes in person. "Kids do

well when they're together," he said. Indeed, COVID precautions made in-person learning possible: students submitted negative results from PCR tests for COVID-19 before returning to campus and were retested upon arrival. Most new students arrived on September 11, but arrival was staggered throughout the week as preseason athletes, Sixth Formers, and other groups arrived early.

Before bidding parents farewell, the headmaster warned that students might become homesick, but that they would settle into their new home soon enough. In the interim, rather than frequent video chats, he suggested an old-fashioned approach: "Write letters reassuring them of their place in their home and in your heart."

He also reminded parents of the exceptional gift of a Groton education. "You're one of the 9 percent," he said, referring to Groton's acceptance rate. "I can assure you, of all the gifts you are going to give, this is probably one of the top gifts they will ever have, because this is a place of tradition but also a place of dynamism."

SCIENCE FACULTY Lead Circle Book Club Discussion on *Under a White Sky*

On May 20, alumni and science faculty gathered on Zoom to discuss Groton's second Circle Book Club selection, Elizabeth Kolbert's recently published *Under a White Sky: The Nature of the Future*.

Groton science faculty **David Black '80, P'10, '12**, Ali Hamlin, and Nathan Lamarre-Vincent kicked off the conversation about the Earth, its future, and students' environmental education. Dr. Black said he has seen students' interest in the environment shift during his thirty-two years teaching at Groton. "The biggest change has been technology, and the fact that we can now do levels of analysis that were completely impossible when I began teaching," he said. "Over three decades of teaching, I have

come to realize that I want to only teach in an inquiry-based way, based on research, data collection, and huge amounts of time in the field—focused on problem-solving."

Ms. Hamlin, who teaches Chemistry and Second Form Science, covers environmental science and global warming with her Second Form students, who discuss possible solutions to some of the issues Ms. Kolbert documented in her book. Dr. Lamarre-Vincent said that these environmental issues come up in his Honors Chemistry class, when he covers thermodynamics by analyzing sequential snapshots of the temperature anomalies, globally, since the 1950s.

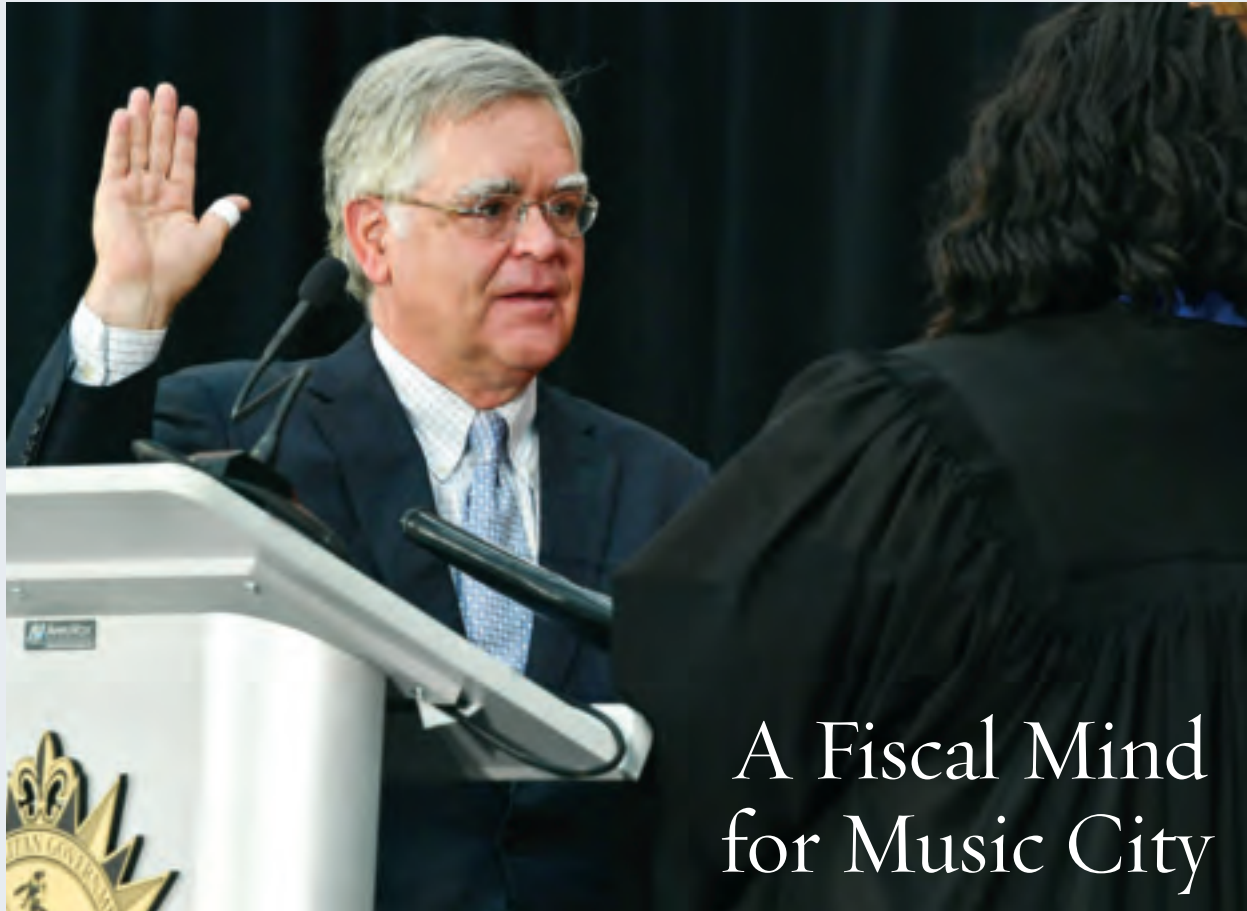


Small group discussions tackled questions such as: When we talk about nature and the natural world, what are we really talking about at this point in the history of our planet? Does Kolbert present

an optimistic picture of the possibilities of innovation to protect the planet? How do you stay optimistic in the face of the new claims of environmental degradation?

Several alumni who joined the discussion have pursued careers as science teachers, inspired by Dr. Black's teaching, as well that of other members of the science faculty.

John Cooper '74



A Fiscal Mind for Music City

Mayor John Cooper, being sworn in as mayor of Nashville

The mayor of Nashville, Tennessee, has a small secret tucked inside his wedding band. Any Grotonian would understand it immediately.

When he married his wife Laura, twenty-four years ago, **John Cooper '74** chose to have four words carved inside his ring: *Cui servire est regnare*.

The engraving of Groton School's motto captures the mayor's commitment to service, as well as his love of Latin and the influence of the school where he found family a year after the death of his father.

Prentice Cooper was governor of Tennessee more than a decade before his son John was born. The Nashville mayor brushes aside the notion of a family political dynasty, but acknowledges that he and his brother, longtime Tennessee Congressman Jim Cooper '72, did have "a role model for service and to

some extent maybe a family identity with politics. That identity," said John, "was hugely reinforced by Groton."

The mayor actually views his public service as a tribute to his Groton teachers. "How do you ever repay the debt that you have to those hardworking, interesting people—all of those teachers who worked so hard for you?" he asked. "Any act of public service is repaying that debt. All the work and patience they put into you—you have to pay it forward."

Today, after a career in finance and business, John might find himself at economic development summits, press conferences, country music festivals, or a multitude of neighborhood meetings. The legacy he hopes for: to build a city of opportunity that people will be grateful to call home.

Nashville, a growing metropolis now similar in size to

Boston and Denver, with high scores on a variety of livability rankings, is the envy of many cities. John, who owns businesses and was a former vice president at Shearson Lehman Brothers in New York, ties a successful city to a balanced budget. “I used to be dinged by people saying, ‘You should talk about values, not about money.’ But you have to have money to accomplish the work,” he said. “My financial background has been the strongest asset I could bring to the city.”

That background helps when John is luring businesses, and jobs, to Nashville. One recent coup: Oracle’s new billion-dollar campus, which is “bringing Silicon Valley to the South.” Under John’s leadership, the city did not offer the kinds of incentives that other cities routinely give

a city remained ever-present this past year, as Nashville seemed to bounce from one crisis to the next. The sixth costliest tornado in U.S. history hit Nashville in March 2020. In May of that year, portions of Nashville’s historic courthouse and city hall were burned during otherwise peaceful protests that followed the killing of George Floyd. “The arsonists were not protesters. They were more consistent with the January 6 crowd than with Black Lives Matter,” John said, adding, “They were all turned into the police by their neighbors.”

While Nashville leans liberal—a blue island in the red sea of Tennessee—it is politically diverse, and “a Trump element” tried unsuccessfully to recall the mayor. John estimates that 25,000 Nashville residents believe in QAnon.

Even less popular than the COVID shutdown was a property tax hike to fund essential services. Well before the pandemic, the city was facing a long-brewing financial crisis. The solution under John’s watch: a one-year property tax rate hike, an especially difficult move for constituents to swallow during the pandemic. “The city has now gotten onto sound financial footing,” he said, “and has the lowest tax rate of any city in Tennessee, which is a very low-tax state.”

For John, governing through crisis is more exhilarating than exhausting. “It’s actually quite inspiring to lead a city in a crisis because you mostly see people at their best when times are at their worst,” he said. “What wears you out is when government and politics get petty and small. The bigger stuff of how we get through a flood or a tor-

» “It’s actually quite inspiring to lead a city in a crisis because you mostly see people at their best when times are at their worst.”

away. Instead, it relied on Nashville’s vibrant culture and educated citizens. “Cities often compete against each other by offering incentive subsidies in a vicious cycle,” he said. “Nashville’s tool is our workforce. Companies will come to you if you have the workforce and the employee retention. Incentives pale next to workforce.”

In Nashville, the buck stops at John: the city government is responsible for everything from electric and water utilities, public health, and education to airports, housing, public safety, and \$5 billion of construction permits a year. In Nashville, the mayor is also the county executive, an unusual system in the U.S. that creates a leader with broad authority. Some mayors of even large cities have less influence, John explained, due to governing structures that grant more power to city managers or city councils.

The routine challenges of running

On Christmas Day of 2020, national news fixated on a bombing that destroyed a historic part of downtown Nashville. Amidst all the crises was the persistent and politically charged handling of COVID. John held more than one hundred televised emergency press conferences in one year—most of them about COVID—so many that people now routinely say they recognize John just by his voice. His shutdown of non-essential businesses was not popular; in fact, frustrated bar owners placed sarcastic stickers on empty bar stools that read, “Reserved for Mayor Cooper.” He ignored opposition to a mask mandate and followed the guidance from Vanderbilt University in Nashville. “Vanderbilt predicted that a mask mandate would cut the mortality rate in half,” he said. “We did a mask mandate, and we have half the mortality rate of cities that didn’t have the mandate.”

nado or a Christmas Day bombing—that is more inspiring. It’s energizing.”

Among the mayor’s non-crisis priorities is the lack of affordable housing—an intractable problem in Nashville and many other cities. He says the state of Tennessee has restricted what cities can do to address the problem. Still, John presses to change the culture within the development community—which has invested more than \$20 billion in new construction in Nashville over the past five years. “You have to change the development community’s expectation to be that every project will have an affordable housing component,” he said. “Cities have a lot of discretionary power. Are we going to build this street? Are we going to put in this sewer? We will want to help you if you are tackling the affordable housing problem.” This, John admitted, remains a work in progress.



The mayor tours areas devastated by a tornado. Right: Once a month John, who has four dogs of his own, brings a canine companion who needs a home to his office. Here, he spends the day with future adoptee "Goose."

The mayor often finds himself defending ideals that would be unwelcome in "redder" parts of the state. He led Nashville's government and board of education to sue the state over a school voucher law that would have given students \$7,000 for private or parochial school tuition, funds that otherwise would be in the public schools' budget. "Vouchers respond to a political itch on one party's wing, with critical funding for all our public schools put at risk," he said.

When explaining his work, John often turns professorial. He mentions his Groton history teacher, Acosta "Corky" Nichols, more than once as he explains the nation's shift from an industrial economy to a service economy to today's digital economy. "The digital economy is creating more inequality than even the industrial economy of the late nineteenth century did," he said. "Now we have to create the tools to make the digital economy serve people."

John laments that city government is typically ignored in high school history classes, especially as "failure at higher levels of government has pushed down responsibilities onto the cities." Cities today are both first responders and the last resort for transportation, housing, and other

mammoth issues.

The mayor's love of history began at Groton. John adored life on the Circle. "I completely loved it. It was a deep influence on me," he said. For one thing, his Classics education was formative. "The Classics are so underestimated in culture. You have contact with a culture stranger than any modern civilization, and yet it is fundamental to the founders and the founding of the U.S. You have to understand Rome to understand how the founders thought. Washington's favorite influence was Cato and John Adams' was Cicero. In the hands of [Groton teachers] Hugh Sackett, Melvin Mansour, Robert Gula, Norris Getty, or Warren Myers, the Classical world came alive. We won't have anything so interesting to study until we find interstellar space cultures. The Classics are a powerful way of understanding another culture."

Many people in Tennessee know little about Groton and naturally have doubts about exclusive New England high schools and colleges. John sometimes offers the viewpoint that Groton was "a church high school where FDR went," quieting any brewing accusation that a Harvard- and Groton-educated man might not relate to his constituents. Referring to Groton as a church school is not

a stretch: the chapel component had enormous impact on John.

"Having ethics and ideals as an instructional product is so important both for the individuals and for the country," he said. "Having that Chapel, having an expectation of service to others—*Cui servire est regnare*."

Which brings us back to that wedding band. The mayor has thought a lot about the school motto. "This is what you should write about—where the motto came from," he urged. He wants Grotonians to know that the school motto was originally in English, from the Elizabethan Book of Common Prayer—"In Whose service is perfect freedom"—and Endicott Peabody used a "cryptic Latin adaptation," which was quite the rage in late nineteenth-century England. "You weren't prestigious unless you had a Latin motto," John said.

The "Cui" or "Whose" refers to God and thus should always be capitalized, he goes on. And the wedding band? "Marriage is also a service role, which is also freedom," he explained. "Service and freedom are not incompatible and are essential to each other."

—Gail Friedman

Irene Jay Liu '98

The Accidental Pulitzer Finalist



Irene Jay Liu '98 was supposed to be pre-med. At least that was the plan. She excelled in math and science at Groton, and was on her way toward a medical future after her Yale graduation.

But there was this project she found riveting: Right there in New Haven, Connecticut, a hospital was going after poor, uninsured patients for medical debt—to the extent that many faced bankruptcy and had liens taken on their homes.

Irene and her classmates took note. “We were a bunch of kids, but we were saying, ‘Hey, this is really wrong. This is an issue,’” she recalled. They were right: hospitals are obligated to provide care to the indigent to retain their nonprofit status. So the students decided to take action.

Unable to get a response from the hospital, Irene took the evidence she had collected to the editor of the *New Haven Advocate*, the city’s alternative newspaper, which published a story and drew the attention of a large

health-care union. “The next thing we knew, the story was picked up by the *Wall Street Journal*. The whole thing blew up, and suddenly there was a class-action suit on behalf of these patients, and eventually the hospital granted amnesty on their debts.”

When Yale graduation came, Irene decided not to apply to medical schools. She’d gotten a taste of health care as a trained Emergency Medical Technician, but she also had sampled what journalism could do.

Now head of the Google News Lab for the Asia-Pacific region, Irene develops partnerships and programs for newsroom innovation. After Yale, she attended the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, focusing on the investigative track, and then had an internship that bridged her journalistic and medical interests—working in public radio in San Francisco as a Kaiser Health fellow. Post-graduation, her first job offer came from the *Sun Herald* in Biloxi, Mississippi—exciting, until it was revoked

» Diligent students who studied past tests—or those willing to pay savvy test prep companies—could actually practice on the exact ones they’d take.”

just before she started because of 2007 budget cuts. “They called and said they were really sorry, but the position had been eliminated,” she said. “It was at the beginning of the global recession. Welcome to journalism, right?”

Irene freelanced in New York until a position opened at the Albany *Times Union*. Covering the two political conventions in 2008 and then-New York Governor Eliot Spitzer’s prostitution scandal clinched her hunger for reporting. Then she applied for a job at the *South China Morning Post*.

This wasn’t an arbitrary application. Irene had grown up in St. Louis, the daughter of Chinese immigrants, but had lived in China only a short while herself. When she moved to Shanghai in 1995, she attended the nascent Shanghai American School, but her parents quickly decided the school system there wouldn’t provide the preparation for college that they wanted for Irene.

“I was very much a middle-class kid from the Midwest. Back then, boarding school meant you’d been sent away for doing something wrong,” she laughed. “But thank goodness my mother’s research found Groton, and she pushed me to apply.”

Her years at Groton were a mix of loving school and being homesick for family in a country she didn’t really know. “It’s funny to talk to kids about it these days because they really don’t understand. We didn’t have Internet. My mother would fax letters to the library every day, and somebody from the library would carry that rolled-up scroll of slippery paper across the Circle and put it in my mailbox. I remember waking up extra early so I could call my parents using a calling card before 7:00 a.m., which was cheaper to Asia.”

Groton pressed her to move beyond her math and science comfort

zone. For the first time, she was having conversations about politics and history, and she began to enjoy writing. She also recognized how mathematical data could inform other disciplines.

The position at the *South China Morning Post*, and then Reuters, was in part a decision to be closer to family. The Shanghai Chinese-American expatriate community is quite close-knit, and it was through those connections that she heard about a school scandal at her alma mater.

“I heard through Shanghai school connections that there was a scandal where students from a number of international schools had their SAT scores canceled for alleged cheating. And I was like, ‘huh, that’s interesting.’ Then I started digging.”

Combing through tests, practice tests, and online forums, she realized she was onto something. Old U.S. SAT tests were being recirculated for international markets, rather than being created anew. So diligent students who studied past tests—or those willing to pay savvy test prep companies—could actually practice on the exact ones they’d take. “There’s a very lucrative business in test prep in Asia. These kids want to go to school in the U.S.,” she explained. “So they would take every single test they could get their hands on and keep practicing until they could get perfect scores.”

After a year reporting the story alone, her editors at Reuters added a team of reporters in the U.S. and across Asia. The story caught fire and was named a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. “These test prep centers were perfecting the art of recycling tests, hiring students to take pictures of exam booklets in the U.S. to scan more pages for students to practice,” she said. “It was a hot story because of the frenzy to do well on these tests.”

Now based in Singapore at

the Google News Lab, Irene often focuses on how digital tools, including Artificial Intelligence and machine learning, can enhance reporting. The News Lab also teaches journalists how to fight misinformation online and do data-driven research using Google tools, and it assists reporters who experience trauma in the field.

“To me, one of the most rewarding parts of my job is being able to be a voice for Asia and a voice for journalists, who are working under very stressful circumstances and conditions,” she said. For example, “at the beginning of COVID, an Indonesian journalist organization said, ‘We need PPE for our reporters.’ So I was able to say, ‘Yes, let’s make that happen.’”

At first glance, Irene’s experience at Groton might not seem to line up with where she is now. But she sees the thread clearly.

“With a focus on well-rounded liberal arts, they put me through my paces. I never considered myself particularly strong in the humanities, but Groton taught me how to write, to think critically—laying the foundation for my career in journalism, long before I ever knew I wanted to be a reporter,” she recalled. Over the past decade, she has taught journalism to students and working journalists across the Asia-Pacific and was an adjunct professor at Columbia while working at the Albany *Times Union*.

“The teachers at Groton were incredible. They cared so deeply and were invested in giving students a love of learning. At first, I was just studying, focused on what I was supposed to do, to keep my homesickness at bay. But Groton was such a stimulating environment: it pushed me to stretch my curiosity, to articulate my place in the world and scrutinize my environment with a more critical lens. And that made all the difference.”

—Nichole Bernier

Tony Ducret '96

From Houston to Hollywood



In 2014, **Tony Ducret '96** was an executive producer at Black Entertainment Television (BET), meeting celebrities, staying at hot hotels, and working on projects like *106 and Park*, a groundbreaking hip-hop video show. With fourteen years in the industry, he was a seasoned veteran.

Yet a year later, Tony was an intern at Fox Searchlight. Yes, an intern. And that's just how he wanted it.

Now a director of development at Universal Pictures, Tony was itching to move from BET's unscripted television shows to the narrative-based world of film. He had always had an interest in film and an eye for visual storytelling. Even at Groton, he was the kid toting around a camcorder—lent to him by faculty member Elson Harmon—and using it to record school plays and to capture mundane conversations and day-to-day rituals. Today he thinks of it as cinema verité. "I was the video camera guy," Tony says, and many of his formmates would remember him that way.

At Groton, even though it was "fifteen- and sixteen-year-old boys sitting around a room just speaking

unfiltered," to Tony it seemed like filmmaking, and it still does. "You're choosing scenes, you're putting them together, you're figuring out songs, you're editing sequences together, and all those things become one," he said. Showing his documentary in the Hall (now the library) just before Prize Day, he watched the audience from the balcony and reveled in their reaction. "That did something. I was like, Oh, this is cool... just being able to provoke those reactions through a moving image. That stuck with me."

Tony can't pinpoint an experience that instilled his almost obsessive love of film. He did frequently take refuge in the second-run movie bargains at a dollar movie theater near his Houston, Texas home. But lots of people like movies. For Tony, memorializing moments on film was more of a calling. Even in middle school, he was constantly snapping still photos. "I think there was a photographic capturing instinct that came from somewhere innately," he said.

After Groton, Tony studied film at Wesleyan (with an economics co-major fallback, mainly to appease his mother). He found himself surrounded by people "super passionate about film." But he did not find a level playing field among his classmates. Those with family funds were making impressive short films. He doubled down on his writing and storytelling, ultimately graduating with honors. The son of an immigrant from the West Indies, Tony continued to experience inequities as he climbed into the industry. He got an internship on *The Sopranos* but couldn't keep it. "It was a rich kid's job, and I wasn't one," said Tony. "You're living in New York. You don't go to work every day. You get paid like nothing," he said.

With the help of **Stephen Hill '80**, he took an internship at MTV and landed a job at VH1, another subsidiary of Viacom, which also owns BET. "I'm doing this work and it's really exciting, especially in the beginning because you're working with rappers and people that you admire," he recalled. "But on the side, I'm watching the indie films, and I'm actually writing, producing, and directing shorts independently when I could fund them with my own money. And I had some decent success with that."

But he continued to face the uphill battle of an

aspiring filmmaker in a world of well-heeled peers. He produced a short—*I Can Smoke?*—that was good enough to screen at Cannes (he went to the film festival with Groton roommate **Nii-Ama Akuete '96**). Tony was determined to expand *I Can Smoke?* into a feature film but could not raise the \$750,000 he needed. “When you’re trying to do more ambitious things and you actually need to start raising funds, you need that wealthy uncle,” he said.

“That’s where I hit the wall. I was also hitting a wall in the Viacom world, where the music television thing was becoming a lot less relevant because of the explosion of YouTube and the accessibility of music videos on that platform.” *106 and Park*, the video-based variety show, had been popular for sixteen years but was suddenly struggling.

“The next iteration of my career in that space would have been hip-hop, urban reality TV, like *Love & Hip-Hop*,” he said. “I think that stuff is cool and entertaining and profitable for people. I just had no interest in it.”

It was time to make the long-desired move to film, and Tony realized there was no lateral trajectory. He would need to start over. “I’ve done all the New York stuff. I’ve done all the music stuff. I’ve been onstage at South by Southwest with Pusha T, who’s one of my favorite artists. What’s next?” he wondered.

The answer: USC and Hollywood. At thirty-six, Tony enrolled in one of Los Angeles’ premier film industry steppingstones—the Peter Stark Producing Program at University of Southern California. Only twenty-four students are accepted each year.

The Stark Program arranges internships and placed Tony at Fox Searchlight, which helped lead to a job after graduation at Amblin, Steven Spielberg’s studio. “My assistant years were spent at a premium production company studio,” said Tony. He was on his way.

Today, he’s still what he calls a “junior executive.” As director of

development at Universal, he helps set the slate of movies—“just basically acting as quality control from script stage until the film is edited and delivered.” Agents and managers bring ideas to Tony and his team, who decide if the movies are right for Universal, a studio that leans toward blockbusters. Tony called the studio “commercial, spectacle-leaning” but also “filmmaker-friendly.”

“Someone like Jordan Peele, who I’m working with right now—he’s making commercial films, but he’s doing it as an auteur. Our studio is a place that makes that possible.”

Most weeks, Tony reviews four to six scripts, unpeeling the layers to capture the rare gem that is right for Universal. “I think there’s an intellectual and an emotional component,” he said. “I know my studio is not making small character studies, coming-of-age... we’re not doing hyper-earnest drama.”

Few scripts get a second look. After Tony’s two years as director of development, only one project is close to reaching theaters—*Beast*, slated for an August release. He recently traveled to South Africa for the film—a nail-biter about a family hunted by a lion, starring Idris Elba and directed by Baltasar Kormakur. “I love that in the midst of all of this adrenaline-filled action—you need to get away from this lion—you get to spend some time with the characters. And they’re cool characters,” he said. “The young girl, she’s applying to NYU photography school. It’s just like cool little pieces of texture, I would say expanding the aperture of what you expect when you look at a

Black family.”

When he is considering a pitch, Tony looks for the opportunity to open filmgoers’ minds. “You’re looking at all of the commercial components, and then what really gets me is if there’s any sort of deeper messaging. That’s when I start advocating for things very strongly,” he said. “If I see that there’s an opportunity for expanding point of view. If there’s an opportunity for you to see someone in a role that you’ve never seen them in before, whether that be someone of color, LGBTQ. If there’s a way to expand point of view and it also is commercial, that’s when I get really excited, because I’m like, all right, here’s a chance to do multiple things.”

Tony has written scripts himself, for movies he produced early in his career, and he hopes to write a book some day. “When it’s my turn to run the meetings and run the development with the writers and directors,” he said, “there’s going to be a deep empathy and understanding that will come from the fact that I’ve been in their seats.”

Even beyond that, Tony looks forward to the day when he is in a position to lend support to deserving, ambitious filmmakers who lack access to funding—filmmakers like Tony when he created *I Can Smoke?*

“I do think that the Tony that you will see will be someone, in one way or another, who can advocate for artists I’m excited about, who have something to say, who are bringing a diversity of expression and point of view to their craft,” he said. “That’s kind of the goal.”

—Gail Friedman



Tony's short film, *I Can Smoke?*, screened at Cannes in 2012.

Full Circle



The background of the page features a collage of several overlapping clippings from 'The Circle Voice' newspaper. The clippings are tilted at various angles and show various articles, photos, and a 'Welcome to the circle' section with a circular graphic. A large, solid brown circle is centered over the collage, containing the main text.

AT THE CLOSE of 2019,
the *Quarterly* was poised to complete
this article, celebrating the *Circle Voice*'s 50th
anniversary. But in early 2020, urgent pandemic
communications pushed the article aside,
and subsequent time-sensitive feature stories
for the *Quarterly* intervened.

The *Circle Voice* is no less worthy of recognition
now. Fifty-two may not be a round number;
nevertheless, please join us as we hail
the fifty-second anniversary
of the *Circle Voice*.

by Gail Friedman

COMMITTEE FORMED TO REVISE SMOKING RULES

Change in Senior Prefectship a Necessity

ENERGY CRISIS AT GROTON

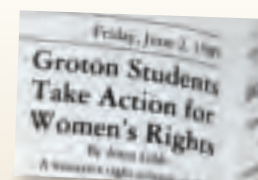
1969

1979

1989

Groton

WIRE THE

*Letter to the Editor*

SINGLE SEX MATH CLASSES SCHEDULED TO END

Intervisitation Granted Experimentally

Was Gulf War II Justified

It's Time For An Arts Requirement

The *Circle Voice* published for the very first time on October 2, 1969.

It was four months after the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy and a year and a half after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. Rebellion was in city streets and on nightly news, as young people protested the Vietnam War, fought for civil rights, and staked out their place in the cultural watershed.

Up until then, the unequivocally parochial *Third Form Weekly*, founded in 1922, was the closest thing to a student newspaper. If the *Third Form Weekly* was the Groton establishment, the *Circle Voice* represented students' desire to challenge entrenched practices and mores and to question authority.

In the first issue, an editorial reported two "obligations" of the fledgling student newspaper: "to report the 'news and views' of the School and to work for change."

Early CV staffers wanted to take on issues such as coeducation, racial diversity, and a curriculum they considered outdated. But—more than anything—they were consumed, like all of America, with the Vietnam War.

"You had the draft. High school boys were having to think about, 'Okay, when I turn eighteen, do I go to Canada? Do I stand for the draft? Do I get a 2-S deferment by going to college?'" recalled **Walter Mead '70**, the *Circle Voice*'s first editor-in-chief, now a university professor, author, and *Wall Street Journal* columnist. "The young people were having to make really big decisions very early in life."

With Grotonians in positions of power and **McGeorge Bundy '36** recognized as an architect of the U.S. policy in Vietnam, protest at Groton was complicated. "If you think about who was running the country at the time, a lot of them were Groton grads," said Walter. "That, I think, led to a lot of questioning

The first *Circle Voice* staff

amongst students. What kind of education are we getting, and what's the purpose of it?

The ironclad career pathways for Groton boys were also starting to erode. "For the parents of a lot of the kids in my cohort at Groton, this was still a very clubby, Ivy League, WASP establishment world, so that you would very naturally go from a school like Groton to a top Ivy League school, from there to a top law school or whatever it is you wanted. Or you would go work for *Time* magazine or *Newsweek* or the *New York Times* and quickly move up the ladder," he said. "That was beginning to change so that it was a time of real uncertainty. I think all of those things were kind of agitating the Groton students of that time. We wanted a conversation at the school that was at a higher level than the *Third Form Weekly*."

Former CV Editor **Richard Doyle '73** remembers the transition from the *Third Form Weekly*. "Editorial staff would be weighted to the Upper School, no longer restricted to Third Formers. The CV physical page size was noticeably enlarged, page count went from four to eight, ten, or more; the Chapel Program yellowish paper was no longer used, in favor of slick, coated white that

Should Build a Performing Arts Theater

Student Solar Proposal to be Presented to Trustees

The Raven's Column
DORMS NOW

BOSTON BOMBING

Groton's Evolving Covid-19 Plan

1999

2009

2019

Failures of FEMA After Hurricane Katrina

Out of Terror, Patriotism

Everything You Wanted to Know About Ebola
(But Didn't Want to Ask)

Karl Rove Dangerous Genius?

Groton Stages Fund-Raisers for Haitian Earthquake

allowed photos," he recalled. "In addition to straight news articles, editorials staked out the CV's position. The naming of the *Circle Voice* itself might have had resonance with the ascendant *Village Voice*—in the 1970s how much more current could one be?"

Back then, at the *Village Voice*, the nation's first alternative weekly, and at mainstream media, journalists were respected, admired, even considered heroic. These role models inspired and emboldened the new CV staff. "You see all these journalists that you admire engaging in fights with the administration over X and Y," said Walter. "Well, that's what you should be doing, too. Are you really a journalist if somebody isn't trying to shut you up?"

For Walter, working on the CV confirmed that he wanted to be a writer. "There was just something about observing events and then writing about events that I found compelling then, and still do," he said. He credits English teacher **Robert Parker '57**, remembering how the CV faculty advisor demonstrated the power of word choice with examples from *Time* magazine. "[*Time* publisher] Henry Luce hated Harry Truman and loved Dwight Eisenhower. [Mr. Parker] showed us a sentence in *Time* from Luce about Truman that says, 'After the press conference, Truman slunk from the room to huddle with his cronies.' Then he showed us, 'Ike strode from the chamber to confer with his advisors,' which I think just opened our minds to what you can do with language, because those are the exact same actions, but by writing about it, you can give it a completely different cast."

The CV, apparently, was not Walter's first experiment in Groton School journalism. **Ben Lamont '09**, a CV editor himself, wrote a paper about the student newspaper for a class, revealing that Walter held another, little-known editorship before the CV began. According to Ben's paper, the *Third Form Weekly* reported: "In recent weeks, an underground newspaper, the *Groton School Bugle and Evening Star*, has been posted on the Brooks House

Schoolroom bulletin board. Ten issues have appeared so far. [It contains] fictitious articles which snipe at the school's cherished institutions and folkways. That newspaper's favorite target is, of course the *Third Form Weekly*. The mastermind behind this new publication is, as might be guessed, Fifth Former Walter Mead. Although he refuses to state exactly what he does for the newspaper, it is suspected that he writes and publishes all of it."

Walter is not the only CV editor to go on to write professionally. "What I primarily do now is write and edit, and working on the CV was seminal in my development as a writer," said former CV co-editor **Kara Miller '96**, who hosted and edited the public radio program "Innovation Hub" for ten years. Among the others: **Michael Beran '84**, the 1983–84 CV editor, is a distinguished author. **Sarah Tuff Dunn '91** is an award-winning writer in Colorado. **Ben Coes '85**, author of ten best sellers, jokes (?) that the CV honed his skills as a fiction writer. Removing the humorist hat, he said: "The CV gave me my first experience with the capacity of words to alter institutions—however slightly." He—and many other former editors—credited CV faculty advisor Jonathan Minifie for his dedication and lessons on everything from layout to copyediting.

Perusing five decades of CVs is a walk through history, through topics inside the Circle such as coeducation, inclusion, and technology, and issues well beyond, such as the Vietnam War, presidential elections, and international politics.

"We thought there were some interesting and important questions," recalled Walter, "and we wanted to have a place where, as students, we could write about them and see what the rest of our community thought about them." This valid ambition fifty-two years ago still drives the *Circle Voice* and Groton's young journalists today.

FINDING THEIR VOICE

We asked the *Circle Voice*'s leaders over the years to share memories about leading the CV and the issues that monopolized conversation at the time. The *Quarterly* thanks those who responded.



Philip Benfey '71

Circle Voice Editor 1970–71

WHILE SEARCHING recently for a copy of my university diploma, I discovered back issues of the *Circle Voice* from 1969 to 1971. What came rushing back was that sense of a world in which the old certainties were rapidly disappearing. What was to replace them was not at all evident. My first editorial, which I reread with no small amount of cringing, quoted extensively from works predicting imminent ecological destruction. My proposal was to revert to a hunter-gatherer society that would have lots of leisure time for the arts. Thankfully, subsequent editorials focused on more local issues, with the last one arguing against compulsory chapel but extolling the values of communal worship.

In retrospect, what I came to greatly value (although I don't think I adequately expressed it at the time) was the willingness of the faculty to engage with students in meaningful discussion about issues both global and local.

I did have aspirations to become a writer. To that end, I dropped out of college after a year and went to work for a logging company in Oregon. My hope was to gain experiences to write about. What was initially intended as a one-year hiatus stretched into a six-year trip around the world. This included working in the iron mines in Australia, for the Philippine film industry, as a gardener in Japan, and taking the Trans-Siberian Railway across the USSR. I ended up in Paris, where I first worked as a carpenter, then rented a garret apartment and started writing short stories. Probably deservedly, the only response from the journals to which they were submitted was mimeographed rejection notices. My girlfriend of the time, now my wife of forty-two years, suggested a day job might be a good idea, and that is how I became a biologist.



Jim Cooper '72

Circle Voice Editor 1971–72

WORKING ON the *Circle Voice* was great preparation for life. Not only did it enable me to have the confidence to be editor of one of the nation's largest college dailies, the *Daily Tar Heel*, but it also helps me today to write strong op-eds and press releases as a U.S. Congressman. The press and the shop were two of Groton's best "trade school" experiences.

The competition to get on staff at any of Groton's publications was also beneficial because that sharpened our skills. We were thinking of publishing and outdoing our classmates whenever we wrote essays for Groton's classes.

Adult supervision from faculty and trustees was also helpful. I remember being chastened by Mr. [Charles] Sheerin ['44] for describing "too accurately" a speaker we were previewing. Just because he was described that way in *Time* magazine didn't mean it could be repeated in the *Circle Voice*. And Ken Auchincloss ['55], a trustee who was at *Newsweek*, was kind enough to edit an issue of the CV, a memorable experience.

Today's generation may be experiencing the death of journalism. We were privileged to live during its golden age, and Groton's publications, including the CV, were wonderful student examples of that era.



Richard Doyle '73

Circle Voice Editor 1972–73

BEFORE THE *Circle Voice*, we got our “news” from the *Third Form Weekly*, which was rushed out around Saturday dinnertime from the printing press in the basement of the Schoolhouse. The type size, line length, and page size pretty much tracked the Chapel Program printed by the Second

Formers. In those simpler days, seeing the *Weekly* was one of the high points of the weekend, like the Saturday night movie in the Hall.

In an effort to provide students a more ambitious journalistic experience, the *Circle Voice* replaced the *Weekly*. ... The changes reflect the desire by both faculty and students to expand horizons to encompass the extraordinary geopolitical movements taking place at the time (the Vietnam Moratorium March, Earth Day, Kent State). The changes also gave a greater number of students the chance to be aspiring Woodward/Bernstein reporters or their equivalent photojournalists.

... Printing the paper [on the school’s Heidelberg flatbed press] was itself a Herculean feat. No more weekly distribution. The best we could strive for was an every-two-week publication cycle.

On one hand, the longer publication cycle [compared to the *Third Form Weekly*’s] meant “news” might not be all that new. On the other hand, the longer interval provided an opportunity for deeper research. The CV I think was successful in reporting the balance of opinion surrounding proposals related to the move to coed, the student body increase, and day/boarding mix proposals.

There were many extraordinary individuals who

put in extraordinary efforts to produce the *Circle Voice*. I was fortunate to spend five years under the tutelage of Al Olson, not just the press master but a mentor in many ways. Warren Myers, when not in his Classics classroom, was a tremendous resource to us, providing consistently invaluable advice, often with a humorous twist.

James Cooper ['72] was my direct predecessor as CV editor and our model in clear writing. His Prize Day reflections in his last *Circle Voice* are as poignant to me today as they were then.

John Rothman ['73] was tireless in the press room and fearless in his tell-it-like-is writing.

Shades of Green

Various crises around energy—usage, costs, shortages, waste—have consistently inspired the CV’s young journalists. In 1973, the paper reported on a campus oil shortage and resulting conservation measures, such as thermostats set at 65 (60 at night) and temporary closure of the hockey rink. In 1979, the paper was already suggesting that Groton go solar. In 2018, a student presentation to trustees about solar power made CV headlines, and since then, the CV has covered the John B. Goodenough '40 Solar Farm, a net-zero faculty residence, and other energy-saving initiatives, while continuing to lament waste, overuse of plastic, and society’s slow action on climate change.



Bradley G. Kulman '80

Circle Voice Editor 1979–80

MY MAIN takeaway was organizational experience. This was my first (unknowing, of course) exposure to project and people management. We used a large blackboard to track the progress of each article, from initial draft through edits, revisions, casting, and proofreading. Each task had its own box, and editors would insert their initials after it was completed. At times it was a struggle to keep all of the articles progressing at roughly the same rate, while motivating the editorial staff and maintaining a reasonable level of quality control.

Big stories: The continued rebuffs of student demands for intervisitation (definitely a word I have not heard since leaving Groton in 1980), the abuse of “black marks” in student discipline, the possibilities of solar energy for the school, the revision of smoking rules for students (can you believe it?!), lack of avenues for student input on issues facing the school, and opposition to the requirements that Lower School boys play football if they didn’t make the JV soccer team. Hard to even fathom these in 2021. We did miss many of the important stories of the time, including missteps and successes in the early years of coeducation; persistent under-commitment to arts and science education; and the difficulties that minority students faced on campus. I definitely did not have the maturity then to see those and other big-picture issues.





Charlie Wray '82

Circle Voice Editor 1981–82

THE 1981–82 CV was notable for excellent cartoons, but the content was, on the whole, standard fare: commentary on the school and sports. There were important topics covered as well: gender discrimination at Groton, the role of minority affinity groups, and recruiting more faculty of color. A competing, gorilla publication existed during my tenure working on the CV: *The Daily Bastard*. It was simultaneously vulgar and hilarious; in many ways it covered topics that never would have appeared in the CV. Distribution was done by leaving a small number of copies as garbage on the floor of the Schoolroom. If memory serves, the editorial group may have been caught making copies

of “All the dissent that is fit to print” at Lawrence Academy and received some mysterious discipline.

Two very different communities could look out at each other from the Schoolhouse basement. The shop was always clean, the furniture was astonishingly good; it seemed to be a refined, quiet atmosphere. By comparison, the press was a gritty, loud place with old lead type on the floor and ink smeared on clothes, hands, and the antique presses. It was great fun. We raised our voices and acted like teenagers. At one point we created a sort of fake CV masthead; my title was Mayor of Bonehead City.

I took away two quite different things from my experience working on the CV. First, that being able to multitask is an essential skill. This was especially true as a spring term Fifth Former; I learned that spring that the busier I was down in the old press room the more efficient and productive I could be across all tasks at school. The second takeaway was that printing can be an art form with its own aesthetic. I still appreciate a great font or typeface and a beautifully printed and executed book.



Michael Beran '84

Circle Voice Editor 1983–84

OUR YEAR, 1983–84, was the last in which the *Circle Voice* was printed in the old press before its closure. The spirit of student protest in which the paper was born had by this time dissipated; America was in a better mood and so was Groton, which had found stability and successful leadership under **Bill Polk** ['58]. As editors, **James Socas** ['84] and I were conscious of the change of atmosphere; we ran a couple of pieces on the evolving school, one of them about the difficulties Bert Honea confronted in trying to steer a middle course between old-guard masters who were averse to reforms like coeducation and discontented students with dubious demands (such as making Prize Day optional). Yet we had our own difficulties in trying to put out an interesting newspaper in a happy school: bad times make better copy!

Smoke and Mirrors

It's hard to believe today, but the school's smoking policy generated numerous *Circle Voice* stories. A 1973 opinion piece begins, “It's not hard to remember back to the time when a few Sixth Formers were unceremoniously suspended for sneaking a cigarette on the third floor of the infirmary. That was in the spring of 1970, and now, three years later, any student in the Upper School is permitted to smoke with parental permission.”

In 1975, a new smoking policy was announced, restricting smoking to Upper Schoolers in their own rooms or in faculty houses, with roommate and faculty permission. Lest this seem unreasonable, a fire extinguisher was required for the dorm room (as was an ashtray). By 1987, a smoking-free campus was under discussion, and in 1988 tobacco use by students was forbidden.





Nina Simonds Trowbridge '85
First Female CV Editor 1984–85

GIRLS HAD been at Groton since 1975, but it was 1984—the school’s one hundredth anniversary—when I became the first girl to be editor-in-chief of the *Circle Voice*. I remember being conscious of being this “first,” but I never felt anything but confidence in holding the position. I loved writing, and I had worked hard to earn the job, so being editor-in-chief felt like the right fit. Most of all, I felt the complete support of the faculty and administration, the outgoing editors, **Michael Beran** and **James Socas**, and most of all, my co-editor in chief, **Ben Coes**, who was also one of my closest friends. Ben and I were a team; this was never a question. All of these factors made my role as the first girl in the job a seamless and easy one.

My fondest memories are of the many hours, usually late at night, working with Ben and our executive editor, **Greg Smith**, in a tiny room in the student center, assembling each issue’s layout. Greg and Ben were two of the funniest people I knew. The laughter would get progressively louder as the hours passed, while with scissors and tape we literally cut and pasted photos and text in that pre-computer age. Somehow, despite the silliness, we would manage to cobble the paper together, usually just at the printer’s deadline. I would not trade those memories for gold.



William Vratatos '87
Circle Voice Editor 1986–87

ONE THING I did learn is that thinking creatively and going outside the normal boundaries of expectations could produce excellence. My co-editor-in-chief **Tim Farrell** interviewed the descendants of Henri

Matisse, who lived in Groton, and wrote a story on them. It was highly original and differentiated from what we were doing at the time.



Stephanie Plasse '89
Circle Voice Editor 1988–89

BESIDES PROVIDING lessons in writing, editing, managing deadlines, and starting to learn the basics of journalism, editing the CV was a great early life experience in working as part of a team and building consensus. We had vigorous debates over everything

from masthead editorials to layouts. It was also a lesson in how a local publication can have an impact on a community. Jonathan Minifie was a singular influence as our faculty advisor. He was a dedicated teacher of the skills and values of journalism who cared deeply about the content of the paper but stood out even more as a mentor who guided, challenged, and nurtured his students. He was very special.

One of the big topics of discussion was the fact that no female had been elected Senior Prefect during the era of coeducation. The CV published editorials for

and against a proposal for a co-prefectship role with a male student and female student. The joint male-female senior prefectship was first implemented in the form that followed ours.

Working on the CV definitely gave me the journalism bug. I ended up as the editor-in-chief of my daily college newspaper and had some reporting and editing stints before ultimately becoming a media lawyer—which also had its roots in being exposed to journalism, starting with the CV.



Sarah Tuff Dunn '91
Circle Voice Editor 1990–91

I LEARNED about objective reporting, teamwork, and creativity, lessons I still use today after more than twenty-five years of professional writing. Working on the CV sparked a passion for helping people tell their stories, something I now do for a living as a ghostwriter and book producer.

Big story: We launched an investigative report to find out if there was contamination in the Schoolhouse water fountains. Our conclusion: go for the milk and cookies instead!

The funniest and most fun times were when we literally cut and pasted the stories together for the final layout, and then celebrated with 'za from GroHo.


Asma Hasan '93

Circle Voice Editor 1992–93
Creator of the Asma Gull
Hasan 1993 *Circle Voice*
Journalism Prize

THE MAIN thing I learned on the CV was how to take writing of another person and convert it into vocabulary or phrasing others could understand. I was known for this ability in college, law school, over countless restaurant orders, and even today as a practicing lawyer. It's not that the original person was misspeaking or speaking a different language. Many of us just jumble our words or have a little difficulty putting our thoughts on paper. We

know what we are trying to say, but it's not coming out in a clear way. When you are a teenager trying to decipher what a younger student wrote for the CV, and it's in the middle of the night in the CV room, you figure out how to make sense of their words in exactly the manner that person meant and as expeditiously as possible. It's a great skill.

Another useful thing I learned was taking a project from a blank slate to completion. Putting out

the CV multiple times a year was like doing project management, as well as a lot of the work within the project itself. Having that experience, over and over again, at a young age, has given me great skill in envisioning, implementing, and executing short- and long-term projects. The prior faculty advisor and seniors who were running the CV handed over the layout of the last issue of my junior year to my co-editor-in-chief and me without

Remembering an Old-School Tradition:

Many CV editors recalled the painstaking process of laying out the paper for the in-house printing press—a process unfathomable in this digital era. The *Circle Voice* stopped printing in the Schoolhouse in the eighties, but parts of the old press remain in the school archives.



Former faculty
Albert Olson,
left and
opposite page,
helped students
run the school's
printing press.

Among the memories of this old-fashioned printing:

JIM COOPER '72: Mr. [Albert] Olson, the press advisor, helped CV staff actually forge and set the individual letters of lead type, and print on the Heidelberg press—everything from the *Third Form Weekly* to the *Grotonian* to the CV. That hands-on, printer's devil experience was invaluable because it taught us hard, painstaking work that users of today's word processors cannot imagine. My generation experienced the transformation from Gutenberg (or at least Franklin) to Microsoft Word.

RICHARD DOYLE '73: While Groton's social mores and outside awareness had advanced in keeping with the times, the school's

so much as a hint as to how to do it. Our new faculty advisor, Mr. Minifie, wasn't taking over until the fall. I made a lot of probably very naïve-sounding calls to the contact at the printer asking things like, what if we have bumping headlines, or what if a headline doesn't fit, and where does the masthead go? We edited many articles by hand but failed to tell the printer what we had cut out, which he then very politely reminded us to remember to do the next time. It was a

stressful but great learning experience.

Biggest stories: I wrote an article about a Parents Week-end poll, which I remember raised many faculty eyebrows, much to my delight! The Admission Office even refused to keep that issue of the CV in the Admission Office lest visiting parents see it! I wrote an op-ed in the next issue complaining about this exclusion. Many parents wrote letters to the editor describing how much they enjoyed the CV and

looked forward to reading it. No one directly rebuked the Admission Office, but the writing parents made their love and appreciation well known, which was gratifying to me personally.

Funniest moment: When I chased Mr. Polk across an athletic field for a quotation when I was in Second Form. I stopped him to ask him for a quotation, and he looked at me sort of, I guess, in a mock huff, and then ran off. I thought he was playing a game or invoking

some tradition unknown to me where he wanted me to chase him. I saw him as an athletic type, and I felt very aware of the athletic mindset of Groton and didn't feel I was athletic. So I thought he must be testing me or something, and I thought of my parents' reaction if I were to say I failed a test! Until I graduated, Mr. Polk would always boast of what a dogged and determined reporter I was—I believe with affection.

“Setting Every Inky Letter by Hand”

printing equipment was still wonderfully nineteenth century. Printing was done on a mammoth Heidelberg flatbed press. Pages were composed in monotype, spit out from a molten metal casting machine. Photos to be printed were sent out to who knows where, which produced, a day or two later, copper-etched plates mounted on wooden block foundations. These would be fitted next to the type, set in a large metal frame. Printing the paper was itself a Herculean feat.

BRADLEY G. KULMAN '80: After some searching, I found the bound volume of my half dozen or so CV issues that I have kept for forty years! It immediately brought back memories of how physically difficult it was to publish the paper. For our first issues, we were still using a monotype casting machine—articles would be typed onto an antiquated keyboard and then cast into lead, letter by letter. The machine needed to be continually tinkered with and, at times, with little warning, molten lead would spew out into the casting room (which was cordoned off by Plexiglas from the rest of the pressroom). Goggles or no, this was not safe. The lines of type were



then manually organized into a page with handset headlines, all held together by various mechanical devices. My proudest accomplishment at the CV was transitioning production to offset printing for our last issues, which allowed for an attractive redesign, including adding a touch of color to the title on the front page.

MICHAEL BERAN '84: Our year was one of transition: we were the last to print the paper in the old press beneath Gammons Hall, while in the spring term we edited the first computer-set editions printed offsite. I've often regretted the loss of the press—you learned a lot about the craft of printing that computerized generations will never know. But if, as I'm told, dishwashing was phased out as a punishment because

of liability concerns, I don't see the linotype machine, an ancient, temperamental contraption that spewed molten lead, surviving the scrutiny of the school's lawyers!

NINA TROWBRIDGE '85: The CV was printed on Groton's beloved, old-fashioned, type-set printer in the basement of the Schoolhouse. Each edition took hours of labor from the few dedicated students and faculty willing to set every inky letter by hand. The printing press was a vital part of Groton tradition. But this slow, laborious process limited the size and number of editions.

The summer before our Sixth Form, Ben [Coes '85] and I researched other high school newspapers, and with help from our advisor, we petitioned the administration for the support and funds to print the *Circle Voice* outside the school. This allowed us to produce a full-sized newspaper much more frequently throughout the year. I'll never forget the thrill, each and every time, of walking up the Dining Hall stairs on the days the paper was released, seeing the room filled with students and faculty, pages open, reading the *Circle Voice*.



Emily Colby McLellan '94
Circle Voice Editor 1993–94

BEING EDITOR of the CV required hard work, dedication, and typically a very late night before each publication. I always say that I worked harder at Groton than at any other point in my life—professionally or academically—and my involvement with the CV certainly contributed to my workload. I learned a great deal about how to manage my time efficiently and get things done by deadline.

**On a deeper level,
 the CV gave me my first
 experience with the
 capacity of words to alter
 institutions—however
 slightly.**

—Joshua Adams '96



Joshua Adams '96
Circle Voice Editor 1995–96

I WAS a layout editor on the CV before I was a co-editor (with **Kara Miller '96**), and I learned important lessons from the late Jonathan Minifie, the heroic faculty advisor to the paper, both about design and about how to ruthlessly cut and paste articles to make them fit. I mean cut and paste literally: at this time, we still had the proofs of the paper typeset for us by a printer in western Massachusetts. We cut and pasted these galleys into mockups of pages using scissors and rubber cement, and then sent these mockups back to the printer, who would produce the papers and send the issues back to us. The whole thing seemed ancient to me, as if it were the 1890s not the 1990s. At one point, Minifie let me experiment with Adobe PageMaker, but I barely knew what I was doing, the computers on campus at the

time were slow, and it took longer than doing it by hand! Everything Minifie taught me about page design was helpful in my career as a college journalist, and later as the editor (and typesetter) of a literary magazine.

On a deeper level, the CV gave me my first experience with the capacity of words to alter institutions—however slightly. At some point in my co-editorship I wrote an opinion piece criticizing the form officer system and asking for better student government. Kathy Giles, who was then a college advisor, saw the piece and suggested we do something about it. The result was the Student Response Group. I think the opportunity to see how commentary could lead to change was an important lesson.

Biggest stories/controversies: The stricter athletic requirement and changes to the curriculum occupied some discussion, as did the school's various plans for building new facilities in athletics, arts, sciences, and recreation, which were badly needed by 1995. There were some debates around diversity (racial, ethnic, sexual), as well as the school's response to the AIDS crisis. And of course the twentieth anniversary of coeducation occurred in 1995, so that was in the air, too.

But as I remember it, the main topic

of discussion at the school in 1995–96 was technology. That was the first year email, along with personalized voicemail, was made available to everyone at Groton. Even though we did not have access to email or phones in our rooms, it felt as if technology had totally changed life at the school, as well as, potentially, the relationship between the school and the outside world. When I had arrived as a student in the fall of 1992, there were two pay phones in our Third Form dormitory, and, as a boarding student, it seemed you were largely cut off from the rest of the world unless you wrote letters. By spring of 1996, the Internet was a thing, and the school was no longer so isolated (for better and worse, I'm sure).

There were some funny stories—and some wild brainstorming meetings—but none of them were as good as what appeared in the *Hoarse Voice*. Truth be told, mostly what I remember consists of entire weekends swallowed by the grueling intensity of the editorial and layout process, holed up in Minifie's classroom under the Schoolhouse roof. But then, of course, when the paper showed up, seeing the Schoolroom fill with it at Roll Call—that was a great feeling.



Kara Miller '96

Circle Voice Editor 1995-96

WORKING ON the CV is—without question—one of my most memorable and positive Groton experiences.

I came to Groton itching to do as much writing as possible, and—as soon as I possibly could—I started to write for the CV. The faculty editor at that time was Mr. Minifie, and he was incredibly devoted to the paper. He spent entire weekend days laying out the paper with us, copyediting, and re-copyediting (because our high school grammar was sometimes lacking).

I never had Mr. Minifie as a teacher, but he changed my life. He taught me how much effort a high-quality paper demanded. He set a

standard that I still try to embrace now, when I write for radio. During my Sixth Form year, Mr. Minifie was teaching in Istanbul, and I felt like we needed to pick up the slack and do the work necessary to make him proud.

When I got to college, I knew I wanted to work for the school newspaper, which I did. For a while, in graduate school, I thought I was heading in a different direction (medieval literature), but I kept writing for local and regional newspapers on the side. I loved engaging with the issues of the day and refining those ideas. And that love, ultimately, led me back to journalism.

In some ways, what I primarily do now is write and edit, and working on the CV was seminal in my development as a writer. It also gave me a chance to take responsibility, to meet the truck from western Massachusetts when papers were delivered before chapel, and to see how the Schoolroom became hushed as hundreds of white papers opened.



Elbridge Colby '98

Circle Voice Editor 1997-98

THE *CIRCLE Voice* was a central part of my experience at Groton under the wonderful leadership of Jonathan Minifie. One of the things I certainly learned was the importance of a great partner, which I had in my co-editor, **Jeff Wolf**. Running the CV was a big responsibility. One of the things I've certainly taken in my career is to know or learn what I'm good at and what I'm not, and to embrace working with partners rather than resist it. I have not practiced journalism but I deal with journalists all the time, and have great respect for the craft.



Jeff Wolf '98

Circle Voice Editor 1997-98

BEING CO-EDITOR of the CV was one of the highlights of my time at Groton. It also occupied most of my time outside the classroom and off the field in 1997-98.

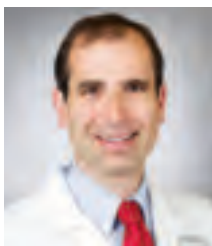
We covered a lot of the major changes that were going on around campus at the time, like the start of the construction of the new gymnasium in 1997, retirements of beloved faculty members, and the various speakers who came to campus (a Vietnam Vet coming to speak about the My Lai Massacre, for example).

I will echo what my co-editor, **Bridge Colby**, said about working with a great partner. Bridge and I had very different personalities and skill sets. But the wise and witty Jonathan Minifie, our CV faculty advisor, saw early on that it was precisely because of our differences that Bridge and I would make a great team. His strengths made up for my weaknesses, and vice versa.

I recall being anxious about the responsibility of co-editing the CV. I did not feel I had enough experience to fill the editor's shoes and was tempted to turn down the opportunity. This would have been a colossal mistake. For while there was a steep learning curve, I *was* ready for the position and grew more from its demands precisely because I still had so much to learn. You don't have to be ready before you start.

I also learned that you can get a lot done under a hard deadline.

I was a columnist for the *Daily Princetonian* and a writer for the campus science and technology magazine. These drew upon my CV writing experience, but I used my editor skills more directly as the co-founder and editor of an intercollegiate campus journal. I remember designing and editing the first issues of that journal, drawing directly from what I had learned at Groton. It was Mr. Minifie, and my fellow staff at the CV, that taught me the fundamentals of publishing a newspaper.

**Seth Bechis '99***Circle Voice* Editor 1998–99

WE TOOK the paper into color while I was editor. Those were big technological hurdles in terms of photo quality, technology, editing, etc.

I learned how to manage a team and meet deadlines. And that when working with multiple people in different aspects, from writers to editors to photo, it is critical to run a tight organization that meets deadlines but also is a good work environment.

In college I wrote and worked as an editor for scientific journals. I now enjoy medical writing and scientific writing, which I incorporate into my career in surgery.

**So-One Hwang '01***Circle Voice* Editor 2000–01

THIS BROUGHT back a flood of memories—the mentorship of Mr. Jonathan Minifie (“Fie”), the CV room that held the most powerful Macs at that time with Adobe PageMaker and Photoshop, the hands-on learning in editing and layout design (and leadership as an editor-in-chief), the article brainstorm meetings after sit-down dinners, the tremendous teamwork and labor of love publishing each issue.

Before becoming editor, I remember being assigned an article to investigate how Prize Day prize recipients were chosen and to interview Headmaster Bill Polk with questions and concerns by students about fairness. That felt

rather controversial at the time! The most challenging experience by far was when Mr. Minifie passed away suddenly and unexpectedly, the summer before my senior year serving as editor.

I remember laughing a lot in Mr. Minifie’s classroom (which was the CV headquarters at that time), not just when working on the April Fools’ Day issue but on the regular issues, too. Sometimes laughing helped to survive getting cross-eyed while proofreading. Mostly, the laughter flowed from the camaraderie and healthy doses of irreverence while working together.

Throughout my career in research and academia, I frequently used skills in editing and design to write and present research reports. In my first teaching position after college, I served as the faculty advisor of the student newspaper at Dexter Southfield School. From teamwork—navigating politics of any dynamic and social environment—to leadership, the opportunities I had to apply skills gained from serving on the CV are innumerable.

**Henna Garrison '04***Circle Voice* Editor 2003–04

BEING EDITOR of the *Circle Voice* was more of a lesson in listening than anything else. Rather than amplifying my own voice, it was an experience in navigating and expressing important issues and opinions from diverse contributors. I learned that it wasn’t just what you wanted to say, but how you wrote it: the words used, the tone, the style ... even the placement of the article within the paper.

I spent less time writing and more time reading and re-reading, editing, playing with the layout, and brainstorming ideas.

I do remember writing a particular opinion piece toward the end of senior year where I wanted to share some frustrations and make a plea to the student community to contribute more. It wasn’t particularly controversial, but my faculty advisor, Katherine Bradley, challenged me by asking important questions and having me reflect on my choice of words and tone of voice. I took the time to let the words sit and settle and, in the end, that period of listening and then editing my own words helped me ultimately produce a stronger piece.

My takeaway from that experience was that asking the right questions is important, space for reflection is key, and it’s just as crucial to listen for both what is and is not being said. These

are ideas I still use in my current life as program director for the Anna Tasca Lanza Cooking School’s food education programs in Sicily, and in my work as a mindset coach and community cultivator.

Part of my job is to lead and organize a two-month-long food education course called Cook the Farm. We talk specifically about Sicilian food culture and how it relates to global food movements. A lot of what interests me is how we perceive and communicate our individual experiences, especially as it relates to food and taste, so I facilitate discussions and writing prompts on food experiences and ideas.

In my work as a coach, I use principles based on neurolinguistic programming, which is all about the power of words. I know my time as editor of the *Circle Voice* was a valuable start to my foray into language, writing, and words.

Sometimes laughing helped to survive getting cross-eyed while proofreading.

—Kaitlyn Mauritz '07



Kaitlyn Mauritz '07

Circle Voice Editor 2006–07

THE IDEA that we lived in this “Groton Bubble” was very prevalent when I was editor. We got a lot of feedback from teachers that the newspaper needed to do more to broaden the scope of what students focused on. My senior year was the year before an election, so there were a lot of opinion pieces about the potential candidates. The people we had writing the opinions were very strong in defending their candidates and beliefs, and I think those articles raised good conversations. No doubt they raised some arguments too.

I had a blast working in the editing room with the other editors. I learned that when you have a big deadline, if you are working with other hardworking, motivated, fun people, the process can be enjoyable. Those issues were a hugely collaborative effort, and knowing that it was a team effort and having the camaraderie of the editors behind each issue made seeing the final product that much more rewarding. I remember laughing a lot in that editing room.

I did not study journalism in college, but today I work in investor relations, and storytelling and presenting information to different constituents are definitely a big part of my everyday job.



Edoardo Saravalle '11

Circle Voice Editor 2010–11

I WAS always impressed by how much faculty members and students were willing to discuss their views on the controversies of the day. I remember specifically one case when one faculty member was very open about the difficulties of both enforcing the rules and allowing students to learn and grow. I remember being amazed that a faculty member would take the time to talk to me about such a topic when she clearly had no obligation to do so.

While I did not participate in college journalism, the experience gave me an appreciation for writing and arguing in print. This encouraged me to write about foreign policy both as part of my job and on my own.



Matt Clarida '12

Circle Voice Editor 2011–12

I AM most grateful for the hours I spent with my classmates working in the CV office, which was next to the library in Hundred House. From a personal development standpoint, I really appreciate the opportunity the newspaper gave me to practice my interview skills. Interviewing requires preparation and confidence. I now work for a judge and get déjà vu as I prepare for a big meeting: it feels similar to when I put my notes together to interview Rick Commons. I also remember being nervous whenever a new edition printed, which is exactly how I feel today when I finalize a judicial opinion.

Big stories: Brian Fidler departed as chaplain, which brought to the fore some debates about the place of religion at the school. There were some who thought changing times called for a different approach to religion on campus. Others viewed the traditional rituals as foundational to

the Groton experience. I am sure this debate continues.

The other big story I recall was an early-stage plan to reroute one of the roads near school. I believe this was in 2011, and the effect would have been a more private campus. I can't remember how far this went (when I came to Lessons & Carols in December, all the roads looked the same), but the proposal highlighted familiar tensions between Groton and the surrounding communities.

I am not sure if the paper's humor section has survived, but mine was an era of tightening supervision and we had our fair share of canceled stories and close calls. These are funny stories to think of now, but they made me sweat when I was editor.

At Harvard, I wrote for the *Crimson* and covered the campus faculty meetings as a sophomore and the university president's office as a junior. Writing about the president, Drew Faust, gave me the opportunity to meet with her once a month. These are some of my most treasured experiences from college: she was a brilliantly strategic leader of global renown and I felt very fortunate to be able to learn from her. Another Harvard journalism experience I am very proud of is that **Derek Xiao** (Groton '15) became president of *The Crimson*. I did not get quite so far but was associate managing editor my senior year.

COES' CORNER

Best-selling author **Ben Coes '85** says that editing the *Circle Voice* sharpened his skills as a fiction writer. We hope he's kidding, but we'll leave that up to you. He shared his memories of editing the CV.

Warning: some of this is true.

My favorite memories of the CV are in fact also the main things I've learned about in my life after Groton. Working with **Nina [Trowbridge '85]** and my friends was an extremely slapdash effort to have enough content for the next issue. Everyone pitched in. I made my roommates write articles, and if you knew my roommates that was a major accomplishment.

I just looked over some old copies of the CV and there are articles such as, "Is It Really Just Green Cheese?" by **Amy DiBuono Graham '85**, "Adven-ture in Senegal," by **Hal Pratt '85**, "On Being a 'Townie,'" by **Dave Tosatti '86**, and my favorite, an advice column by [the late] **Greg Smith '85**, a verbose classmate who couldn't stop talking. We ended up being roommates at Columbia together and our friendship started at the CV. Nina and I made them all write articles, every person we could find. Many of them were also trying to "impress" Nina—and the CV was their vehicle.

I went and found Greg, whose nickname was "Smittée," or "Té," and told him he needed to write something for the CV. He refused and said it sounded like a lot of work. I explained to him that if he didn't do it, I would attempt to hurt him. He didn't take kindly to that. We were trying to beat the crap out of each other, and a teacher broke it up. After that, he agreed to write for the CV. We came up with the idea for an advice column called "Smittée's Corner." In the column, Smittée gave dating and other advice to students who submitted questions under anonymous identities. Its apotheosis was short-lived. It turned out there wasn't much appetite for advice.

He set up a box in the Schoolhouse for people to insert questions. The column reprinted the question and his answer, always in italics.

Here are a couple gems from "Smittée's Corner":

"Dear Smittée,
You are one weird dude."
SMITTÉE: *"So was Saint Francis of Assisi. Your misutilization of this advice column to take swipes at me could be a sign of early stage dementia, and I would encourage you to see the school nurse immediately."*

"Dear Smittée,
What's up? I'm washed up. There isn't a network that'll touch me."
SMITTÉE: *Get a grip, son. The times are a changin'. Soon we will all live on the moon. In the meantime, stop bothering me and find your own job."*

Smittée's Corner eventually ran low on letters asking for advice, and Greg turned to writing horoscopes to fill the space. His predictions were consistently inaccurate, but it's funny to read them again:

"Aries: Your father will be indicted in a few weeks. Watch out for Virgos. Most lepers descend from Virgos.

Taurus: Accept your fellow students for who they are, except that Fourth Former who always wears suspenders. Female Tauruses, pay particular attention to Moon Children this month, perhaps even coming onto a Moon Child.

Gemini: You need some serious time alone. You annoy everyone who so much as looks at you.

Moon Children: You're on fire. Find love, but no teachers.

Leo: You lied to your grandmother and will burn in hell for it. She was a nice lady.

Virgo: Don't call home so often. Your parents are divorcing. Oh stop whining, you know they've hated each other for years.

Scorpio: Stop making hints to people. Dungeons and Dragons might get you into Harvard but it won't get you laid.

Capricorn: The water polo league went on strike and thus love cannot be found there. Seek out the horoscope staff of the *Circle Voice* and await further instructions.

Aquarius: Forget about water polo. It's over! There's an intense Tiddlywinks seminar on PBS. You look like you might be in the mood for a Moon Child. Need I say more?"

The CV used to be manually printed with a printing press located in the Schoolhouse basement. It was the size of an SUV. Well, one day it fell over and several staffers were trapped underneath it. Nina Simonds '85, co-editor in chief, grabbed one of the steel legs of the massive machine and clutched it before the entire thing crushed everyone. It was just inches away from turning them all into pancakes.

Nina was screaming: "Ben, Ben! Can you please help?!"

I was like, "I think you have it, Nina!" because I was finishing up an edit to my front page exposé about how students no longer helped one another. I also didn't want to rob Nina of the opportunity to be the "hero." Well, as every Grottie knows, Nina lifted that printing press and hurled it through the window, saving many lives and ushering in the CV's new age of having to be printed by an outside vendor.

How the CV influenced my professional writing career—The CV allowed me to pursue serious fiction writing at a very young age, and I remember a few of the bigger pieces we put out:

"Mr. Polk's Polka Party"—a two-part exposé of a polka party supposedly thrown by then-headmaster Bill Polk and his wife LuAnn at the Headmaster's House, featuring polka music, fancy hors d'oeuvres, and a hot tub.

"The Short Happy Life of Francis Macoeser," a two-part epic, in first person, a la Hemingway, of my rather significant and some would say unjust time spent washing dishes, a punishment that used to be employed by the school for various non-lethal transgressions of which I partook, including making up a story about Mr. Polk. Like Upton Sinclair in *The Jungle*, I exposed the harsh working conditions of the old dishwasher in the Dining Hall—rusty squeegees, the reuse of food for the school's ubiquitous "beef stroganoff," pudding so old there were dinosaur footprints in it—and in so doing exposed the school's disciplinary regime for targeting someone who coincidentally happened to be the editor of the school paper. (I received sixteen more dishwashings as punishment for various things I may have embellished in the article.)

"Ding Dong, Dong Ding, DANG," a brutal four-part critique of the Second Form bellringers and how truly horrible they were at ringing the bells, written by the CV's art critic in residence, yours truly. This article apparently "hurt a few feelings" of "impressionable Second Formers" for calling for their immediate expulsion and resulted in said journalist's decision to move into the Dining Hall and live there.

"FAC Brat," a six-part Watergate-esque conspiracy theory exposé about faculty children operating a major gun-running syndicate out of the music hall, a theory that ended up being deemed "extremely inaccurate" according to the school's lawyers and "libelous" according to all of the faculty children at the school, as well as their lawyers, as well as my father's lawyers right before he disowned me.

"Newt and Tom's Big Adventure," a seven-part reality series in words about a kind and innocent Fifth Former who roomed with two individuals who proceeded to systematically brutalize the innocent roommate, through gaseous incidents as well as replacing the poor roommate's toothpaste with Preparation H. The author of this controversial article remains, to this day, anonymous.



Elizabeth Salisbury '14

Circle Voice Editor 2013–14

I REALLY learned how to utilize everyone on a team and maximize strengths to get the job done. This lesson has helped me in many areas of my life, from group projects to biology research. It's important to recognize that everyone has something to contribute, and that the outcome is always better when people are excited and motivated about what they're doing.

I haven't practiced journalism officially since Groton, but I've found the skills I learned and the passion for a good story have not gone away. In college, I extensively researched the relationship between the pharmaceutical industry and the health care we receive, and I find myself today constantly wanting to learn the who's and why's behind important decisions in politics and health care. My experience working on the *Circle Voice* continues to help me even today. I started my clinical rotations in the hospital in March, and have found that interviewing patients is often similar to interviewing people for articles, trying to get to the core issues and the why so I can figure out what is wrong with them and how to fix it.



**Derek Xiao '15***Circle Voice* Editor 2014–15

I GOT my first real taste for journalism at the CV. This—and the appreciation it inspired for the vital role a newspaper plays in serving as a voice for its community—is perhaps my single biggest takeaway from my time as editor.

As Groton continued to get to know its eighth headmaster, Temba Maqubela, the CV focused much of its editorial attention on the new headmaster's initiatives in promoting greater diversity and inclusion at Groton. The Schoolhouse renovation project was another consistent thread during that year.

Putting together a paper every three or so weeks was no small task for our student staff. Weeks before an issue arrived on the front steps of the Schoolhouse, neatly stacked and bundled with twine, it meant debating story pitches, researching, sourcing, conducting interviews, structuring articles, parsing grammatical obscurities and syntax, wrangling InDesign, and trading emails with our contracted press operator hours and hours after lights-out.

Yet every three weeks, we'd call a new pitch meeting and the whole process would start all over again. All this, because we believed an uninformed campus would be a poorer one. Because our readers deserved to know about what was happening in the place where they lived, studied, and worked. Because even in today's age of social media and rumors—maybe *especially* in today's age of social media and rumors—a newspaper's work still mattered.

I know I wasn't alone in this belief. Later in college, I ran into more than a couple former CV editors who continued their work at the

Crimson—including **Matt Clarida '12**, **Winston Shi '12**, **Hanna Kim '17**, and **Isabel Kendall '17**. Each of us, and doubtless more, got our start chasing stories for the *Circle Voice*.

An old photo of **Franklin D. Roosevelt 1900**, a former *Crimson* president, sat on the walls of my office in the *Crimson*'s newsroom. His words to the *Crimson* in 1933—"Keep the old sheet flying"—have been repeated by generations of *Crimson* editors since, adopted as a sort of unofficial rallying cry to continue the necessary work of the paper. We're proud of few alumni like we are of FDR.

But for me, seeing that photo always recalled Groton, and the lives of public service the school inspired. Roosevelt predated the CV, but I learned a lot of these lessons through my time as editor of the paper—about journalism, public service, and leadership.

They say the best editing is done the second after you hit the send button, and that's undoubtedly true of editing a newspaper, too. After a week of layout in the Brooks House basement office, the last step before shipping a new issue of the CV off to the presses was to export it from our layout software, Adobe InDesign, to PDF. The PDF, however, could only be viewed from our laptops upstairs—a good sprint away.

There were too many times when I closed out an issue only to run upstairs and discover a misplaced comma in the PDF. And then a forgotten photo credit. And then a single quote where a double quote should've been. (Never on the same trip, though.)

And that required running downstairs again, restarting the computer (if I had been overconfident upon exporting the last time), clicking back into InDesign, fixing the error, and saving everything in PDF again. This might go on for an hour or more at a time.

So it certainly gave me some bittersweet joy to close out of InDesign for the last time in the April before my Prize Day. Little did I know I'd be running up and down between the *Crimson*'s downstairs presses and its upstairs newsroom only four years later—still on InDesign.

**Ethan Woo '16***Circle Voice* Editor 2015–16

VARSHA HARISH and I focused on completing the CV's transition to the digital world as we built out the paper's website. We also switched printing presses to better the quality of the paper. I still remember the mock presidential election that our features team held in 2016. That story was the CV's first official poll, and the staff had a lot of fun digging into the data to figure out the political leanings of students and faculty members on campus—and how that compared with the broader political trends of the country.

Varsha and I spent almost every 10-12 period in the CV room, and every night, I dragged along **Zahin Das** and **George Klein**, my fellow dorm prefects, who doubled as section editors. Some of my favorite Groton memories happened in that two-hour period of delirium, when all of us pored over page edits and stressed over the college application process. The CV was one of the most intense and exciting parts of my time on the Circle, and I feel privileged to have been a part of its history.

For better or for worse, I've always prioritized practicality and productivity. I loved the CV for its ability to put out a tangible newspaper for the Groton community. At the same time, I was lucky enough to go into my year as editor-in-chief with an editorial board that consisted of my best friends at Groton. I looked forward to every meeting, every late night in the CV room with my co-editor as we made tweaks and negotiated layout styles with the ever-frustrating Adobe InDesign. The CV had a lasting impact on what motivates me in leadership roles. In college (and now in the office!), I did my best to create an environment where people were driven to create the best possible product. But I also tried to create a place where my peers felt safe and seen, comfortable with being themselves. Even five years after Prize Day, I look back fondly on the opportunities the CV afforded me, and am extraordinarily grateful for the lessons I learned there.

Even in today's age of social media and rumors – maybe especially in today's age of social media and rumors – a newspaper's work still mattered.

– Derek Xiao '15



Hadley Callaway '17

Circle Voice Editor 2016–17

THE 2016 election was notably divisive for the entire country, and those effects were felt on the Circle. In the months leading up to the election, nearly every Opinions section featured the topic. Our December issue's front page article was entitled, "Turbulent Election Trumps Unity on Campus," accompanied by a graphic of Clinton supporters looking disdainfully on a single Trump supporter. As the cartoon hints, Groton's students and faculty at that time leaned strongly to the left. The day after the election, campus felt like a funeral—much of the student body wore all black to denote their mourning. The Democratic and Republican clubs on campus held a joint meeting to discuss how students were affected by the issue, and ways to move forward. Some students wrote Mr. Maqubela asking him not to obtain Trump's letter, but the Young Republicans wrote an email asking that the school come together and not reduce the views of the student body to one single viewpoint. It was an

interesting few weeks, to be sure.

There were also some significant changes to dorm life. A new position of "lead prefect" was established. The lead prefect served as the point person of each dorm's group of Sixth Form prefects, meeting regularly with the dorm head and the deans about how to improve residential life. This came to complement the simultaneous changes to the peer counselor system, as the number of peer counselors was reduced to only one or two per dormitory. A third important change to dorm life came in the form of an overhaul of the intervisitation ("intervis") policy, extending the hours and days that students could have guests of the opposite gender visit their dorm. One goal of the policy change was to ease the strain on inter-gender relationships, which seemed notably tense for my form.

The greatest personal challenge was how to manage peers. At first, I struggled to delegate work and provide constructive criticism to my friends. Adjusting the way I interacted to match certain personalities, learning to give criticism, and other such person-to-person skills amounted to some of the more valuable things I learned at Groton. They informed how I worked on collaborative projects at summer internships, how I ran meetings for the Columbia Women in Computer Science club, and how I worked with younger students as their TA.



Christian Carson '18

Circle Voice Editor 2017–18

HOW TO work with a team, how to find a good contract printer in New England who prints the right paper size (becoming more difficult!), and how to use InDesign are all skills I took from the paper. But more than anything, editing the *Circle Voice* teaches you how to quickly and ruthlessly cut down prose. A good rule of thumb was that all pieces received, including the ones I wrote, could be reduced by half without harm to the content. And they were reduced—unless the paper needed the padding. I've used that lens—removing all but the extraneous from prose—on my own writing, both creative and critical, in college.

Editing the paper also gives a measure of responsibility. There was ample editorial and logistical oversight and help, but **Annie [Colloredo-Mansfeld '18]** and I were were responsible for setting a publication schedule and sticking to it. "Sticking to it" in this use means keeping in contact with all interested parties in various articles, late nights spent editing, and chasing many people down.

Biggest stories: The biggest involved topics of national discussion as they applied to campus. Take climate change: as the issue rose in prominence, students and faculty began to question whether Groton could be doing more to reduce its footprint. The paper in our year reported on many related issues: the Schoolhouse addition, built with climate concerns in mind; the (successful) petition for a solar farm on unused Groton-owned land; and some investigation into the energy sources of the local municipal utility. And as the nation reconsidered memorials of certain historical figures, students at Groton leveled a critical eye at the busts in the Schoolroom. News articles and opinions on either side of the issue were written. Now, four new busts are about to be added to the Schoolroom.

**Marianne Lu '19***Circle Voice* Editor 2018–19

I HAVE written for the *Stanford Daily* and I love it. On the CV, I learned that being a leader isn't all that glamorous and that there are so many behind-the-scenes logistics involved. I also definitely learned to delegate tasks to others, to respond effectively to emergencies, and to work with a wide range of people.

Biggest stories: A common theme across a few of our issues was college admissions practices, especially in light of the Varsity Blues Scandal and affirmative action court case. A few articles that stand out were opinion pieces that debated legacy and affirmative action.

**Lily Cratsley '19***Circle Voice* Editor 2018–19

SERVING AS editor-in-chief of the *Circle Voice* was one of the most difficult challenges I took on at Groton. I learned many lessons, the greatest of which revolved around time management and teamwork. My co-editor, **Marianne Lu '19**, and I faltered time and time again, often skipping sleep and even Spring Fling celebrations, but always managing to pull things together at the last minute to publish. It was wildly intimidating to be given such a high level of responsibility and trust at that young of an age, but with Marianne's help and Ms. Friedman's

generous guidance, we persisted.

In college I took a few steps away from journalism, focusing more of my energy on storytelling through another vehicle: theater. I was first introduced to both of these disciplines as strategies for creating change on the Circle, for which I am forever grateful. Through narrative work, we hold the power to challenge prejudice and illuminate those who have been historically pushed into the shadows. That is what I hope to do through stories.

My Sixth Form year, the Christopher Columbus bust in the Schoolroom was smeared in red. I heard about it in the Dining Hall and sprinted to the Schoolroom to get a photo for the *Circle Voice* before staff covered it up. Though we were unable to uncover many details about the act of vandalism, I often remember that event as a bold act of protest and one of the most important stories we covered.

I hope some student in fifty years will be able to look back to our paper to understand what it was like to live through the pandemic.

— Zoe Colloredo-Mansfield '21

**Cara Chang '20***Circle Voice* Editor 2019–20

IN THE aftershocks of the destabilizing 2016 U.S. presidential election, political representation on campus became a hot topic; in particular, students pointed out that there

were few to no conservatives ever invited to speak at Groton. "Are we becoming an echo-chamber?" we asked ourselves. The question appeared in the *Circle Voice* multiple times, sparking back-and-forths in the paper itself. The question itself was controversial, because implicit in it was a "them vs. us" divide: who was the "echochamber" leaving out and why? Things became even more complex when op-eds began responding to each other. Navigating that arena full of history and personal identity, all the while worrying

about the *Circle Voice*'s credibility, was the most important and most challenging coverage my senior year.

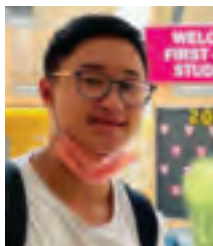
Hadley Callaway '17

doesn't know it, but she changed my life. I'm so grateful she threatened to drag me from my room if she didn't see me at the first *Circle Voice* meeting. I picked up a pitch about the transition of student computers from Dell to Apple, thinking it would be a quick dabble into journalism. One tiny column of text has since multiplied into dozens of stories, and I have no intention

of putting down my pen.

I'm back at the bottom of the totem pole at the *Harvard Crimson* (and absolutely loving it!). After joining the fall of my freshman year, I've become one of the *Crimson*'s newsletter writers and labor beat reporters. On the labor beat, I cover Harvard's ten labor unions and its 15,000 workers as well as U.S. labor policy. Even though it isn't a class, the *Crimson* has taught me the most during my time at Harvard.

To anyone considering writing at Groton, my advice is simple: do!



Derek Hu '21
Circle Voice Editor 2020–21

THE MAIN points of discussion as editor-in-chief were Black Lives Matter and COVID-19. With Black Lives Matter, the *Circle Voice* covered stories about Black@Groton and incorporated a variety of opinion pieces regarding the Black Lives Matter movement. COVID-19 dominated the entire news section and made it extremely difficult for the sports section to come up with ideas. I feel honored, though, to have covered COVID-19 at Groton as editor. I feel like people will look back one day to see how COVID-19 was handled at Groton and maybe even write a research paper about it. To be honest, all articles are extremely challenging to cover. The *Circle*

Voice does its best to ensure everything is true and that it is representing everyone's voices, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, gender, religion, or sexual orientation.

The biggest lesson I learned from the CV editor position is to trust those around you. Sometimes, I felt like **Zoe [Colloredo-Mansfeld '21]** and I were doing too much work, which was not the fault of the staff writers. Grotonians are some of the smartest and most talented people in the world, but I didn't realize that at first. Later on, though, I learned to trust and rely on my peers, and when I did, the article quality was better.



Zoe Colloredo-Mansfeld '21
Circle Voice Editor 2020–21

WE CERTAINLY had a unique year as editors. As everyone is well aware, 2020–21 was full of newsworthy stories. While editors, we spent more time than usual just figuring out how to keep the paper running: connecting an editorial team living in time zones up to seventeen hours apart [due to hybrid learning], switching to an all-online format, and adapting to Groton's own ever-changing rules.

Logistics aside, topics like the ongoing pandemic, the Black Lives Matter movement on campus and beyond, and the ever-tumultuous 2020 election dominated the pages of the paper. For our team, the most important story was COVID-19, and more specifically serving our purpose as journalists to open up communication and understanding between students and administrators—running stories both expressing student critiques and giving space for decision-makers to answer questions and explain their reasons. I hope some student in fifty years will be able to

look back to our paper to understand what it was like to live through the pandemic from a minute-to-minute and day-to-day perspective.

I learned a tremendous amount. I learned how to manage a team and communicate with every member effectively—and that delegation to talented editors and writers is paramount to success. I also learned how clear direction and time invested on the front end of the editing process can save hours per article on the back end—an excellent lesson in careful planning, clear expectations, and time management to carry far into my own life. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I learned how much we all stand to gain from each other if we take the time to ask interested questions and understand what each person is trying to say. Whatever angle I thought I had going into my research or interviews would rarely be the same at the end of the process.

Finally, these questions were about what we did as editors, but any CV editors-in-chief would be remiss not to mention all Ms. Friedman does for the paper. Offering editing suggestions, providing advice, and supplying a real-time education in journalism is no small feat. Somehow, amidst all her other responsibilities on campus, Ms. Friedman manages to show up year after year to guide another pair of untested editors through a complicated process and we all are so much better for it!

CARRYING ON THE CV TRADITION

This year's editors, Allison Jiang '22 and Tyler Weisberg '22, have introduced a podcast (first guest, Dr. Andy Reyes '80) and more vibrant social media marketing while maintaining the *Circle Voice* in print and online at thecirclevoice.org.





PRIZE DAY



“There is no courage without fear.”

Prize Day keynote speaker Richard Stengel shared that empowering observation with ninety-four graduates of the Form of 2021 and their guests, in a ceremony with special significance for its mere existence, after a year of careful pandemic protocols and last spring’s remote ceremony.

(continued)

Prize Day was both familiar and different this year: it followed its usual format, but guests were seated by family pods in two tents, separate from the main tent for students and faculty. Younger students watched their friends graduate remotely; they had been sent home several days earlier to reduce density on campus and allow for social distancing. Because a full Chapel would have violated pandemic protocols, parents watched the chapel service on large screens in the tents.

Mr. Stengel, a former under secretary of state who collaborated with Nelson Mandela on his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, spoke about the benefits of fear—a suitable topic for a form facing a world of unknowns.

Also speaking at Groton's Prize Day ceremony were Headmaster Temba Maqubela, Board of Trustees President Benjamin Pyne '77, P'12, '15, and Beatrice Agbi '21, who was selected by the Sixth Form as the student Prize Day speaker. Beatrice described a tumultuous year, the opening of the Groton Circle and Groton mindset, and how a Groton education prepared this year's graduates to ask tough questions of the school.

Mr. Maqubela described how this year's graduates had fulfilled four essential pillars undergirding a Groton education—scholarship, spirituality, service, and globalism. "Scholarship: Because you would be hard pressed to find many schools that accomplished as many in-person teaching days as we did. Spirituality: You look after and take care of each other in profound and mundane ways. Service: Whether it was in mask-wearing or wiping down benches after every class, you accomplished the greater good with distinction. Globalism: Never was globalism more in focus than when we had hybrid learning, or even a hybrid Prize Day as we have now."

Mr. Pyne expressed gratitude to all who made in-person learning and Prize Day possible this year—not forgetting the graduates. "We need to thank you, the Form of 2021, for your amazing leadership through all the past challenges of this school year. On many occasions, Mr. Maqubela has told me and other trustees how you set an example for the whole school and showed leadership. And as we all know, learning leadership is part of our mission, and you exemplified it this year."

The traditional words spoken at the end of Prize Day took on extra meaning in 2021. "Go well!" said Mr. Maqubela as graduates tossed their straw boaters into the air. Going well and staying well were goals this year, and Prize Day provided a joyful opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments and courage of the resilient Form of 2021.



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1. Caroline Drapeau and Margot Ferris
2. Leah Pothel
3. Angelica Parra, Selah Barrett, Maddy Son
4. Harry Liao and Andrej Klema
5. Jane Park, Zoe Colloredo-Mansfeld, Angela Wei, Kate Clark, Janice Zhai, Harriet Winterer, Cella Wardrop, Zoe Park, and Aisling O'Connell
6. Following pandemic protocols, elbow bumps replaced hugs as the traditional post-graduation greeting.
7. Lilly Gordon
8. Lola Murnighan and Chiara Nevard
9. Roshan Palakkal, Anuj Agarwal, Samarth Agrawal, Lucas Zheng, and Har Vey Yuen
10. Harriet Winterer
11. Robbie Long, Spencer Miller, Anthony Romano

Be Prepared to Change Your Mind

Keynote speaker Richard Stengel—under secretary of state from 2014–16, author, and former *Time* magazine editor—delivered the following address:

It's been a tumultuous year for everybody. And you guys, the students, the Form of 2021, have learned a lot of lessons. The problem is you don't really quite know what they are yet. You'll figure that out as you go along, but in a strange way, you're guinea pigs of the twenty-first century. You've lived in a way and had to deal with things that very few people have had to deal with, and you have learned a lot of lessons and you've probably achieved a lot of grit, and you're also smart, capable, and ready to take on the world, I'm sure.

Temba, thank you for that very kind introduction. You've had secretaries of state speak here before, so under secretary of state doesn't sound that impressive. But the reason I'm here, of course, is to talk about Nelson Mandela. I love South Africans. In fact, I'm married to one. And as Temba mentioned, I did work with Mandela on *Long Walk to Freedom*, and I spent about a year in South Africa talking to him every day. We accumulated about seventy-two hours of tapes to use for the creation of that book. And I came back to New York, where I was still a writer at *Time*, to work on it. The only

problem was we didn't have an ending yet, because while we were working on the book, he was also running for president of South Africa, trying to prevent the country from falling into civil war and trying to create the first democratic South African constitution and election. I realized we needed to get to the ending of the story, so I managed to get an assignment to go down to cover the South African election.

And I went to a place which is now known as KwaZulu-Natal, where Nelson Mandela wasn't very popular. There was a lot of violence. In fact, all of his aides told him he shouldn't go down there at all. But he's Nelson Mandela. He wanted to be president of all the people. So I had flown down there ahead of him. And he was coming down in a tiny propeller plane with just two seats for him and his bodyguard. And his bodyguard was a guy named Mike who I'm not even sure had ever been on an airplane before. I was waiting at the airport for him to come down. And while I was in a little private room, an official from the airport came to me and said, "I just want to let you know that one of the propellers on the plane has stopped working. And normally this isn't a problem; planes can land quite easily that way. But out of an abundance of caution, we're coating the runway with foam and we're bringing the local fire engines here."

So I nodded, a little bit concerned, and I sat there waiting. I went out as the plane was landing, and sure enough,



Keynote speaker Richard Stengel

it landed fine. And Mike and Mandela came off, and right next to that airplane was a busload of Japanese tourists who were leaving to fly back to Johannesburg. If you know Nelson Mandela, you know that it was irresistible for him to go and shake hands with every member of that bus and pose for pictures. So while he was doing that, I was in the waiting room when Mike came in, and I think he was still trembling. I asked him what happened. And he explained that during the flight, Mandela was reading a newspaper—he loved reading newspapers—and he tapped Mike on the knee and he said, "Mike, you might want to tell the pilot that the propeller is not working." Mike's eyes got wide. He went to see the pilot. The pilot said, "Yes, we know," and explained about the fire engines and the foam.

And Mike went back, took a seat, and explained to Mandela, and he said Mandela just nodded and thanked him, and went back to reading his newspaper. Mike said the only thing that kept him sane on the plane was that he would look at Mandela, who was calmly reading the paper like he was commuting into the office that morning. That's the story. Mandela finished shaking hands with all the Japanese tourists. He came through the waiting room. He picked me up. We got into the back of his armored BMW to go to the rally, which was the plan. The doors closed, the windows shut. He leaned over to me and said, "Man, I was terrified up there!"

Over the weeks and months that I had worked with him, he had on many



Luke Benedict and Noah Bay; right, Grace Oh and Annie O'Leary

// You don't guide them from the front. You lead them from the back."

occasions told me that he was afraid. He was afraid when he ran away to Johannesburg. He was afraid when he first started studying at a university. He was afraid when he went underground to launch the military wing of the ANC. He was afraid when he was sent to prison. He was afraid that he was going to be assaulted.

And I think one day I asked a stupid question like, "You're Nelson Mandela—how could you be afraid?" And he looked at me like I was crazy. And he said, "Richard, it would be irrational not to be afraid." This was an enormous lesson because what Mandela was saying is, there is no courage without fear. If you're not afraid of doing something, then maybe you're crazy. It's only the fear that you have to overcome to do it.

During all of these commencement speeches now, people are saying this line that's become a cliché: "What would you do if you weren't afraid?" Well, he

would laugh at that. The fear is actually something that helps you, and the courage comes in overcoming it and not letting it stop you from doing something that you know you need to do.

And the other lesson of that was, he wasn't afraid to say that he was afraid. In our world of sometimes authoritarian leaders who don't ever admit mistakes, saying that you're afraid is a sign of strength, not a sign of weakness. That was only one of his tenets of leadership. He was, in fact, a student of leadership. When he was twelve, a little bit younger than you, his father died, and his father was a hereditary chief. And he was then raised by the king of the Thembu Tribe and the Xhosa Tribe, which Temba is from. Mandela was raised in this royal village, and he studied the king for signs of leadership. And one of the things that he noticed was the king, in any meeting of the village or of his elders, was always the last to speak.

He listened and empathized with what everyone had to say and he spoke last, and then he summarized what everyone had said and tried to find some consensus. That was his style of leadership. I saw Mandela do that over and over again. I used to go down with him to the Transkei, where he built a house that's very near the place where he was born. And we used to take early morning walks in the hillside there. And when I say early morning, I really mean early, 4:30 or 5:00 a.m. And we were walking through a hillside one morning and he stopped and said to me, "Richard, have you ever herded sheep?" I'm from New York City. I've never herded sheep before. And he said, "You don't guide them from the front. You lead them from the back. You make them think that the direction that you want them to go in is the direction they want to go in." That is the way real people lead. It's not banging on the table and saying, "Me first."

Now, I mentioned that he was the son of a chief, a hereditary chief. Temba was talking about the fact that Groton is an elite school. Well, you know who else went to an elite school? Nelson Mandela. He went to a very fancy prep school for young African



Russell Thorndike and Ronan Doherty (left) and Luke Benedict and Edwina Polynice (right)

// The truth is, and educators never tell you this, that your real education begins when you leave school.

boys, and then he went to an even more exclusive place called Fort Hare, which is so exclusive that Temba's grandfather actually taught there and knew Mandela well. But the truth is, and educators never tell you this, that your real education begins when you leave school. And Nelson Mandela ran away from his school to Johannesburg because the king wanted to arrange a marriage for him, and he thought the girl was in love with someone else. So he ran away to Johannesburg, and he became a nightwatchman in a mine. And he was treated miserably under apartheid. All young Black men were, and this changed him.

This began his real education because the injustice that he experienced—he is a man of great confidence—was that if I, Nelson Mandela, am being treated like this, subhuman, what does that mean for all of my people? And something triggered in

him and that began his struggle, which was his struggle for freedom for his people. The thing that really molded him was a school that is even more elite than Groton, even more elite than Fort Hare. It's very, very hard to get into. Some people, and he among them, called it "The University." It's known as Robben Island, which is the prison where he spent twenty of his twenty-seven years. Some of you have been there. And what Robben Island did was, it was a sort of a crucible that ripped away all of the extraneous parts of his character and then kept what was pure. And for our book, I wanted to figure out what that was, what were the lessons that he learned in Robben Island?

He's not an introspective man. And I used to ask him, "How was the man who went to prison in 1964 different from the man who emerged in 1990?" He hated that question. But then one

day in exasperation I asked it, and he said, "I came out mature."

Now, a mature human being is actually quite a rare thing, as you'll discover in life. And what did he mean by mature? He meant—another adjective that he used all the time—measured. Someone who had self-control, someone who thought before he acted, and someone who did something else that a lot of people today think is a flaw—someone who can change their mind. I remember asking Mandela about why, when he came out of prison, the ANC, his organization, abandoned its commitment to socialism and the government owning all of the mines and the companies. And he said, "I looked around me and the world had changed. When circumstances change, I change my mind. What do you do?"

As you guys are about to go off to college, a year off, to work, whatever, be prepared not only to learn, but be prepared to change your mind. Don't stick with things just because someone else told you that's the right thing or because you believed it before. Be open-minded. He made a distinction, and it's often made in philosophy and social science and politics, between principles and tactics. And I used to ask him why, just before he went to prison in 1962, he became the head of something called *uMkhonto we Sizwe*, the Spear of the Nation, the military wing of the ANC. And I said, "How did you make that decision?" And he said, "We weren't making any headway in the freedom struggle. And for me non-violence, unlike for Gandhi, where non-violence was a principle, to me it was a tactic. And I would use any tactic to get to my goal, which is freedom for my people."

So, again, what I would say to you before you go out into the world, as smart and capable and ready for it as you are, figure out what your principles are, the things that you really care about, and then stick to them, because then everything else is a tactic.

Go forth, Form of 2021. It's great to be with you. Thank you so much.

On Tumult and Beauty

Members of the Form of 2021 chose Beatrice Agbi '21 (below) to deliver the student Prize Day speech.



Students, teachers, faculty, staff, family members, guests, alumni, trustees, leaky faucets, functional faucets, the Form of 2021, and anyone who is watching from wherever they may be, the word is “tumultuous.” Tumultuous like the plates, baseball cage, and tent that flew across the Circle in a thunderstorm in late October. Tumultuous like the scramble to test hundreds of students, faculty, and faculty families each week this year. Tumultuous like the two, three, four, or five years some of us have spent here, learning how to live.

T-U-M-U-L-T-U-O-U-S—yes, we know tumultuous. Our being here, under this tent together, stands testament to the fact that we have stared the word down in the past year, looked it in the eyes, watched it spread

sickness and social distance, and laid it to rest. Everyone here in this tent has known tumultuous, and because we have lived the word, we get to know peace. We’ve made it here, when so many thousands have died, and so many millions have suffered. Let’s take a moment and clap for ourselves.

To the Form of 2021, first, congratulations. We finally made it! And second, I want to thank you for choosing me to be your Prize Day speaker. I’m not gonna lie when I say that I was a little bit shocked when the results were announced. I mean, had I, on occasion, practiced giving this speech to an adoring crowd in my bathroom mirror? Yes, but who hasn’t? For the past five years, I’ve allowed this possibility to remain just that, a possibility—one that I only whispered to myself as a daydream, a distraction from a bad day.

But you chose me. I thought maybe I had done enough talking here for the past five years, thought that maybe you were sick of the sound of my voice, but you all have a knack of seeing magic within me when I fail to see it in myself. You have given me the gift of the last word. I thank you.

For those of you who don’t know me—hi, my name is Beatrice, but I go by B. Not Beet-rice, just B. I am seventeen years old, I am from New York City, and I am a poet.

Over the years, I have spoken to my formmates, and the wider Groton community, of romance, of love, of how bodies are like flowers, of the magic that lives in my bloodline, and, more recently, of the dangers of perpetuating binaries.

Today, my formmates have trusted me to do a scary thing—they have asked

Thomas Dempsey, Will Molson, Charlie Dane, Jack Bolton, and Nick Wyman



// We are able to carve spaces for ourselves, places where we can just exist, in the midst of tumultuous landscapes."

me to stare headfirst into the end, and make a bold declaration about this ember of our lives that is about to flicker out. My job as the Prize Day speaker is twofold; one, to assure my peers that the time we spent here was not useless, and two, to remind them that we are smart, capable, and ready to take on the world.

But here's a secret: I am terrified. I've spent so much of this past week crying and worrying about the end that I've worked myself into a stress-induced cold. The life that I've built for myself here, the lives that we've built for ourselves here, they are so specific to this environment that there will

never be a community like this one again, friends as close as these again, or a school that micromanages us like this one again.

You all know parts of me that my parents, my family, and the real world have yet to see. I am afraid that once I leave, the Beatrice here that you all have borne witness to will disappear. I am afraid that she won't survive the tumultuous world waiting beyond those gates. Tumultuous like the ongoing effects of police brutality and racism; tumultuous like the rioters who stormed the Capitol on January 6; tumultuous like the millions dead or dying at the hands of

this virus; tumultuous like the rise in Asian American violence; tumultuous like the impending doom of climate change or the continued struggle for LGBTQ+ rights or America's deep political divides—I don't want to know tumultuous.

But ultimately this desire to stop time so that I can cling onto what I know is just the natural human reflex against change. No matter what I say, we're going to get our diplomas, throw our hats into the wind, then drive off and have a good sober time. We're going to graduate.

Meanwhile, the teachers will head off to faculty meetings; the trustees will go on making budget calculations and decisions concerning the well-being of the school; the students will, eventually, return, work hard, complain about working hard, then continue to work hard some more; the Fifth Formers will become seniors; the Fourth Formers will become Fifth Formers; the Third, Fourth; the Second, Third; and Mr. Maqubela will continue to make awkward chemistry jokes in all of his public speaking events.

The reliably exuberant hat toss; right, Anna Ferronato Pimentel and Aidan Garcia



All of Groton's tragedies and successes will go on, as they have for the past 136 years, without us. And eventually, everyone that we know here will leave, and this school will become unrecognizable to us. The Form of 2021 will soon become history—the only palpable evidence of our existence: our name plaques on the Schoolroom walls.

The scariest, and most exciting, part about graduating is coming to terms with this fact: that we are small parts of Groton's existence. Our time here is equivalent to a second, maybe a minute, of a larger institutional timeline. When Groton students in the year 2100 look back on school history, the only characteristic that will differentiate our form from the rest will be the pandemic. In the long run, we will be remembered as the seniors who lived through COVID. In the long run, I think we might do the same.

But we're more than that. If I were to speak to you all now of our legacy, of the poetry of our time together, I would have to speak to you all of Sunday, May 2, 2021.

It was morning brunch, and a group of us were sitting in the senior section. Because those tables are so long, we were having the sort of Dining Hall conversation in which there were three different discussions going on. On one end, Edwina [Polynice], Tai [Campbell], and I were harmonizing to James Charles' rendition of "Bring Me a Little Water Now"; in the middle, Leah [Pothel], and Angelica [Parra] were worrying over their unfinished U.S. History research papers; and on the other end, Zoe Colloredo-Mansfeld, Zoe Park, Hollis Maxson, Gracie Mumford, Harriet Winterer, and Angela Wei were talking about how much they missed sit-down dinner.

For reference, sit-down is a Groton School tradition that takes place during the fall and spring terms of the school year. Once a week, the community dresses up and gathers for a formal meal. The tables are randomly assigned so that students and faculty are exposed to as many members of the community

as possible, giving them a chance to connect with people they might never talk to otherwise.

This year, sit-down dinner was one of the many traditions that were destroyed with COVID. Now personally, out of all the things that got lost, I can't say that I missed this compulsory dress-up dinner too much. I actually vaguely remember briefly stepping outside of my discussion to make fun of them for the intensity of their conversation. Like come on, all this talk and complaining, and for what? It's not like these students were going to bring sit-down back or anything.

They did indeed bring sit-down back. They missed this tradition so much that they decided—in the span of that brunch—to host a Sixth Form-only sit-down dinner. They didn't know where it would be, they didn't know how they were going to go about getting the decorations necessary to make up the space; they only knew that they were going to make this event happen by dinnertime of that same day.

Harriet sent out the email:

"dear sixth formers" it wrote,
"cool people *dress up* for dinner tonight.
(and go to the hundred house side of the dining hall to eat at 5:45)
see you then <3"

I remember reading this email in the Schoolhouse with a group of other people and getting stressed out by this impromptu gathering. We had all already planned out our day, deciding that we would go through the motions of this Sunday like we did all the others: alone, acting in the interests of our own schedules.

But we showed up, as we often do. And when I arrived, a little late because getting to places on time is always a struggle for me, I was greeted with a formal dinner set up better than any I had ever known.

Picture it: This team of students had taken tables they found in the fives courts and covered them up with tablecloths found in the CPAC [Campbell Performing Arts Center]. They topped

each table with flowers that they had picked from bushes all around campus; they put said flowers in mason jars, provided by Ms. Hamlin. And they connected six speakers together to provide the ambient music.

And as we spoke under the bloom of the May trees, with the petals falling down on our plates, and with "Castaways" playing softly underneath it all, I remember looking around and taking it all in. We had interrupted this day to create community. We had interrupted this space and transformed it into a place where something beautiful and new could happen. For the first time in over a year, we brought sit-down back.

The best part about this story is that it exemplifies one of our form's greatest qualities: we are able to carve spaces for ourselves, places where we can just exist, in the midst of tumultuous landscapes. Like how those students scraped together supplies from all over campus to create that sit-down dinner in one of the most inconvenient spots on campus—right in front of the Dining Hall entrance—we have brought our presence to this school, which was not built for the likes of us. Because the fact of the matter is that this institution was not made with people like me in mind.

When Endicott Peabody first dreamt up the idea of Groton School, he advertised it to one demographic: straight, cisgendered, rich, white, Christian boys. Not for students of color, not for women or those that identify outside of the gender binary, not for members of the queer community, not for international students, and not for those from varying socioeconomic statuses.

And yet here I am, the antithesis of all that this school was originally intended to be. How we made the jump from being an exclusive institution to one that houses a more inclusive and diverse student body has been a decades-long arc—one which our form has been an integral part of.

Institutions like Groton will always struggle with the tension of balancing an elitist past with a present and a

future that demand retribution. As students here, our form has struggled with what it means to be a part of that tension. What does it mean for us to study in the Schoolhouse under the busts of all white men, eat in the Dining Hall under the watch of all the previous white male headmasters, sneak into the teachers' lounge in the Gardner Room while looking up at portraits of old white men, pass the added portraits of them in the presidents' hallway, the teachers' hall of fame, the history wing, the English wing—what does it mean for me, and other marginalized students, to exist in a school that wasn't made for us?

What does it mean to be a student at Groton, and promote values of inclusion and globalism, when we are connected to such a troubled and tumultuous past?

When I arrived on this campus for Second Form in the fall of 2016, way back in the olden days of Obama's presidency, the administration was just beginning to ask these tough questions of itself. Groton Feminists were known then as the Groton Girls Alliance, Diversity and Inclusion wasn't holding schoolwide community gatherings three times a term, and the school was having minimal conversations about sexuality and gender.

So the Form of 2021 came just in time. We have never failed to ask these tough questions of our school. We noticed the white men on the walls, the holes in our education, and the lack of space this campus had to hold the diverse entirety of us. Like Zoe Park said in her chapel talk, we were the ones pointing out the leaky faucets in our community, even when others struggled to do so.



Beatrice Agbi and Anuj Agarwal

We examined the ways in which our exclusionary past functions into our lives here today. We asked questions of everything that was handed to us. Questions like: Why don't we read more books by marginalized peoples in English class? Why don't we spend more time on non-Western civilizations in World History? Why don't we learn about the Tulsa massacre, COINTELPRO, or the AIDS crisis? Why don't we have an all-gender dorm on campus, for students who identify outside of the gender binary? Why do we have to walk boy/girl at Prize Day? Why don't we have more discussions surrounding mental health, sex education, racial justice—why, why why?

One would think that, with time, we would get tired of bugging the administration. That we would realize the enormity of our task, the amount of work that would need to be done, to undo a decades-long, exclusionary history, and give up.

But here's the elegant truth: Our Groton education has been equipping us with the knowledge and vocabulary necessary to ask these questions of our school. As we grew here, we took what we learned in the classroom and brought it into our efforts toward building a better community. And by this statement, I don't mean that we have all of the history facts, math equations, and books we've read memorized and ready to be cited at a moment's notice. (Or maybe some of us do, I don't know.) What we have taken from these classrooms is the ability to discuss, empathize, and listen to one another.

Discuss. Empathize. And listen. Let me say it one more time: Discuss. Empathize. And listen.

We do not always agree. Our form is, actually, very rarely on the same page. We are divided on a number of issues, the list of which is so vast and expansive that if I were to get into it we would be here all day. But when

// Our Groton education has been equipping us with the knowledge and vocabulary necessary to ask these questions of our school."

we speak to one another with respect; when we speak to one another with an awareness that we all come from different backgrounds; when we speak to one another not with the intent to argue, but to listen, we come to agreements on how we can best make a change that suits everyone. If only our politicians could do the same.

And because we have asked the hard questions, and taken on the work of confronting a tumultuous past; because we have discussed, we have empathized, and we have listened, we are now beginning to see the impact we have had here.

This year, we have changed the way we walk out of Chapel on Prize Day, so that by walking in alphabetical order over the traditional boy/girl pattern, we can include non-binary students; the ginormous queer community in our form has made it so that more students feel comfortable coming out here; and we are going to graduate on the same day that this school has introduced four new, non-white-male busts to the Schoolroom.

We have truly given this school a tumultuous time.

I said earlier that the job of the Prize Day speaker is twofold. One, to assure my peers that the time we spent here was not useless; and two, to remind them that we are smart, capable, and ready to take on the world.

I have done number one. Our form's legacy is one that will be remembered as speaking in direct opposition to the original legacy of this school. In this campus of elitist histories and portraits of old problematic white men, we have found space to exist. I have found

space to exist, as myself, in full.

So on to number 2. We are smart, capable, and ready to take on the world. We are smart, capable, and ready to take on the world. We are smart, capable, and ready to take on the world?

Last time I checked, our form was having a tumultuous time getting out of bed this morning.

I am still terrified. My stress-induced cold is still here. When I close my eyes and try to imagine for you all what comes next, the far-off future still looks unclear—I still don't want to know tumultuous.

Number 2 means letting go of the specific lives we have lived here.

Number 2 means acknowledging that we have the power and agency to turn building entrances into dinner venues.

Number 2 means that we are ready to go out into the tumultuous world, one rife with racism, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, bigotry, and hatred, and dare to be our full authentic selves in the midst of it all.

Number 2, Number 2, Number 2.

But in writing this speech, I've come to understand that if you've done Number 1, Number 2 isn't hard at all. Because if we were able to step onto this campus, and radically shake the very foundations upon which it was built, I have full faith that we will be able to walk into the tumultuous world as our full authentic selves and do some good. And if you still doubt me, then I have another word for you.

The word tumultuous applies to everyone in this tent; this next one is just for the Form of 2021. It is how we should be remembered in history.

The word for you, Form of 2021, is "beautiful." Beautiful like the speeches of conviction that were just given over the past two weeks; beautiful like the sunsets we have witnessed in our time here; beautiful like the senior portraits Tai and Luke took of all of us this past term; beautiful like Edwina and Angelica's Step team; beautiful like Thomas Dempsey's theatrical rendition of a scene from *The Notebook*; beautiful like Jane Park's voice during chapel postludes, Yuen Ning's set designs for theater productions, Janice Zhai's fits, Alex Karr's Tik Toks, Zoe C.M.'s experiments as a woman in STEM, Angela Wei's paintings, Claire Holding's dance parties in our room, or like Caroline Drapeau in that dress during the school production of *Legally Blonde*.

Beautiful like you all are right now, dressed up in your Prize Day outfits, looking like birds ready to fly.

Beautiful like the dinner we had that day in front of the Dining Hall, underneath the May blossoms of spring.

B-E-A-U-T-I-F-U-L—yes, we know beautiful. And because we have embraced the brilliant implications of its magic, we can know that we are smart, capable, and ready to take on the world.

People of this tent, of these tents, if you are going to remember us as anything, remember us for this word. Remember us for our ability to create community and belonging in a space that didn't historically deem it so. Remember us because we have exemplified the sum total of our parts; we are loud, we are big, we are Black, we are white, we are brown, we are Asian, we are Latinx, we are queer, we are boys, we are girls, we are non-binary, we are the tumultuous Form of 2021.

We are beautiful.

You, sitting there, are beautiful.

I love you all very dearly. Thank you, and congratulations.



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1. Andrew Huo
2. Claire Holding and Derek Hu
3. Nicole Lee Heberling
4. Grace Mumford and Olivia Dillon
5. George Kingsland and Lily Kempczinski
6. Aroon Sankoh and Nate Salander
7. Christina Oelhafen and Aisling O'Connell
8. Angelica Parra, Tai Campbell, Beatrice Agbi, and Edwina Polynice
9. Joshua Golden



5



6



7



8



9

2021 Groton School Prizes

THE CHARLES LANIER APPLETON PRIZE

Awarded to members of the Sixth Form who have greatly served the school

*Grace Emma Mumford
Timothy Walker Smith*

THE ASMA GULL HASAN 1993 CIRCLE VOICE JOURNALISM PRIZE

Acknowledges outstanding leadership in creating, editing, and producing the school's newspaper

*Zoe Liesl Colloredo-Mansfeld
Derek Hu*

THE TRONIC AWARD

Given in honor of Michael G. Tronic and awarded to a member of the Sixth Form who has made especially good use of the resources of the library and has shown strong interest in the life of the mind

*Beatrice Osaretin Ehinomen Agbi
Zoe Messun Song Park*

THE BISHOP JULIUS ATWOOD LITERATURE AND HISTORY PRIZE

Created by the late Right Reverend Julius Atwood for the best scholar in the combined fields of history and literature

Zoe Liesl Colloredo-Mansfeld

THE BUTLER PRIZE FOR EXCELLENCE IN ENGLISH

Beatrice Osaretin Ehinomen Agbi

THE PERRY HISTORY PRIZE

Given by Mrs. Eliza Endicott Perry to the best scholar in the field of history

Charles Thomas Whitehead

THE GEORGE LIVINGSTON NICHOLS PRIZE

Awarded for the best essay on a historical subject

Magnus William Miller

THE ROGERS V. SCUDDER CLASSICS PRIZE

Given in memory of Rogers Scudder, a distinguished teacher of Classics and a much loved member of this community

Yizhen Sophia Wu

THE FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT DEBATING PRIZE

Given in memory of Franklin D. Roosevelt 1900 by W. Averell Harriman 1909

*Anuj Mohanka Agarwal
Samarth Sanjay Agrawal*

THE ENDICOTT PEABODY MEMORIAL PRIZE

Given in memory of the Reverend Endicott Peabody by the Sixth Form of 1945 for excellence in the field of religion and ethics

Yuen Ning Chang

THE ISAAC JACKSON MEMORIAL PRIZE

Awarded to the best mathematics scholar in the Upper School

Nicolas Alan Bowden

THE BERTRAND B. HOPKINS ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES PRIZE

Given by the Form of 1948

Zoe Liesl Colloredo-Mansfeld

THE THORPE SCIENCE PRIZE

Created by Mrs. Warren Thorpe for the member of the Sixth Form who has been the most successful in developing an appreciation of the spirit and meaning of science

Samarth Sanjay Agrawal



Leah Pothel, Lily Kempczinski, Tai Campbell, Zoe Park, Zoe Colloredo-Mansfeld

THE WORLD LANGUAGES PRIZE

*Shane Michael Dennin
Juhyun Grace Oh*

THE ANITA ANDRES ROGERSON DANCE PRIZE

Janice Tianzhen Zhai

THE HUDSON MUSIC PRIZE

Given by the friends of William Clarke Hudson '56 to recognize effort and progress in music during the school year

*Katherine Jane Clark
Nathan Siyuan Zhang*

THE CHOIR CUP

Awarded to the Sixth Form chorister who has exhibited musical growth in sight reading and vocal technique

*Nicole Lee Heberling
Jane Park*

THE PHOTOGRAPHY PRIZE

Luke Kodiak Perini Benedict



Foster Waxman and Cella Wardrop

THE REVEREND FREDERIC R. KELLOGG UPPER SCHOOL ART PRIZE

Given in his memory in recognition of distinguished work in art

Janice Tianzhen Zhai

THE DENNIS CROWLEY DRAMA PRIZE

Given by Todd C. Bartels '01 to a member of the Sixth Form who has made the greatest contribution to the theater program

Caroline Helena Drapeau

THE REGINALD FINCKE JR. MEDAL

Given by the Sixth Form of 1928 in memory of First Lt. Reginald Fincke Jr. and awarded to a member of the Sixth Form who has shown in athletics his qualities of perseverance, courage, and unselfish sportsmanship

Ronan John Doherty



Walker Smith, Nathan Zhang, Jack Pedreschi, Eric Schiavone, Aidan Garcia, Sam Quigley, Aidan Garcia, and Josh Golden

THE CORNELIA AMORY FROTHINGHAM ATHLETIC PRIZE

Given by her parents and awarded to a girl in the Sixth Form who has demonstrated all-round athletic ability and has shown exemplary qualities of leadership and sportsmanship

Cassidy Lee Ann Thibodeau

THE ELIZABETH AND MARGERY PEABODY AWARD

Given to a member of the Sixth Form, other than a school prefect, whose contributions to the community demonstrate sensitivity, strength of character, leadership, and integrity

Zoe Liesl Colloredo-Mansfeld

THE WILLIAM V. LARKIN '72 AWARD

Given to the Groton student who best exemplifies uncommon courage and perseverance in meeting a challenge or overcoming adversity

Edwina Christine Polynice

THE CARROLL AND JOHN KING HODGES PRIZE

Given in memory of Carroll Hodges, Form of 1905, and John King Hodges, Form of 1910, to a Sixth Former who has distinguished him- or herself in a capacity to be designated by the headmaster

Zoe Liesl Colloredo-Mansfeld

The following awards were presented on the Saturday evening before Prize Day:

THE GADSDEN PRIZE

Given in memory of Jeremiah Gadsden of the Form of 1968 by his classmates and friends to a member of the Fifth Form who has demonstrated inspirational leadership, encouraging social and interracial understanding in the Groton community

Anthony Christopher Wright Jr.

THE O'BRIEN PRIZE

Given by the Hoopes family to a member of the Lower School who has shown qualities of integrity, loyalty, enthusiasm, and concern for others

Jeremy Gall

THE MONTE J. AND ANNE H. WALLACE SCHOLAR

Given to a student who has completed the Fourth Form in recognition of scholastic excellence, as well as those qualities of character and commitment so important to the Groton community

Rebecca Baptista Serodio

THE LAURA J. COOLIDGE '85 POETRY PRIZE

Given in her memory by her husband, Peter Touche, to a member of the Upper School who has shown a love for the power of poetic expression and a sustained interest in writing and reading poetry

Fiona Elizabeth Reenan

THE LOWER SCHOOL CREATIVE WRITING PRIZE

Alisa Gulyansky

THE HEARD POETRY PRIZE

Allison Zhai Jiang



Cassidy Thibodeau and Russell Thorndike

THE GROTONIAN CREATIVE WRITING PRIZE

Given by the *Grotonian* Board of 1946 to a member of the Upper School for the best example of prose fiction written in the past year

Benjamin Padilla Reyes

THE JOHN JAY PIERREPONT PRIZE

Given to the best mathematics scholar in the Lower School

Aryan Mago

THE ROSCOE C. THOMAS MATHEMATICS PRIZE

Given by the Form of 1923 and awarded to a member of the Fifth Form for excellence in mathematics

Qi Hao Jack Wang

THE FELS SCIENCE PRIZE

Given in honor of Stephen B. Fels, Form of '58, awarded to a member of the Lower School who has demonstrated exceptional enthusiasm for and proficiency in the experimental aspects of scientific inquiry

*Christian James Armaly
Eleanor Grace Taggart*

THE RENSSELAER MEDAL

Awarded to a Fifth Form student who has distinguished him- or herself in mathematics and science

Robin Winship Huntington

THE NEW ENGLAND SCIENCE TEACHER'S AWARD

John William Sperling Jr.

UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER HONORARY SCIENCE AWARD

Given to the member of the Fifth Form who demonstrates exceptional promise in the sciences

Edric Kan

THE RICHARD K. IRONS PUBLIC SPEAKING PRIZE

Established in 1972 by McGeorge Bundy '36 and Arthur T. Hadley '42 in honor of their teacher Richard K. (Doc) Irons, presented to the student who most logically and effectively presents his or her ideas during the R.K. Irons Speaking Contest, held at Groton each spring

Jasmine Marick Garcia

THE LOWER SCHOOL STUDIO ART PRIZE

Lin Marlene Ma

THE HARVARD BOOK PRIZES

Awarded to two members of the Fifth Form who exemplify excellence in scholarship and high character combined with achievement in other fields

The first Harvard Book Prize, given by Harry Eldridge 1920 in memory of his brother Francis H. Eldridge 1924

Amelia Ziqiang Lee

The second Harvard Book Prize, given by Mark A. Medlinsky '76 in memory of his father

John Burton Rogers III

THE WILLIAMS BOOK PRIZE

Given to a member of the Fifth Form who has demonstrated intellectual leadership and has made a significant contribution to the extracurricular life of the school

Aine Elizabeth Ley

THE JEFFERSON BOOK AWARD

Given to a member of the Fifth Form the faculty considers to best represent the Jeffersonian ideals of scholarship, leadership, and citizenship

Jasmine Marick Garcia

THE DARTMOUTH BOOK AWARD

Given to a member of the Fifth Form who is of strong character, has made a positive impact on the life of the school community, and has excelled in at least one non-academic area

Anthony Christopher Wright Jr.

THE WELLESLEY BOOK PRIZE

Given to young women who have been top scholars in high school as well as talented performers in extracurricular areas

Allison Zhai Jiang

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO BOOK PRIZE

Given to a member of the Fifth Form the faculty considers most dedicated in deep intellectual inquiry in a range of academic disciplines

Robin Winship Huntington

THE FREDERICK GREELEY CROCKER MEMORIAL AWARD

Given to a Groton graduate whose record in their first three years since graduating from Groton has done honor to themselves and their school

Noah Augustine Aaron, Form of 2018



Margot Ferris, Olivia Dillon, and Hannah Wise



1. Christopher, Spencer, Anne, and Griffin Miller

2. Walker Smith and his mother Davonne

3. Cousins Wilson Thors and Edie Thors celebrate with their families including Groton graduates Gardner '20 and Rex '83

4. Andrea, Chiara, and Mark Nevard

5. The Park family: John, Grace '86, Zoe '21, Soonhi Song (Grace's mother), Sophie '19, and Matthew

6. The Karrs: Tonia, Alex, Adam, Dani '23, and Zachary

7. Song Yi Zhang, Yuen Ning Chang, and Bing How Mui

8. Michael, Angela, Tai, and Zuri Campbell

9. Rashmi, Samarth, and Sanjay Agrawal

10. Jenny Minton Quigley '89, Dan Quigley '87, Sam, Leo '24, Gus, and (Jenny's mother) Marion Minton





The Form of 2021

Anuj Mohanka Agarwal
summa cum laude

Beatrice Osaretin Ehinomen Agbi
magna cum laude

Samarth Sanjay Agrawal
summa cum laude

Selah Emma Barrett

Noah-Philip Petrov Bay
summa cum laude

Luke Kodiak Perini Benedict
magna cum laude

Jack Bolton

Nicolas Alan Bowden
summa cum laude

Alexander James Brown
magna cum laude

Tate Kinkead Burgin
cum laude

Yici Isabel Cai
summa cum laude

Tai Jordan Campbell
magna cum laude

Yuen Ning Chang
magna cum laude

Yiwei Elbereth Chen
summa cum laude

Katherine Jane Clark
summa cum laude

Zoe Liesl Colloredo-Mansfeld
summa cum laude

Charles Hambleton Dane
magna cum laude

Thomas Joseph Dempsey

Shane Michael Dennin
summa cum laude

Olivia Maxwell Dillon
cum laude

Ronan John Doherty
cum laude

Caroline Helena Drapeau
summa cum laude

Margaret Moorehead Ferris
cum laude

Anna Beatriz Ferronato Pimentel
summa cum laude

Aidan Ayong Garcia

Joshua Xavier Lincoln Golden
cum laude

Lilly Alexandra Gordon
cum laude

Claire Kenney Holding
summa cum laude

Derek Hu
magna cum laude

Andrew Ruiming Huo
magna cum laude

Addison Litchfield Hyde
cum laude

Alexandra Lynn Karr

Kaylie Aliece Keegan
cum laude

Lily Ann Kempczinski
magna cum laude

George De la Ossa Kingsland
magna cum laude

Andréj Berrigan Sriburatham Klema
magna cum laude

Annabel Ziwei Lee
summa cum laude

Nicole Lee Heberling
magna cum laude

Neve Catherine Ley
cum laude

Hanling Liao
magna cum laude

Robert Collins Long
cum laude

Lloxi Amanda López
magna cum laude

Hollis Benjamin Maxson
cum laude

Ainsley Britt McKeown
cum laude

Zenande Kwakho Mdludlu

Daniel Martin Meehan

Magnus William Miller
magna cum laude

Spencer Andrew Miller
magna cum laude

William George Molson
magna cum laude

Grace Emma Mumford
summa cum laude

Lola Gabriella Murnighan
summa cum laude

Mikayla Bea Murrin
magna cum laude

Chiara Elin Nevard
magna cum laude

Aisling O'Connell
magna cum laude

Christina Marie Oelhafen
magna cum laude

Juhyun Grace Oh
magna cum laude

Anne Victoria O'Leary
magna cum laude

Roshan Palakkal
summa cum laude

Jane Park
summa cum laude

Zoe Meesun Song Park
cum laude

Angelica Parra

Jack David Pedreschi

Emily Elizabeth Pollis
magna cum laude

Edwina Christine Polynice
cum laude

Leah Gabrielle Pothel
summa cum laude

Cornelia Fish Potter
cum laude

Samuel Minton Quigley
cum laude

Anthony Vincent Romano
cum laude

Nathaniel Donald Salander
summa cum laude

Aroon Jamal Sankoh
magna cum laude

Katherine Marie Sapinski
cum laude

Eric Jaden Schiavone
magna cum laude

Timothy Walker Smith
cum laude

Madelyn Byul Son
cum laude

Alexis Gail Steinert

Cassidy Lee Ann Thibodeau
magna cum laude

Russell Amory Thorndike
cum laude

Edith Sturtevant Thors
summa cum laude

Wilson Clark Thors
magna cum laude

Grace Diane Travis
summa cum laude

Michael Edward Walsh

Cella King Wardrop
magna cum laude

Foster Otis Waxman
cum laude

Angela Wei
summa cum laude

Charles Thomas Whitehead III
summa cum laude

Harriet Reese Winterer
cum laude

Hannah Savage Wise
magna cum laude

Helene Delahunt Worthington
magna cum laude

Yizhen Sophia Wu
summa cum laude

Nicholas William Wyman

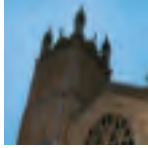
Har Vey Yuen
summa cum laude

Janice Tianzhen Zhai
summa cum laude

Nathan Siyuan Zhang
summa cum laude

Lucas Yixiang Zheng
summa cum laude

College	Number attending	
Colby College	• • • • •	Grinnell College •
Georgetown University	• • • • •	Hamilton College •
University of Chicago	• • • • •	Haverford College •
Columbia University	• • • • •	Ithaca College •
Stanford University	• • • • •	Massachusetts Institute of Technology •
University of St Andrews	• • • • •	McGill University •
Boston College	• • •	New York University •
Bowdoin College	• • •	Northeastern University •
Duke University	• • •	Pitzer College •
Kenyon College	• • •	Samford University •
Northwestern University	• • •	Savannah College of Art and Design •
Yale University	• • •	Scripps College •
Harvard University	• •	St. Lawrence University •
Middlebury College	• •	Swarthmore College •
Princeton University	• •	Trinity College •
University of Pennsylvania	• •	Tufts University •
University of Virginia	• •	University of California-Berkeley •
Washington University in St. Louis	• •	University of California-Los Angeles •
Amherst College	•	University of California-San Diego •
Babson College	•	University of Colorado Boulder •
Bentley University	•	University of Miami •
Boston University	•	University of Notre Dame •
Carnegie Mellon University	•	University of Richmond •
Clarkson University	•	University of Southern California •
Connecticut College	•	Vanderbilt University •
Dartmouth College	•	Webb Institute •
Franklin University Switzerland	•	Wesleyan University •



A CHAPEL TALK

by Christina M. Oelhafen '21
February 12, 2021

“Risk It for the Biscuit”

We all have that really fun uncle, right? The one that stirs the pot at Thanksgiving dinners or the one who makes little jabs at you during family gatherings. No, maybe not, that might be just a me thing.

OK, well, I do. From a young age, my Uncle Jeff has been teaching my cousins, brother, and me life lessons, ones that I have never forgotten. These life lessons, however, are not what you might think. They are not like the basic “never give up” or “believe in yourself” sayings that we all have heard a million times. Rather, they are

basic sayings but with a twist—a rhyming, magical, and catchy twist.

My Uncle Jeff teaches us lessons like “suck it up, buttercup” or “when in doubt, don’t let it out.” While it may take a little more deciphering to figure out the meaning behind my uncle’s life lessons, they are so catchy that you will never forget them. Yes, they are simply funny little sayings, but I have come to find great meaning in his comedic rhymes. So, I will tell you my four favorite phrases and a few stories that have come from them to convince you that these phrases are worth remembering.

First, my personal favorite: “Risk it for the biscuit.”

“Risk it for the biscuit” essentially means to shoot your shot, be spontaneous, or be adventurous for a reward. For example, do the minute-to-win-it during Spirit Week to win the McDonald’s feed, or, even more risky, cut the Circle in broad daylight to reduce your total walking distance by two. For those of you who know me, you know that I am no stranger to this saying. I am a sucker for the double-dog dare and, even more so, the triple-dog dare. I love to be adventurous and audacious even if the biscuit is just a smile from my friends or a memory that I can lock away for a rough day.

Now, for a more convincing story, let me take you back to December 11, 2017, a truly magical day for me. It was winter term during the two weeks [between Thanksgiving and Christmas], and talk of winter formal proposals filled the hallways. A friend and I were prepared to serenade two Upper School boys at Roll Call when the plan began to fall apart. My friend was forced out of the plan when another Upper School boy asked her to formal, leaving me with a song and a man in mind, but no partner to sing with. After much deliberation and many practice runs in the dorm, I decided to take the stage alone. I decided to

Christina, atop Rubicon Peak



Right, Christina with her brother, cousin, and Uncle Jeff; with friends after her chapel talk. Below, Leah Pothel '21, Alex Karr '21, Christina, and Lily Kempczinski '21.



“I sang the best I could sing, pitchy as ever, and proposed. I risked it for the biscuit and walked away with the formal date of my dreams.

risk it for the biscuit. So, the next day, I stood in line to make my announcement, nervously waiting for my turn to propose. Every worst-case scenario ran through my head. What if I fell off the desk before I got to pop the big question? What if the music wasn't loud enough and my voice was all too clear? What if he wasn't even at Roll Call, or worse—what if he had already been proposed to that morning? Finally, it was my turn. I hopped onto the desk, my knees nearly buckling under me and I sang the most beautiful rendition of Jason Derulo's "Marry Me" except instead of saying "will you marry me?" I said, "will you go to formal with me?" Very clever, I know. I sang the best I could sing, pitchy as ever, and proposed. I risked it for the biscuit and walked away with the formal date of my dreams, Paul Malone.

However, not all risks lead to a biscuit as great as Paul. Sometimes, they end up being complete failures. In Third Form winter, on February 22, 2018, green streamers floated from the Forum ceiling and Mr. Maqubela donned his famous green jacket. It was Surprise Holiday, the best day of every term. This day in particular seemed to come at just the right time. The infamous Third Form pig practical was set for the next day and many of my peers were excited to have the entire day before free to study. On the contrary, Alex, Lily K, and I had thought, "Psh, the pig practical? No, we don't need to study for that all day. We only have Surprise Holiday once a term, so let's go to Cambridge." We boarded the bus at 9:30 a.m. and forgot all about our fetal pigs. We took Hujis, got Sweetgreen, and shopped until Lily hit her debit card limit for the day. When we returned to campus, we went

to the lab to study and then got a good night's sleep before the pig practical. "Sleep the night before is what really matters," we kept telling ourselves.

About a week later, I pulled my graded pig practical out of my mailbox to find a not-so-great grade written across the top. Sleep was evidently not all that mattered. Nevertheless, when I look back on my Third Form winter Surprise Holiday, I have no regrets. Although I didn't get the grade I had hoped for on the practical, the memories and laughter on that Surprise Holiday were an even better biscuit.

It may not seem like much wisdom, but I guarantee that this wonderfully rhymed saying, risk it for the biscuit, is the key to your future fun and most cherished memories. So, I encourage you to risk it for the biscuit every once in a while. At Groton, schoolwork and major commitments often seem to dictate our lives, so take moments to be risky. Propose to your formal date in the craziest fashion, bust out a bomb outfit on a random Tuesday, and always play Surprise Holiday roulette. I promise you, the memories that you will make from just a simple "risk it for the biscuit" mentality are enough to keep you smiling for a lifetime.

Next up, we have "better late than never." In other words, it is never too late to do anything. I think that a lot of the time we tell ourselves that it is too late as a justification for giving up. Some of the best things in life, like friendships, just take a little bit of effort and are worth fighting for. So, let me tell you my most convincing "better late than never" story.

My friendship with Leah, my Third Form roommate,

got off to a rocky start, to say the least. Our first interaction took place near the entrance of the Athletic Center. It was preseason, and Leah was heading out to practice with two other girls. "Hi! Are you Leah? I think we're roommates," I said, excited to meet my roomie for the first time. "Hey, yeah, I'm Leah," she said as she continued to walk toward the soccer field. That was it. To be completely honest, after that first interaction and the first time I walked into our room only to be greeted by a stench of sweat and dirty cleats, I was not convinced that we would be friends.

Fast forward to the two weeks of school during December. The annual dorm Secret Santa was underway and, of course, I got the one and only Leah Pothel. Immediately I had an idea ... money soap. For those of you who don't know, money soap is soap with money inside of it, but the exciting part is finding out how much money will be inside. It could be one, five, ten, twenty, or one hundred dollars. Two days later, my perfect gift arrived in the mail. Alex, Leah, Lily K, and I were socializing in our room when Leah said that she had to go to the bathroom, aka the perfect time to place my gift. When she returned from the bathroom, she saw the gift and said, "What the heck is this! Haha! This person obviously does not know me. Are they trying to tell me that I smell? Haha!" I was rattled. I had no idea what to say. I responded with, "Haha—what even is that? I wonder who has you?" Leah proceeded to hate on my money soap while Lily, Alex, and I laughed until our stomachs hurt. Just before we left for Christmas break, I revealed myself as Leah's Secret Santa and the rest is history.

Since our first interaction and our Secret Santa debacle, Leah and I have become the best of friends. She has been by my side for my happiest moments and for not one, not two, but three of my college rejections. Had I completely written Leah off after our first interaction, I would be without one of my best friends. Better a late start to the friendship than never. I encourage you to be open-minded, especially to people. As my fellow Second Form girls can attest to, I have changed considerably since I first stepped onto the Circle. As I have grown, I have formed new connections with people that truly make me happy. So, to the Second Form girls, thanks for not writing me off immediately. Never say that it is too late to do something because it is always better late than never.

"Fake it till you make it." Say it a few times in your head. Really commit this one to memory because I think that it is the most important and valuable life lesson that my uncle has taught me. "Fake it till you make it" means that by telling yourself that you are confident, worthy, or positive, you eventually will be. I believe that you can will good things into existence. If you aren't hopeful, think positively until you can see the bright side of things. If you don't think you are good enough for something, tell yourself that you are worthy until you know that you are.

Be confident, and if you don't have confidence, then fake it until you really do.

Last summer, I found myself heavily relying on this phrase as I hiked up Rubicon Peak in Tahoe with Alex and her dad. It was a hot summer day, and Alex had chosen this particular hike because of the breathtaking views at the top. We started up the mountain, each with one sixteen-ounce sparkling water. By the end of the first mile, half of my water was gone, but thankfully there were only 0.8 miles to the top. Little did we know that the last 0.8 miles would be almost completely vertical. Like, I'm talking using hands and feet to get up this mountain. After about 1.3 miles, Alex and I decided to take a "walk for fifteen seconds and then break for thirty seconds" strategy until we got to the top. Either the air was very thin or Alex and I were just really out of shape, but whatever the case, by mile 1.5, Alex and I were both out of water and extremely slumped. Because Alex's dad was about a hundred feet in front of us and insistent that we keep moving, I knew that I had to make it to the top. I harnessed my inner strength and told myself "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can," just as *The Little Engine That Could* used to say. Eventually, after telling Alex a million times that we could do it, we made it to the top of the mountain. It truly was an amazing view, although I could not enjoy it, as my legs were too weak and the dehydration had begun to set in. Now, I will not speak any further on the symptoms of my dehydration following the hike because it might be TMI, but I do want to stress the fact that Alex and I made it to the top. My body was telling me to quit and head back down the mountain, but it was *The Little Engine That Could* saying, "I think I can" that gave me the extra push that I needed.

Last but certainly not least, "Give me a hug, ladybug." As my time here at Groton comes to a close, I want to offer a hug, socially distanced of course, to the people who have made me happiest over the past few years. To my roomies, yes, all four of you, thanks for sticking with me through it all. When I am sad, I think back to the many memories that we have made and a smile always returns to my face. To the triple train, Alex and Jane, thank you for teaching me what hope and everlasting positivity look like. To my teachers over the last five years, you have taught me in ways that you will never know, and I am eternally grateful. Lastly, to mom, dad, Jack, and Henry, thank you for being my biggest cheerleaders and supporting me in everything I do. Sending love and hugs to you all in North Carolina and New Hampshire.

I want to close by leaving you with a quote from Rhonda Byrne, who has captured the essence of my chapel talk in her book *The Secret*. She says, "How do you get yourself to a point of believing? Start make-believing. Be like a child, and make-believe. Act as if you have it already. As you make-believe, you will begin to *believe* you have received." So be a child, risk it for the biscuit, will confidence into existence, and give hugs to all of your ladybugs.



A CHAPEL TALK

by Mary Frances Bannard, Faculty
March 2, 2021

Blind Spots



Mary Frances Bannard with husband and fellow Classics teacher Preston Bannard '01, and their daughters (from left) Arden, Ginny, and Ella

I think that part of the reason I fell in love with Classics as a discipline is because, at its heart, the study of ancient language is all about understanding the stories that make up another culture. Yes, Latin and Greek are about recognizing what type of subjunctive a verb is in, or what declension a noun belongs to, but really, they're about untangling sentences and thoughts and ideas and finding meaning. The word translation, in fact, is derived from the Latin verb *transferre*, which translates literally as "to carry across." Thus, translation is, quite literally, carrying across meaning from one language to another. It is about finding the story implicit in every single word, and that never stops being a wonderful—and at times infuriating—challenge.

I speak in my Latin I class constantly about how culture creates language; students often notice that in Latin I we learn multiple words for "farmer" and "to kill." Yeah, we do. The Romans were an agrarian and militaristic society. Those words were essential to their way of being—language reveals culture. This time last year, I bet that very few of you used the words "zoom" or "pod" in the way that we do today. "I'm going to Zoom into class from my room" or "Yeah, I'm podding with them, so we can hang out" would have been nonsense last winter, and now those statements make perfect sense. Similarly, it is no accident that one of our two-year-old's first words was "mask." Mama, Dada, ball, mask. Ginny was a late talker (her older sisters and her impatient parents tended to talk for her), but when she did start talking, her words were, well, telling. She started talking during a pandemic. Mask. This is what she knows. This is her world. Language reveals culture, and culture creates language. They are inextricably, and beautifully, linked.

However, there is also something to be said for being

“Over the last year, as I have taken time to reflect on my privileges, it is hard for me not to wonder: what have I lost by buying into this narrative of “niceness”?

too dependent on stories, for leaning into particular mythologies, particular labels, particular elements of language, without questioning why we are doing so or even simply without thinking about the weight of those stories that we carry, the weight of the words that we use. When [art teacher Melissa] De Jesús-Akuete ran a workshop on labels as part of a faculty professional-development day this winter, she asked the faculty there to think of different words that people have used to describe us throughout our lives—different words that have, in a sense, helped create the narrative we believe about ourselves. The first word that I thought of was “nice,” and I wrote it in bold script across the top of my page. I learned from an early age that niceness and politeness—not justice and courage, or strength and independence—were essential to my story and indeed, a cornerstone of my family and cultural mythology, particularly as a woman in the South. When I was a senior in high school, I was runner-up for the “most likely to succeed” superlative in our yearbook, but instead received another coveted superlative: nicest.

When I was growing up, the giant of our family mythology was my maternal grandfather. He had been the first in his family to go to college. As part of the GI Bill, after he served in France in World War II, he was granted free admission to the University of Alabama—a perk, I will add, that the Black soldiers who fought alongside him were denied across the country, but especially in the South, where Alabama refused admittance to Black students until 1956. The privilege of his education—granted by his service, but also by his skin color—changed his life and, by extension, mine as well. After graduating from Alabama, he worked his way up to a PhD and, ultimately, a tenured position at Clemson University, where he taught in the Economics Department for thirty years. I don’t have strong memories of wanting to be a teacher when I was a child; to be honest, even into college, I wasn’t really sure what I wanted to do with my life. But Granddad had been a teacher, and he was an epic hero for me—an example of constancy in a childhood that often felt uncertain.

Granddad loved to teach, and although I was never a student in one of his classes, I was a student at his dinner table whenever he and my grandmother came

up for the Christmas holiday, or my mom, brothers, and I trekked down to South Carolina in the summer. He was old school, a lecturer who carried pens and a handkerchief in his front pocket, always wore a bow tie, and eventually died from lung complications exacerbated by years of chalk dust inhalation in his classroom. We “yes sir’ed” and “no ma’am’ed” him and my grandmother, the Mary Frances for whom I am named, and at dinner, you always stayed to listen until Granddad was done talking. You didn’t rock the boat and you didn’t question authority with Grandmother or Granddad, but you knew you would always be safe and loved when you were with them. You played nice, you were nice, and that was ... nice.

Over the last year, as I have taken time to reflect on my privileges, it is hard for me not to wonder: what have I lost by buying into this narrative of “niceness?” Whom have I failed? What conversations have I avoided for fear of offending? How have I abused my privileges by staying silent out of fear of being seen as impolite? As “not nice?” How many times have I neglected to stand up for myself because I was worried that, if I spoke my truth and named my concerns, people might think I wasn’t nice enough? How have I let this label, both self-imposed and given to me by others, cloud my vision?

In the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving last year, I noticed that my vision was, quite literally, cloudy: as I scrolled through Instagram or did a crossword on my phone as I nursed Ginny every night, I realized that the screen in front of me wasn’t clear—letters and images blurred together until I would have to turn off my phone, close my eyes, and try to stay awake while Ginny fell asleep on my chest. It was almost the end of the term, and I rationalized that it was just screen fatigue combined with regular old fatigue: I was so exhausted I couldn’t see straight! A few weeks later, however, as I was grading Latin II exams in the dimly lit basement of our oldest daughter’s piano teacher during her lesson, I realized that I couldn’t read the words on the page. The text swam in front of me, with a small but insistent blur at the center of my vision. I knew something was wrong.

Macular degeneration is most common in people over 65, but it also has a genetic component; the disease runs in my family, and it caused my grandfather to lose his sight in his sixties, cutting short his own teaching career probably by twenty years. Thus, as part of my family mythology, I was taught from an early age never to take my vision—which had always been 20/20—for granted. My mom was diagnosed with early-onset macular degeneration when she was thirty-eight, and she lost



Clockwise from top left:
The writer's grandparents;
Mary Frances with her
grandfather, who lost his sight
to macular degeneration;
with her Latin class during
Give2Groton; and daughter
Ginny, whose very first
words included "mask,"
demonstrating that "culture
creates language."



her sight intermittently during my childhood, usually during times of intense emotional stress. I am in a very different domestic situation than my mother, but genetics are genetics, and I was thirty-four when, on the day before Thanksgiving last year, a retinologist outside of Boston diagnosed me with the same disease.

As I sat in the exam room that November Wednesday, worried that I would never read a book again, never again see the faces of my children with perfect clarity, and never read the tiny footnotes of a Latin text, my retinologist explained that, although my tired eyes reflected the anatomy of a much older human, not all hope was lost. "So much of vision is related to the brain," he said, "This vision loss didn't happen overnight, and it won't get better overnight, but your brain will adjust." And what's remarkable is that, a year later, it has. Macular degeneration affects the eye's macula—the place in the center of the retina where light is focused, and which, essentially, takes a picture of everything we see before it sends that picture to the brain for processing. Even though the

picture my eyes send to my brain is still blurry, my brain has learned to compensate for my body's weakness, thus allowing me to see beyond the cloudiness in my own vision. Treatment of macular degeneration has advanced so that, although I will never see perfectly clearly again, I will also likely never lose my sight completely. If I do start to lose my vision more precipitously, as my mother and grandfather did, there are treatments that can arrest the loss. I am so, so lucky.

As I've dealt with this literal cloudiness of vision over the last year, I've been drawn to think of how apt it is as a metaphor as well. My implicit biases, the labels I give myself and others, the limitations of my own experience and knowledge—what are those if not blurriness, blind spots, barriers to connection and understanding? How do I not only recognize, but also address, the blurriness in my own vision? How do I pay closer attention to the language that I use—not only with others, but also with myself? How do I notice and honor the stories that every single one of us, and every single word we use with one

“**My retinologist explained that, although my tired eyes reflected the anatomy of a much older human, not all hope was lost.**

another, contains? How do I learn to see myself as a product of, but also separate from, my own mythology? How do I learn that I am more than “nice?” That I am more than Southern. That I am more than a mother, a teacher, a daughter, a friend. That we are all more.

Well, for one, I can remember that change—both learning and unlearning—takes time. I can accept that there are always systems, mythologies, and “isms” that keep me from seeing our world clearly. Those systems, those “isms”—that blurriness in our collective vision, as it were—didn’t happen overnight, and if we are to learn to see each other clearly, we accept that changes in ourselves, changes in culture—just like changes in anatomy—don’t happen as quickly, sometimes, as we might want. After I broke my arm last winter, the doctor who set it in a hard cast told me that the heaviest thing I could pick up was a pencil.

I interpreted that as, “Please lift whatever you want, including but not limited to your toddler.” I had to have my arm reset without any medication a week later, an experience which I still cringe to remember. Change, growth, and healing take time. I am not a naturally patient person, and it is infuriating, sometimes, to have to wait. But change can still happen bit by bit; with the collective energy of millions of taps—some big, and many others very small—we can shatter the glass ceiling and find healing together.

Secondly, I can rely on other people and other tools to help me, even when relying on or reaching out for help might seem like more of a hassle. Even when my glasses fog up over my mask, I wear them all the same, remembering the clarity that wearing them can bring. Even when I *know* that this is the right direction for a project, and that I don’t need anyone else’s opinion, I can choose to collaborate. I can listen and ask others for input, since their experience—their knowledge—contains mountains that I cannot imagine.

And, most importantly, I can practice, over and over again. I can show up to do the work of learning and unlearning every single day. I can practice deep listening—listening to understand, rather than to respond—with humility, and I can engage with the people around me with courage and kindness. Every day

I look at an Amsler grid in our bathroom, a simple black and white grid that is meant to help detect any changes in my vision. Most of the time I don’t notice anything, but I keep looking at it all the same, keep reminding myself that, although I am more than my anatomy, I also never know when a new blurry spot might occur.

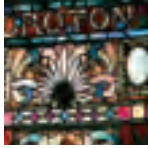
The writer Ursula K. Le Guin, in her 1986 commencement address at Bryn Mawr College, said, “When you look at yourself in the mirror, I hope you see yourself. Not one of the myths ... I hope you look away from those myths and into your own eyes, and see your own strength.” Our stories, our mythologies, our labels, our language, and our anatomy—blurry spots and all—make us who we are, but they are not all we are, and they are not all we have to be. We can learn to see beyond ourselves, beyond our words and our habits, our labels and our myths, and to see the humanity in ourselves and in everyone around us.

With time, tools, and practice, our brains—our wonderfully resilient brains—can learn, and relearn, and unlearn in a way that allows us, both as individuals and as a community, to see more clearly. With each other’s help, we can learn to do this work with joy, humility, and pride. We can learn to practice deep listening and, in doing so, build relationships that are grounded in authenticity and empathy.

In the classroom where I teach, I have a letter pinned to the bulletin board behind my desk. It is a letter that my grandfather, the man who never saw my dark brown eyes that mirrored his own, wrote me when I was at sleepaway camp the summer I was eleven. The letter is typed—Granddad had taught himself how to use a computer with accommodations for his vision loss—but at the bottom, he has signed, in letters that all slightly overlap each other, the name I always called him, Granddad. He rarely wrote anything by hand after he went blind, so I treasure this letter. It’s one of the only times I remember seeing his handwriting.

Granddad was a determined teacher to the end, and in this letter, he reminded me—at the ripe age of eleven—that camp was a good opportunity for me to learn time management, make decisions on my own, and “pursue lots of outside and athletic activities.” He ended the letter by saying, “This time you are on the learning end, but someday you may be one of the teachers ... Learning never stops. We hope you enjoy all of it.”

I have total confidence that, as a clueless eleven-year-old, I did not appreciate any of the wisdom he was imparting, but I love that, in this letter from 1996, I can see that a seed had been planted. A seed that would allow me to follow in his very big footsteps and to earn the privilege of working, every day, with students and colleagues who challenge me to do better, to see more clearly, and with whom I can work to build a new mythology.



A CHAPEL TALK

by Anthony C. Wright '22
September 20, 2021

My Personal Beacon of Hope

As some of you may know, I spend most of my time at home either in my bed on Snapchat or driving in my car. After enduring arduous periods of time at Groton, I like to spend my breaks watching movies and TV shows. I know I probably should spend my time being more productive, like reading or doing SAT prep. However, there is something special about doing absolutely nothing during break that is calming to me. Breaks are the one moment where my life stops moving so quickly, and I can be fully present in the present.

So one day this summer I was doing just that, and I came across the movie *Good Will Hunting*. In Fifth Form, Huck [Jamison '22] raved about how good of a movie *Good Will Hunting* was. So I decided to give it a try. Personally, I was a little skeptical because the title did not seem like it could be the name of a captivating movie. But after reading the overview of the movie I was reassured.

I'm sure plenty of you have watched it or heard about it. But for those of you who have never watched it, I would highly recommend you watch it. In short, the film captures the young life of a mischievous man who has the brains to study and even teach at MIT, but instead works as a janitor. Once his genius-level IQ is discovered, an MIT professor takes him under his wing to help him create a better life for himself. What really resonated with me was how much of a troublemaker Will Hunting was and, of course, the soapy love drama that was woven into the film.

Will Hunting was a young man who never had anyone who believed in him to be successful during his youth. He also never knew what emotional love felt like. Similarly, not many people have believed in me. And I too have struggled with finding and keeping emotional love. From kindergarten to sixth grade, I was bused an



This year's senior prefects, Maya Varkey, Yeabsira Gugssa, Griffin Elliott, and Anthony Wright

hour away to a wealthy suburban public school in an effort to receive a better education compared to Boston public schools. The teachers pitied me because I was just another young African American athlete to them. Thus, they had lower expectations for me compared to their expectations for my classmates. It probably didn't help that I was sort of a menace as a kid, too. I continuously found myself in the principal's office for being a troublemaker. Between constantly talking back to my teachers and cutting three inches off a girl's hair because she laughed at me for spilling chocolate milk on my pants, I couldn't keep myself from being mischievous.

During every single meeting I had with my teachers, principal, and parents, the faculty members always repeated one line to me: "Anthony, you have so much potential to be a great leader, but you cannot keep up your current behavior in order to reach your full potential." I never really understood what they meant by this, and to be honest I always thought it was a pile of horse manure. I thought to myself: how could they think I have so much potential, but not push me to be my best self? Eventually, I became accustomed to being disruptive in class and giving half effort toward my schoolwork. I was afraid of attempting to reach this "potential" my teachers saw in me and failing.

My disruptiveness not only stemmed from my fear of failing to live up to their expectations, but also as an outlet for my problems at home. At home, I have two parents who are not married, two older half-siblings, and two older biological sisters. My parents worked a lot while I was growing up. So I never really got to see my parents, except at nighttime or on the weekends. My mom worked a full-time job while going back to school to get her undergraduate degree and two master's degrees. My father worked two jobs, one during the day and one at nighttime. During the little time I did get to spend with my entire family, there was always so much fighting going on. Whether it was between my parents, my siblings, or both my parents and my siblings, I felt like I could never escape the sounds of shouting voices, the taste of salty tears, and the feeling of boiling rage. As the youngest, I felt isolated because there was nobody I could really talk to. My bad behavior in school turned into my outlet for all the chaos I was dealing with internally. In *Good Will Hunting*, Will isn't able to reach his true potential until he meets a therapist named Sean Maguire. Sean endured similar struggles to Will during his childhood, but decided to make something of his life. Sean teaches Will to confront his past so that he can

finally let himself be successful in whatever he decides to do.

Beacon Academy was my Sean Maguire. For those of you who don't know, Beacon Academy is a small private school in Boston that allows inner-city kids to take a gap year in between eighth and ninth grade to hone their academic skills in preparation for independent schools. At Beacon, I had teachers who believed in me, teachers who pushed me, and teachers who never gave up on me even when I wanted to give up on myself.

After getting into Groton, I finally realized that I did have it in me to succeed inside and outside the classroom. This past spring, I was elected by formmates to be one of the senior prefects. Now I say this not to flaunt this accomplishment, but merely to show how far I've come from being the class clown my classmates laughed at, to someone my peers respect and trust to advocate for them. To the teachers who never thought I'd be in the position I am today, I didn't think I'd be here either. But I want to thank you for casting your doubts upon me and for holding me to a lower standard. Had you not done that, then I would have never learned about myself as a student and as a person. Without your doubts, I would not be the leader I am today. And without your low expectations, I would not have such high standards for myself.

Nipsey Hussle once said, "None of us know who we are until we fail." As Third Form me would say, that's big facts. It took me countless hours in the principal's office, many bad grades, and multiple rounds of applying to independent schools for me to get here. Without these hardships, I wouldn't be able to prove all of those teachers wrong.

From the looks of it, I'd say that Will Hunting and I are somewhat similar. However, there is one thing that I still haven't been able to get myself to fully do. One of the most crucial things Sean teaches Will is how to open himself up to emotional love. Will comes from a life of never being able to fully reveal his identity because he is afraid of loving someone and them leaving. Well, so am I. While I did not recognize it at the time, my lack of seeing my parents created an emotional wall inside of me. I built this wall to protect me from the feeling of abandonment. This wall kept me from truly opening to anyone because I did not trust that anybody would stay in my life. Furthermore, I had this fear of growing so close to someone and loving them, but not being enough for them. Thus, I have never fully opened myself up to someone I've liked for the past four years. It's been easier

“From kindergarten to sixth grade, I was bused an hour away to a wealthy suburban public school in an effort to receive a better education compared to Boston public schools. The teachers pitied me because I was just another young African American athlete to them.



Anthony with friends after his chapel talk

to just listen to their problems, and maybe, just maybe, tell them bits and pieces of what I've been through. So, I've created this habit of closing myself off to emotional connections before I get too deep. "Commitment issues" is what I call it. But now I realize that label is a misnomer because it is not so much the committing part that scares me. Instead, it is the heartbreak of realizing I am not enough for someone I care so deeply about.

As a defense mechanism, I tell myself that I will wait until I'm older to find love. But the fact of the matter is that none of us are promised tomorrow, next month, or next year. All we are promised is now, this very moment in the present. That is all we can be sure of. And so I am beginning to take on this task of allowing myself to open up to emotional love because there will never be a perfect time for me to find love and find happiness. There will always be a reason why I should wait. Will Hunting lived in the present and allowed the possibility of love to enter

his realm because he never knew what tomorrow would bring. As Ellen Pompeo once said in *Grey's Anatomy*, "The carousel never stops turning" in life. The sun will shine tomorrow morning whether I am happy or not, and whether I am alive or not. So it is up to me to make the most of this precious time I'm given on this earth.

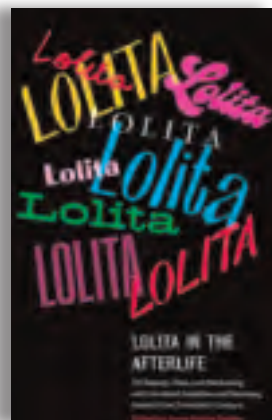
I just want to say thank you to all of my friends at Groton for making me feel included at this place and for helping me out of such dark places. Thank you, Ms. Smith and Mr. Nett, for believing in me and helping me get into Groton. I will forever be indebted to you both. And most of all, thank you, Mom and Dad, for everything that you have done and sacrificed for me. I know it was not easy to raise me amidst all the things you guys had going on, so I mean it when I say I appreciate you guys. I do not blame you guys for being so busy because I know that you both just wanted my siblings and me to have a better life than you all had. I will always love you both so much.

new
releases

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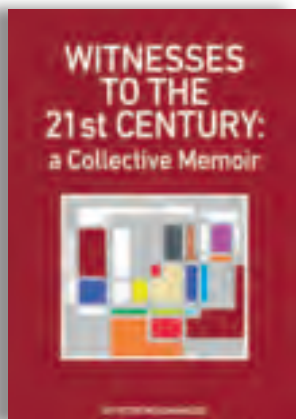
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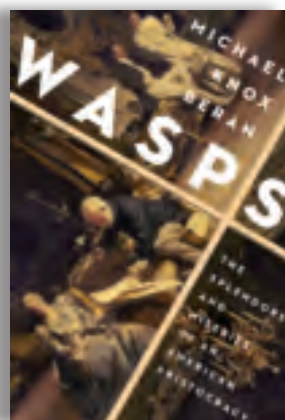
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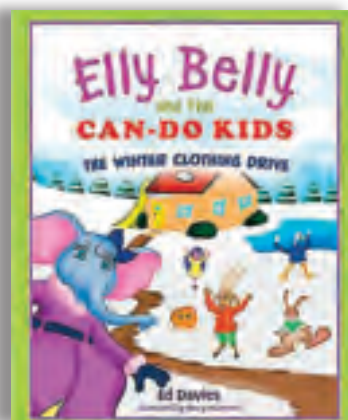
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► Please send information about your new releases to quarterly@groton.org.

1

Ben Coes '85
The Island

America is about to face the deadliest terrorist attack on its soil since 9/11. Iran has been planning a revenge attack for years, with three goals in mind: bring America to its knees, assassinate the popular U.S. President J. P. Dellenbaugh, and neutralize their most successful CIA agent, Dewey Andreas.

The first pre-emptive attack against Dewey Andreas fails, but it worries the head of the CIA enough that he sends Dewey out of town and off the grid. But as intelligence analysts work as fast as they can to unravel the chatter on terrorist networks, Muhammed el-Shakib, head of Iran's military and intelligence agency, launches a bold strike. When the president arrives in New York to address the U.N., embedded terrorist assets blow up the bridges and tunnels that connect Manhattan to the mainland. Taking control of the island with its hidden forces, they race to the U.N. in search of Dellenbaugh and to launch an even deadlier attack that will wreak unimaginable destruction.

While a shocked country struggles to mount a counterattack, a hopeless, outmanned, and outgunned Dewey Andreas sneaks onto the island of Manhattan to fight a seemingly impossible battle.

2

Jenny Minton Quigley '89 (editor)
Lolita in the Afterlife

In 1958, Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* was published in the United States to immediate controversy and "bestsellerdom." More than sixty years later, the novel generates as much buzz as it did when originally published. Central to countless issues at the forefront of our national discourse—art and politics, race and whiteness, gender and power, sexual trauma—*Lolita* lives on. This collection of sharp, modern pieces on Vladimir Nabokov's perennially provocative book features original

contributions from prominent twenty-first century writers. Jennifer Quigley, the editor, is the daughter of *Lolita*'s original publisher in America.

3

Matthew Pearson '79
Behind Every Fortune

Han van Meegeren was a forgotten, bitter son of the Netherlands, mired in the life of the starving artist selling sketches and portraits on the street. Then he sold the single most expensive painting in Europe to one of the greatest museums. From the rainy streets of Rotterdam to the sunny Côte d'Azur to the dark forests of Nazi Germany, Han fed the world what it wanted even as the fascist storm devastated Europe. He had everyone in place until suddenly he didn't, and then it was his turn to try to escape with his life. This is his story.

4

Peter Rousmaniere '63
Witnesses to the 21st Century: A Collective Memoir

A panoramic look at American life in the first twenty years of the twenty-first century, this memoir chronicles momentous changes in society and technology. Interviews with some one hundred individuals describe what they saw, felt, feared, enjoyed, and thought as eyewitnesses to historical moments. Topics include the 9/11 attack, immigration, personal computing, consumer life, climate change, and the COVID pandemic. One chapter presents sharply contrasting views on national politics. The author weaves in his own analysis of these and other subjects, such as artificial intelligence, fundamental changes in the nature of work, and the evolving concept of fairness in American society. One chapter on "Fairness in America" delves into how race relations were addressed at Groton. *Witnesses to the 21st Century* also includes the author's personal story of aging, emerging friendships, and self-discovery.

5

Darren Van Blois '95
Searching for Private MacGuffin

In a future dystopia controlled by artificial super intelligence, where everyone has an AI chip implanted in their arm, a man named Private MacGuffin disappears to fulfill his destiny as a cinematic plot device. The world freaks out when they find his amputated arm, and everyone looks for answers from an obsolete radiologist.

6

Michael Knox Beran '84
WASPs: The Splendors and Miseries of an American Aristocracy

"If the fictional chronicler of the WASPs is Louis Auchincloss and its memoirist Henry Adams, they have found their historian in Michael Knox Beran," writes Mark McGinness in *The Spectator*. With a cast of characters ranging from Amory Gardner and Endicott Peabody to Eleanor Roosevelt and Vida Scudder, *WASPs* traces the rise and fall of a class that helped to shape the American Century.

7

Ed Davies '89
Elly Belly and the Can-Do Kids: The Winter Clothing Drive

The Can-Do Kids Club series chronicles the efforts of a special group of kids who use their unique characteristics and talents to improve their world through community service projects. The kids remind us that our differences can unite us, not separate us. And working together, we can change the world.

The Can-Do Kids Club motto is: No matter how different we look or sound, we all share the same space. And we each have special talents to make the world a better place.

Author Ed Davies said, "I clearly learned a lot about service at Groton." He also shared that his characters are inspired by the distinctive qualities of his own six children.

Chiara Nevard '21; opposite page,
Ronan Doherty '21 and (bottom)
girls varsity crew members
Helene Worthington '21, Mikayla
Murrin '21, Zoe Colloredo-
Mansfeld '21, Aine Ley '22,
and (not visible) coxswain
Maya Luthi '23



SPRING SPORTS



GROTONIANNA



Andrei Kerna '21



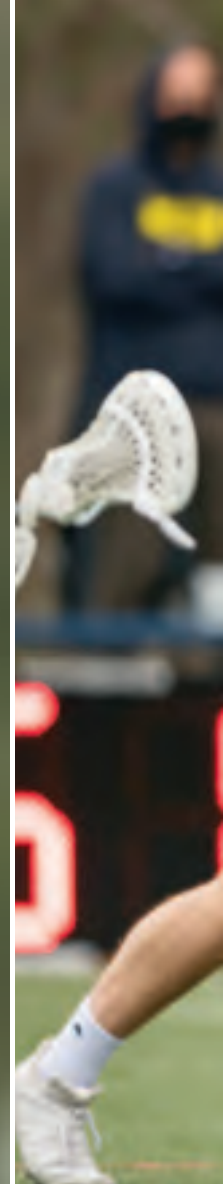


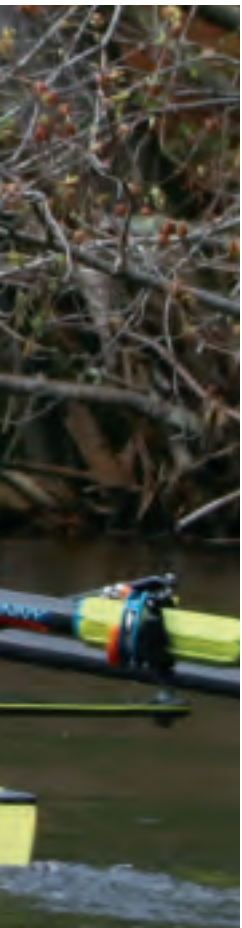
Opposite page, members of the champion boys tennis team, Jared Gura '22, Jack Lionette '23, Griffin Gura '24, Will Molson '21, Larry Li '23, Noah Bay '21, Ben Jones '22, and Will Vratatos '23; below, Groton baseball players high-fiving Sam Harris '22, #11.

This page, clockwise from above, Leah Pothel '21, Will Molson, and Kiefer Wood '23.



AJ Colarusso '22; below, boys JV crew members Lars Fritze '23, Rufus Knuppel '22, Stanley Spence '22, Sebastian El Hadj '22, and (not visible) coxswain Nicole Lee Heberling '21. Opposite page, Russell Thorndike '21 and Cassidy Thibodeau '21.







Follow Groton Athletics
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@GrotonZebras



Above, girls JV crew members Nadia Fourie '22, Hannah Mitchell '23, Becca Serodio '23, and Amy Ma '23.
Below left, Hugh Carlin '23; right, Neve Ley '21



John H. Finley III '54, P'88, '94

Trustee 1984–96

March 25, 1936 – January 13, 2021

by the Reverend John H. Finley IV '88



“Finley, you’re d--- lucky we never caught you!” said the Reverend John Crocker to my father as they shook hands on Prize Day in 1954. Could the headmaster have been referring to the time in Third Form when Dad smashed a plate against a radiator in his dorm after hours, or to when he hid a car in the woods his Sixth Form year? Mischievous hardly covers it.

Born in Boston, on March 25, 1936, to Magdalena Greenslet Finley and John H. Finley Jr., my father grew up with his younger sister, Corinna Finley Hammond, in what he fondly referred to as the People’s Republic of Cambridge, initially on Appian Way and then for many years in Eliot House at Harvard, where his father was a legendary house master. Summers were spent largely outdoors surrounded by family in Tamworth, New Hampshire. Although the Finleys were a bookish family, Dad took a different path. Summer jobs in the local garage led to racing sports cars, motorcycling adventures

on no less than nine Harley-Davidsons, and a modest car collection. An enthusiastic athlete, he enjoyed many sports, including tennis, sailing, golf, skiing, and hockey (including one time on the ice against Bobby Orr).

Groton, with its muscular Christianity of the 1950s, must have seemed to his parents as just the right place for their energetic son, and by all accounts he flourished at school. Although generally unsentimental, he had happy memories of hockey games on Lake Romeyn and appreciated his many stellar teachers. His formate Gordon Shaw remembers Dad constantly tinkering with the outboard motor (a notoriously fickle species) on the crew team’s launch, and Dad’s interest in crew extended to being a coxswain first at Groton and then at Harvard, where he designed a pennant that spelled out in Latin, “We take no crap from anyone.” Like most every sailor, he had plenty of mishaps at sea, including once piloting not home to York Harbor, Maine, but instead to Rye Beach, New Hampshire. He also once sent himself to the hospital after a violent jib smacked his head as he sailed downwind at the end of a Laser race.

He also had his mishaps behind the wheel. As a young child, he took the family’s Model A out for a spin and drove into a tree but managed to repair the bumper without getting caught. Later, in his twenties, he raced Formula Vees and liked to tell the story of a time he spun out on the racetrack in Bridgehampton, New York. As his racecar slid toward the embankment, he saw a woman in the stands and realized from the horrified look on her face that he was watching her thinking she was watching him die.

Dad was devoted to his wife Margot and all three of his children, and each of us had a special relationship with him. He and I went to the same schools, where we both stayed actively involved, and we spent hours weeding together in the garden in Maine. My brother Sam shared hockey and motorcycles and a gift of

hospitality with him. Of the three of us, however, my sister Charlotte spent by far the most time with him through their work at Creative Development Company, the real estate company Dad founded and which she now runs. His largest buildings were old mills outside of Boston, which he repurposed for dozens of different tenants. An engaged landlord, he took a sincere interest in each new business, eager to understand how it worked and what its needs were, and he was fascinated by minutiae. This coffee roaster clearly had to have space that was dry. That warehouse needed more loading docks. He was also honest and never “yessed” anyone either in or out of business. “John, is this building going to leak?” “Absolutely!” Any number of young Grotonians had my father as their first boss over their summer breaks. Brisk and brusque with no interest in small talk, Dad proved to be a great teacher for these young men, introducing them to a world of manual labor far from the utopian life around the Circle and to imaginative uses for duct tape and Homasote.

An indefatigable fundraiser, Dad took his turn running Groton School’s Annual Fund. Rich Fox, the school’s development director in those years, remembers Dad moving ahead full throttle. From my father’s perspective, every graduate simply had to support the school according to their means, and he wasn’t going to waste time with a sentimental trip down memory lane. He was going to ask, and you ... were going to give. Rich is also one of many who remember the unique experience of visiting Dad’s office at 77 Franklin Street in downtown Boston. Stepping off a busy street, one first entered an impressive marble lobby and took the elevator up to a floor of innocuous wainscoted offices. Then the adventure began. You went into the stairwell, up half a floor, through a doorway cut into the neighboring building, and along a hallway with flimsy sheetrock walls until you reached Dad’s actual office—a big space with large windows that looked as if he had inhabited it for years, which he had.

Although Dad loved his business, above all else he was a family man. Whether he and Mom were bundling the kids into the car for skiing weekends in Waitsfield, Vermont, at “Toad Hall”; presiding over a house overflowing with friends in York Harbor, Maine (where he had an impressive vegetable garden); expanding a fisherman’s shack in Boca Grande, Florida, to accommodate visiting children and grandchildren; or making time for family vacations to special spots from Kenya to Tonga, Mom and Dad did everything for their family. Blessed with almost boundless energy, he also supported innumerable eleemosynary institutions and served on many boards, including those of two of his alma maters (Dexter School



and Groton School), the York Harbor Reading Room, the Agamenticus Yacht Club (as Commodore), Nativ-ity Preparatory School, the Vestry of the Church of the Redeemer in Chestnut Hill, and Rogerson House, which gave him excellent care in his final days. He also served on Harvard’s Happy Committee, was the secretary for his class (the “Great ’58”), and was the graduate president of the A.D. Club, where he had so many good times.

Dad was a man who lived in the moment and could change his mind in an instant when presented with new facts; he never had a hidden agenda. If he had an idea about where things should go, he let you know. Devoid of any great ambition to conquer the world but blessed with tremendous energy, intelligence, and creativity, he accomplished a lot. Despite his often gruff exterior and unbelievably short fuse, he was the best friend anyone could ever have, fiercely loyal and lots of fun. He never put on airs and was always the life of the party, whipping up “rum wonders,” organizing volleyball games, and launching the All-Girl Kazoo Band and the South Boston Racquet Club, which was not in South Boston and did not have racquets, but which did hold some spectacular events. He appeared once in the *Boston Globe* under the headline, “Boston Fashion Conservatism Shattered,” sporting a wombat fur coat and quoted as saying, “The fur is sturdy and manly.” His mother, faced with the shame of it all, simply responded with the adage that, “Fools’ names and fools’ faces frequently appear in public places.” In sum, my mother probably puts it best when she says simply, “Dad was fun.”

I’d like to conclude by referring again to Gordon Shaw ’54, who said of Dad, “Always a smile, and a good friend to all of us ... always.”

Samuel C. Watkins '77

July 30, 1959 – May 15, 2021

by Stephen F. Brock '77



First, let's start with the obvious. Sam and I were roommates for five years, Second Form through Sixth Form, and co-captains of the Groton School basketball team, described by the coach as "certainly the best ever."

It is magical to share with someone the leadership of an enterprise deemed "certainly the best ever," even in a limited category. On a basketball court, Sam was in essence our Magic Johnson. He had to be one of the most aware, best all-around contributors to victory the school has ever had. He was the epitome of the player who made all teammates better. He could score twenty-five points, or four, and contribute just as much. He was a superb analyst and strategist, and would call to my attention ways to play, ways to win, and aspects of the game I had not considered.

One of the things of which Sam was most proud was that when we came to the school as Second Formers, the leading scorer on the varsity team averaged 7.7 points per game. On the team we co-captained, every member of our starting five averaged more than 8 points. That was Sam's doing, making sure all five players outscored the leading scorer when we arrived—and engineering, loving, enjoying, and taking pride in what his teammates were accomplishing.

The beginning of our lifelong friendship is not as well known, and the story surprises some people. Throughout our lives, Sam and I enjoyed telling it, sometimes together. The story is best told directly, pulling no punches, the way Sam and I first dealt with each other. Sam and I did not start out as friends. When we met we did not like each other. I thought (at the time!) that he had a big mouth. And I was going to close it. He clearly held me in contempt. We were introduced as fellow basketball players on, I believe, the second day of school. New York City-pedigreed, he looked up and down my four-foot-nine, eighty-pound frame and asked, contempt dripping

from his voice, "Are you any good?" Well, I had my own pedigree. I had been through this before. I loved it. "I'm OK," I replied neutrally, but I thought, "I'm going to make you pay."

In the next month we played maybe one hundred games against each other. (Trust me, I do not believe this is an exaggeration.) Sam would not call fouls, so I couldn't either. I never wanted so badly to beat another player in my life. Sam irritated me to no end. Between games he kept talking to me, and talking to me, and talking to me. He would not stop. Questions about my mother, father, brothers, sisters, Dayton, Ohio, the Dayton flyers, my own basketball pedigree, the state championship won by the high school my brother attended, its epic rivalry with the public school where my father taught, anything, everything. "Leave me alone!" I thought. Then, I realized, he was actually curious. Worse, he was wickedly funny, and no matter how hard I tried I could not stop laughing. Then, in one of those life-revelatory moments, I realized, he's right, I'm wrong. It's that simple. We are not at this school to do what I am doing, expending all my energy trying to beat someone at a game. We are here to do what he is doing. And we became



lifelong friends.

From the time we became friends, I loved the precise aspect of Sam that I disliked at the beginning, his ability to talk, and I came to rely on it. Throughout life, people who wanted to send information to me frequently did it through Sam, because talking and writing with him was so enjoyable. He would relay the information, and I would also get the benefit of his thoughts, interpretations, and opinions, along with a wide-ranging, often hilarious, conversation. I would communicate information back through Sam the same way, for the same reason. He seemed to know everyone, or someone who knew anyone I wanted to contact, or who wanted to contact me, so this would happen even for people whom I did not know, or

who did not know me.

Race and diversity are often difficult subjects to talk about. It is truly amazing that I cannot recall a single instance in which I had difficulty talking about them with Sam.

In school and in life, Sam did his best to help me through low moments. Sam's level of faith, curiosity about others, multidirectional influence, ability to have conversations easily about difficult subjects, and his ability to enjoy the accomplishments and successes of others have been lifelong inspirations. Sam made my life fuller, richer, more beautiful, more celebratory, and funnier. I don't know quite what to say, or how to say it, other than I loved him. I love him. I miss him.

Others shared fond memories:

Sam Watkins had spent much of his adult life practicing law, bringing up a lovely family, and contributing his time and wisdom to his community. When I learned of his passing though, I started to think back to our time at Groton and the basketball team we shared. You see, it was the most exciting team I ever played on, and when Sam and I played in our Sixth Form year of 1977, Groton's gym was full and noisy, and we were having fun!

Back in Second Form, we were three short, skinny kids. Sam was just five-foot-two, Steve Brock a mere four-foot-nine, and me at five-foot-four! The seniors ignored us as we became gym rats who roughhoused around the basket. We would play as hard as we could, then walk off the court and get some water, then return to the court and try trick shots, downtown bombs into the basket, or hook shots from half court. Sam and Steve played one-on-one endlessly. Finally, the seniors took notice of the three of us, and if they wanted to play full court, we would stand by until they asked us to join them for a scrimmage. The last game of our first season (8–5) was against Belmont Hill, and Steve scored 20 points, Sam scored 10 points, and our dorm master took us out to the Bull Run because we were the only Groton team to win that day.

All of the time we hung out together in the gym, if nothing else was happening, Sam was always bouncing the ball, dribbling between his legs, and smiling. Eventually we had to grow up, go back to study hall, and enter our Sixth Form year with a commitment to make our senior year's basketball team the best. The last time Groton basketball had been a winner was Sam's brother's team in '69–'70. We had added some tall players to our speed, and when James Young jumped up, he would tap the ball to Steve, and we would be on the board with two points. Then we went right into a full court press called "Indiana," and the other teams would look flustered. It was a thing of beauty to watch us rebound a shot, accelerate the ball down court, and score.

Sam and I would talk about this season with such

joy. I loved to get him going during alumni reunions, and he would remember everything about the season. The starting team included James Young '78, Mark Griffith '78, Clint Winters '78, Steve Brock '77, and Sam Watkins—five very gifted athletes coached under Jake Congleton, who had his eyes on us for five years. Sam loved telling me how Jake wrestled with him about Sam's role, not as a scorer, but as the point guard who gets the ball to Steve, the point scorer. "I do like to dribble," Sam would say to me, "in order to drive and shoot," to which I might respond, "We all had egos for scoring points."

But Sam's gift to our team that year was to dribble and pass. We were winning games halfway through our senior year, but when Sam switched to dribbling and passing, setting up our scoring, we began to dominate. As a team we began to mesh by giving the ball to Steve, who would simply shoot the lights out of the basket; by James Young and Mark Griffith, who learned how to rebound so effectively to start our fast breaks; and by Clint and Steve, who learned how to convert those breaks into a cascade of two-point scores. The second-to-last game was a penultimate example of this teamwork as we scrimmaged against the defending Class B champs. Our Class C team was expected to lose, so instead we just smoked them by 43 points.

Sam would rattle off the scores for every game that year, including our final game, the only loss in eighteen games. The final championship game against St. Sebastian's was bittersweet for our team because Steve was warming up and came down on his ankle wrong. As he sat on the bench, his foot began to swell, and we all knew that we were in trouble. And still we won a season of great joy for us and the school, wonderful teamwork like you read about, and memories that have lasted all of this time. Imagine, if you will, an unsuspecting team making a lazy pass only to have Clint pick it off and pass it to Sam, who hucked it to Steve for a lay-up—and the noise from our classmates as the Groton gym echoed their support by stomping those wooden bleachers! The house was rocking, and the fans were shaking. Visualize this poor team wondering why we were guarding them so tight. And now see them look surprised at our two guards, Steve and Sam, waiting for them, only to be stopped, robbed of the ball, and suffering another loss of two points. Sam, Steve, and all of us played our way to greatness together with some talent and a lot of hard work. We simply scored, sweated, waited, and scored again. Thank you, Sam, for all of the great memories and your wonderful friendship on the greatest team we have ever played on. I miss you.

—Robert Southworth '77

Sam and I did not hang out at Groton, and with the difference in our athletic abilities (Sam's at the high end; mine, not), we didn't really interact in sports. But I've always remembered a kindness Sam showed me.

I came to Groton as a Fourth Former possessing no



The Watkins family, Sam, Brooke, Sam Jr., Inga, and Brea; Sam at Camp Timanous in Raymond, Maine, where he spent two summers with Peter Congleton '77 before attending Groton; with lifelong friend Stephen Brock '77 in Second Form



remarkable talent, a day student from a public school. Not surprisingly, I remember being received with indifference by most of the boys, and by the school in general. It all worked out, but the start was pretty lonely, as it probably was for some others.

Sometimes in those early days I'd go to the gym to shoot baskets, as a way to (sort of) be part of things. Whenever I was there, so was Sam. We both used a basketball, but that was the only thing our games had in common: Sam walked up the court with a bounce in his step; dribbled between his legs like it was second nature; swished jumpers or glided to the hoop, all with grace and assurance I could only dream of. I had a four-inch vertical leap and a two-handed shot I'd taught myself in the backyard and stuck with (no one else had used two hands since the fifties) because I'd read that Red Auerbach said that there was no reason another great two-handed shooter couldn't come along someday. (I was not that shooter.)

Sam did his thing and I did mine, glued to what I thought of as "my" spot on the floor, doggedly launching my two-handers. One day, after I'd made a few, Sam loped over (dribbling between his legs, as I remember it). "Nice shooting," he said. "You should try out for the JV team."

Words of encouragement are always precious, and never more than when you're an adolescent feeling out of place. After Sam's encouragement, I did try out and made the team (I'm not sure there were any cuts). My

basketball ceiling turned out to be low, while Sam went on to become co-captain with Steve Brock of maybe the greatest boys team Groton ever had. But Sam's kind gesture has always stuck with me—a small moment of grace that helped me feel a little more at home. I know he did similar things for many others at Groton, and it's apparent he went on to live his life the same way.

Thank you, Sam.

—John Veague '77

"He was one of the most Christlike people that folks knew. You would never have known that he went to boarding school, or Harvard or Princeton Seminary or Fordham Law School, because he didn't wear any of that on his sleeve. He wouldn't tell you. He wouldn't tell you he got into every college he applied [to]. He just loved you wherever you were, whether you were somebody who hadn't been to school, didn't have the opportunity to go, no matter what your station in life was, Sam loved people like he loved himself and it came out, people saw that ... this is a guy that was kind and generous and gave people money and never told anybody about it; he did it for people because it was good for them. He considered other people before he considered himself. He was a Christian, he was in church, but more importantly the church was in him, and it was evident by how he lived his life every day.

—Joe Watkins (Sam's brother), excerpted from Joe's Philadelphia television show, "State of Independence"

Sam was a people person and had many friends from many walks of life. He will always be remembered for his illuminating smile, quiet strength and humility. His love of Christ was evident to all he encountered.

A graduate of Harvard University, Princeton Theological Seminary, and Fordham Law School, Sam practiced at several large New York City law firms and at the time of his passing was a partner at Schwartz Sladkus Reich Greenberg Atlas LLP. His extensive career included work as a trial lawyer with the U.S. Department of Justice and as a senior counsel at the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

Although an accomplished attorney, no corporation could ever promote Sam to his most rewarding title of family man. With a love that spanned over thirty-two years, Sam and Inga were married on June 17, 1989, in New Rochelle, New York, where they ultimately settled and raised three beautiful children, Brooke, Samuel Jr., and Brea. Sam prioritized his family at every turn of his life and instilled in his children the importance of character, honesty, and determination.

Sam's kindness and compassion touched all who knew him. He will be sorely missed.

—*Excerpted from the Watkins family's memorial tribute*

The first day of my senior year at Princeton, I was walking to my dorm and who should I see but Sam Watkins. I knew he had just graduated from Harvard, so I was surprised to see him. It turns out his plan was to attend the theological seminary before heading to law school. I had no doubt he could do this because in high school he applied to all eight Ivy League universities and was accepted by all of them.

Having been his teammate on what many considered to be the best basketball team ever at Groton, I was excited to be reunited with my friend. True to form, however, Sam shortly had more friends and acquaintances than I did, even though I had been there for three years!

Sam had an incredible ability to relate to everyone. Grounded in humbleness and a strong Christian faith, he gained people's respect and trust easily. He was a great person who left us too soon. He will be sorely missed by many.

—*Clinton Winters '78*

The Watkins family has a long history with Groton. LeRoy Watkins Sr. was a principal of a junior high in Harlem. Peter Willauer was director of Admission at Groton, and Mr. Watkins told Peter about a wonderful young man by the name of Jerry Gadsden, an ABC (A Better Chance) candidate. I am not sure if it was a "package" deal, but Mr. Watkins said his oldest son was also a candidate, and just a couple of years younger, so the incoming classes had two of LeRoy Watkins Sr.'s students, Jerry Gadsden and LeRoy Jr. There were a number of other Watkins children, and the ISL matriculated five of the six, starting with the oldest child Theresa going

to Milton, with brother Joe going to Middlesex, and youngest sister Dorothy also attending Milton. (His middle sister Patty attended school for performing arts.) The youngest boy was Sammy, Form of 1977.

At the time, I was the associate director of Camp Timanous, a boys camp in Maine, and we had started a scholarship program to diversify our camper body. Sammy came to Timanous through that program. Just as he would be at Groton, Sammy was popular. One of his cabin mates kept up their friendship and later went to St. Paul's and played three years against Sammy—and lamented that Sammy beat him three years in a row!

Sammy was a great basketball player and co-captain of probably the best Groton team of all time, which was 17–1 in the regular season. Steve Brock, the other captain, was a pure shooter, and the team was better when Sammy acted as primary ball handler and set up his teammates. His selflessness made our team a real machine. Sammy went on to play the same role at Harvard. He will be sorely missed by his former classmates! I know he went on to be a very successful lawyer and a wonderful husband and father. For those of us who knew him in his youth, we only have the fondest of memories! Rest in peace, Sam.

—*Jake Congleton, Groton School faculty and coach, 1957–95*

Sam and I spent two summers together at Camp Timanous in Raymond, Maine, before we spent five years at Groton together. Sam had an amazing memory; he could remember the names of all of our cabin mates and counselors going back to 1969, the summer of the first moon landing.

—*Peter Congleton '77*

I am so sad to hear of Sam's passing. I have many fond memories of him at Groton, not least of his athleticism and joy on the football and basketball teams. As a wide receiver on the football team, he came in for plenty of good-natured ribbing from Jake Congleton, who could be heard encouraging him after a dropped pass by yelling down the field, "Way to knock it down, Sam!" It seemed to me the kind of banter reserved for the real athletes, as opposed to the strivers that so many of the rest of us were. I was delighted to reconnect with Sam several years ago because of his daughter's keen interest in acting. He was clearly enjoying life and family. This is too soon to hear such news of him.

—*James Bundy '77*

I feel heartbroken about this. Sam's friendship meant so much to me at Groton. He was kind, he was humble (usually), and he was a gentleman. Sam was thoughtful, measured, and serious. He was curious about everything, and he really listened to you when you said something. Of course, Sam could also be a world-class goofball—with a killer smile. I love you, Sam.

—*David Bolger '77*

FORM NOTES



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CIRCLING BACK



Christopher Temerson

In Groton's early years, Third and Fourth Formers were required to participate in the Junior Debating Society. The Senior Debating Society (for Fifth and Sixth Formers) was optional.

Each society had two teams that competed against each other. For several years, the teams were named for their captains, but in 1905 they were renamed Demosthenes and Cicero. These plaques chronicled the debate winners each year.

FOLLOW GROTON:

