

A high-altitude mountain expedition scene. In the foreground, a climber in a bright orange and blue jacket is hunched over, working on a rope. Behind them, another climber in an orange jacket stands. Further up the snowy slope, several colorful tents (yellow, orange, red) are pitched. In the background, majestic snow-covered mountain peaks rise against a cloudy sky.

Taft

BULLETIN

SUMMITTING EVEREST

FALL 2018

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Street Smarts

How and why John Massengale '69 is trying to make New York City streets safer and more enjoyable.

By Neil Vigdor '95

Photography by Robert Falcetti



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Facing Fears on Everest

Courtney Reardon '03 successfully summits after a two-month expedition.

By Julie Reiff



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Susanna Adams '22 (#4) in control of the ball during a girls' varsity soccer 6-0 win against Berkshire on September 22, along with team captain Emilee Adami '19 (#10), at far left. ROBERT FALCETTI

Taft

BULLETIN

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COMMENTS? TELL US!

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

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ON THE COVER

A view of Camp 3 on Mount Everest's northeast ridge, climbed by Courtney Reardon '03 and her expedition team. It's the highest of six camps at 27,390 feet (and the highest in the world), within what's called the "death zone," the altitude at which point normal human function cannot be sustained and rapidly deteriorates even with the use of supplemental oxygen. The camp is too high for climbers to sleep there, but Reardon's team stopped there to rest for several hours before the midnight start to the summit began. Read our feature on [page 44](#). COURTNEY REARDON '03

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On MAIN HALL

A WORD FROM
HEADMASTER WILLY
MACMULLEN '78



EACH YEAR THE HEADMASTER ADDRESSES THE ENTIRE SCHOOL COMMUNITY AT THE OPENING OF SCHOOL'S CONVOCATION. AN ABRIDGED VERSION FOLLOWS.

Being Genuine

As some of you may recall, at Commencement I spoke about a leather-bound book someone had sent me: an old, crumbling, 1918 Student Handbook. It is small—it can easily fit in your breast pocket—and it had many of the things we still have today in the Handbook: the

daily schedule, the year calendar, club listings, important rules, and so on. To hold that book, carried by some boy a century ago, is to be taken back in time and to be reminded of what we were and what we are.

Headmaster Horace Taft, who founded the school in 1890 with the mission to educate the whole student, included in the book a section titled "General Admonition," meaning advice. In all, there are 20 admonitions, but here's the last:

"Be genuine. Don't try to make others think you are different from what you really are."

It's worth thinking about this piece of advice, because there's a lot here, and there may even be a goal for us this year.

What if every one of us committed to the idea, one we all want, that each of us had the opportunity here, on every corner of campus and at every hour, *to be our genuine self*? Now, that's a worthy goal.

At first glance, it is advice for that individual student. But I think the admonition is more than just advice for the reader. I like to think that he ends with this because it really is a message for the entire school, a claim on what he knew to be essential in creating the kind of school community he aspired toward, because in order for every student to be able to be genuine, to let others see you for what you really are—well, then something really beautiful and challenging has to happen.

Actually three things have to happen. I'll offer them each as a hypothesis.

First Hypothesis: There Are No Outsiders Here

I hope that every single person on this campus believes and works toward that reality: that there are no outsiders at Taft. This I believe and will always work toward.

Each of you was discovered, chosen, invited, welcomed; and each of you belongs.

Each of you belongs as *all* you are, cracked and whole, perfect and flawed, searching and finding, in all the ways you think of and identify yourself.

Each of you has identical and infinite value, enriches this school beyond measure, and is worthy of full-throated celebration.

Each of you is now part of the Taft family, forever and fully a member.

And every day offers a thousand ways to assert we all belong.

Second Hypothesis: It's Our High Standards That Make Us Special

We have really high standards, and they are what make us feel we belong to a special place.

No organization of any kind can be great unless it has high standards, whether it is a professional team or an army platoon or a start-up tech firm or a global corporation. These high standards will be very hard to meet, individually and institutionally, and that's the point. It's the fact that we have to challenge and stretch ourselves to something aspirational that unites everyone, underscores that we all belong.

And these standards are, if you are able to meet them, *proof* that you truly belong. It's like you have a membership card with no expiration date. And so belonging is inseparable from these standards.

So, we have high standards for integrity, especially in your academic work and in your respect for the property of others.



Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78 addressed and welcomed the school community at Taft's Convocation for the start of the 2018–19 school year.

"I hope that every single person on this campus believes and works toward that reality: that there are no outsiders at Taft. This I believe and will always work toward. Each of you was discovered, chosen, invited, welcomed; and each of you belongs."

We have high standards for how we live together and treat each other with the basic decency and respect we all wish for.
 We have high standards for how we wrestle with ideas and perspectives that may be discomforting.
 We have high standards and expect you not only to be nice but also to be brave.
 We have high standards of academic performance, every day, in every class.
 We have high standards for how we treat the campus.
 To meet these standards is really hard. It would be a lot easier to have low standards, but then you would not be stretched and we would not be special and you would not feel lucky to belong and we would not be Taft.

Third Hypothesis: You Can Meet These Standards

Remember, this all starts with the idea that each of us wants to be in a community where we can be our genuine self, and that led to the idea of belonging and to our high standards. We end up inevitably here: with the complete faith that you can meet these standards.
 To be clear, what I have described is very hard. It's hard for each of us individually to meet these standards. We have bad days. We get tired and sloppy. We make mistakes. We say things we wish we could take back. We do stupid things or don't do smart things. We are flawed.
 So we also have to believe in the best intentions of others to remain able to laugh and even forgive.
 Being a place that has no outsiders and holds itself to the highest of standards is especially difficult here. We are crowded together, with diverse ways of experiencing the world, made of motivated and ambitious people, under intense demands and pressure—how challenging that is! Crafting a functioning learning community where we all can be our genuine selves under these conditions is a really big challenge.
 Our work would be a lot easier if we had low standards, lived in a large and anonymous campus, enrolled students and hired faculty of identical backgrounds and perspectives, and didn't strive for excellence.
 But we will never do that. We have deliberately made the task of creating a community of genuine members really hard. But it's glorious work, and my belief in every teacher, student, and staff member is unshakable.
 We will never know exactly why Horace Taft closed with the admonition that we be genuine and not try to make others think you are different from what you really are. Surely it was advice to a new student, perhaps a little nervous about entering the school. But I like to think that if he was offering that advice to this individual, he was also offering a challenge to the school that still rings true today.
 If the year ended and each of you were able to say, "I felt I was my genuine self," and as importantly, you could add, "I helped others be their genuine selves"—well, that would make this a very special place indeed.

Willy MacMullen '78

SOCIAL SCENE

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



Super Sunday is a time for Tafties to show their true colors—and then some! Egg tosses, tug-of-war, pyramids, the slip and slide, three-legged races, and a whole lot of paint are hallmarks of this colorful, wonderful opening of school tradition. See a full gallery of photos from the day at www.taftphotos.com/Super-Sunday-2018



From the Headmaster: What it looks like when a cool front comes in and finally breaks this heat wave.
 #thisiswhatrelieflookslike #taftlife #mytaft #whytaft



Taft's Honors Model UN students traveled to New York City on the United Nations' International Day of Peace, to learn more about the UN and its diplomatic role in the global community. First celebrated in 1982, the International Day of Peace is observed each year on September 21. This year's theme "The Right to Peace: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 70" celebrates the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



Secretive Felines

Wildlife biologist Pete Alexander '94 with a newly radio-collared and ear-tagged cougar kitten. RUSTY SMITH

PETE ALEXANDER '94 has something in common with the animals he researches: Like cougars, he pursues his prey, following them up mountains and through canyons in Wyoming. Unlike the big cats, though, Alexander is studying, not stalking.

Cougars are the widest-ranging feline in the Americas, with their territories stretching from the Canadian Yukon to Patagonia in South America. And they are the most populous of the large cats (cougars and jaguars) in the Americas. Though more closely related to the house cat, cougars are near-apex predators, silently stalking their prey before leaping and crushing the spines of

animals as diverse as deer and livestock.

"They're interesting," Alexander says. "You never see them. They are this really cool, secretive animal. You never see them, but they see you."

What he's been doing lately is figuring out ways to monitor the cougar population in the Jackson Hole, Wyoming, area. As a research biologist with Craighead Beringia South, a wildlife research and education institute dedicated to conserving the natural environment, he's developing noninvasive ways to keep tabs on the local cougar population.

Traditional ways of tracking cougar populations involve sedating individual

cats and placing radio collars on them, a process that's difficult for both the animals and the researchers.

"Almost all the research I was doing when I first joined the study was with radio collars," Alexander says. "It's a ton of work, but it's just such an adventure. You use trailing hounds, then chase them up the tree, sedate them, get them out of the trees, and put the collars on them. You track the animal and find out all kinds of things," such as location clusters and when the animals enter and leave an area, thanks to data sent by the radio collars.

The problems include the price of each

collar—radio collars are very expensive, \$4,000 to \$5,000 each—and the stress on the animals from being sedated and examined.

Alternatives such as camera traps are also used, but often researchers end up with very little good data because cougars are so secretive. Getting a good shot of a cougar takes time and patience. And often the results aren't worth it, Alexander says.

"It doesn't work and it's really dangerous to rely on the camera method to get reliable data on a population," he says. "A method we're testing is using facial recognition software."

The biggest problem with camera traps is that it's really difficult to tell individual cougars apart, he says. "But you need to be able to identify individuals to get reliable population numbers, so that's why

we're trying the facial recognition."

But there are other ways of monitoring both individual cougars and a larger population: scat analysis. Alexander is developing ways to monitor the animals by testing the DNA left behind in their scat.

"It's a lot less invasive, and you don't have to harass the animal to get the data," he says. By checking the genetic material left behind, "it's pretty amazing what you can pull off...you know for sure that Cougar A left this scat, and Cougar B left it over there."

The challenge with this method is finding the scat, and Alexander and his team would love to be able to get a conservation "sniffer" dog trained to hunt cougar scat. Similar to drug- or bomb-sniffing dogs, conservation dogs can lead scientists to

piles of scat left by different animals.

"We're hoping to get our own dog and train that dog on cougars and other species so we can refine that method and come up with best practices," he adds. "It's a lot of work. We need to find some funding to hire some help and a trainer who can work with us. Funding is an issue."

For now, Alexander continues to refine the DNA-scat monitoring, hiking deep into the Wyoming wilderness, checking for scat piles, and hoping his camera traps collect useful information.

"I like hiking in the woods with a goal," he says, "not just to go on the tops of the mountains, but to go find out some secret information no one else has." ■

—Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow '84

Alexander places a scent lure in front of a motion-trigger camera trap in cougar habitat in Wyoming. ALEX COOKE

The Power of Jobs

IN THE TWO SHORT YEARS since she graduated from Hamilton College, Caitlin Kennedy '12 has already established herself in a promising career that wholeheartedly channels Taft's ethic of *Non ut sibi*. Kennedy works as a contracts associate at the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO), a New York-based nonprofit providing employment services to men and women with criminal convictions. The 2017 recipient of the Superstar Foundation's highly coveted Veronica Award, Kennedy is literally CEO's star employee.

Kennedy, who became interested in pursuing a legal career at the age of 7, credits Taft for inspiring her focus on

community service and giving back.

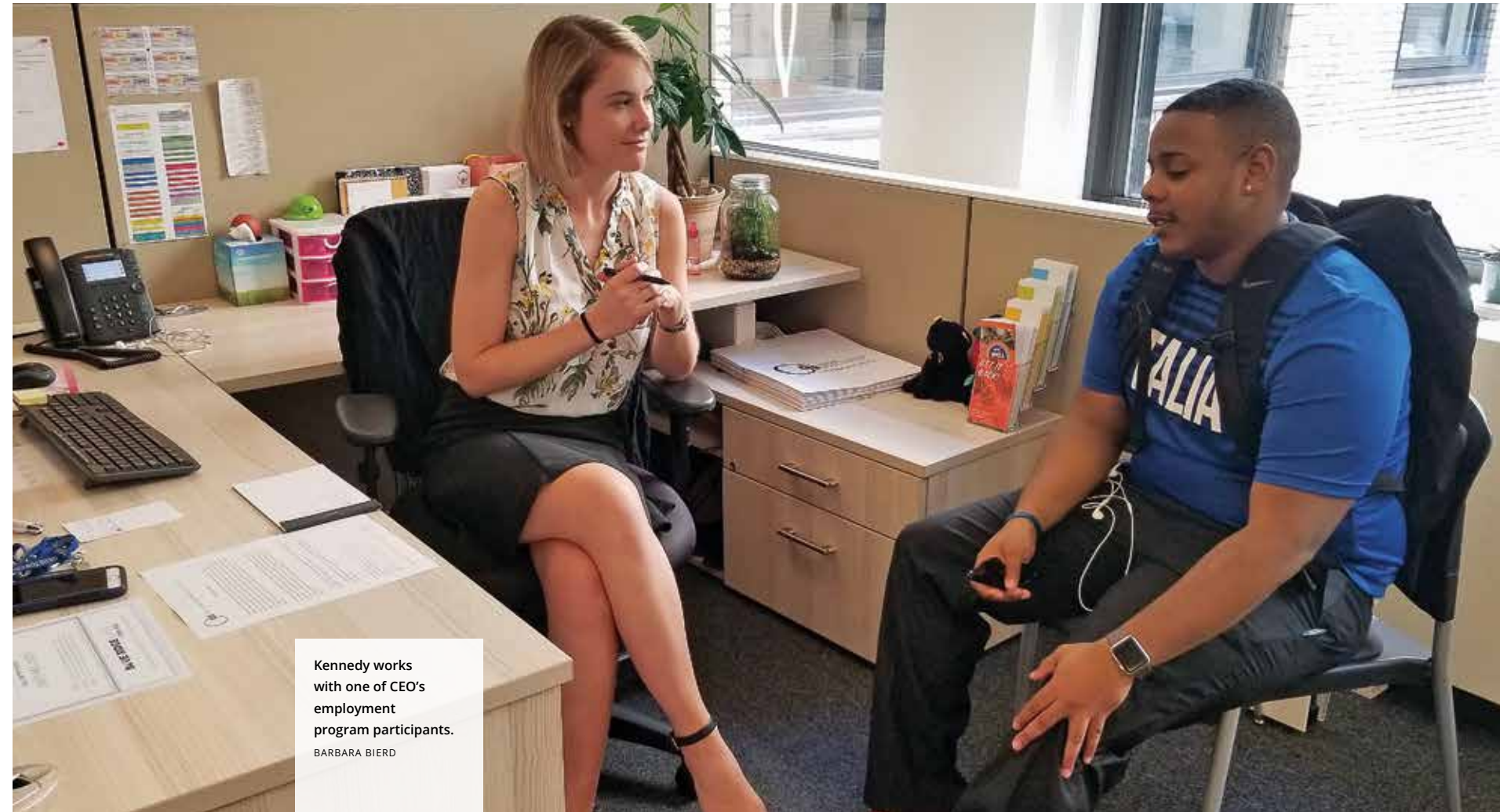
"I went on a service trip to Guatemala with Taft when I was 16, and it was my first look at a community that had less and was willing to accept help," Kennedy explains. "Taft's motto—Not to be served but to serve—became really ingrained in me."

She began her freshman year at Hamilton on the pre-law track, with the larger aspiration of a legal career that would allow her to

defend people of underserved populations. Several college courses, including comparative literature classes on trials and prison writings, as well as a sociology class on law and society, became important for Kennedy's trajectory, as they opened her eyes to the realities of racially-charged courtrooms and the U.S. legal system's injustices.

During her senior year of college, Kennedy interned at the public defender's

"Taft's motto—
Not to be served but to serve—
became really ingrained in me."



Kennedy works with one of CEO's employment program participants.
BARBARA BIERD



Caitlin Kennedy '12 with former program participant and current colleague William Hood at the Center for Employment Opportunities' Success Banquet. The annual event celebrates New York City participants who have been employed for over six months. TOBIAS EVERKE

office in Utica, New York, and another at a corporate law firm in Manhattan. The latter solidified her decision to forgo a career in corporate law, table her law school applications, and focus primarily on criminal justice work post-graduation.

Kennedy was drawn to CEO's belief that if individuals receive employment placement services upon their release from prison, they will be less likely to be reincarcerated in the future. With the goal of reducing recidivism among the parole and probation populations, CEO provides a combination of transitional jobs, hands-on training, mental health counseling, job placement, and post-placement services.

She says that participants are usually referred to CEO by their parole officers, but anyone between the ages of 18 and

25 with criminal justice involvement can request to be a part of their program.

Kennedy began at CEO as a job coach, responsible for managing an average of 120 caseloads per week. It was more than a job; she served as a mentor and advocate for many men and women transitioning from incarcerated life back into society.

"I've been lucky enough to develop friendships with some of the individuals I was assigned to as a job coach," Kennedy shares. "It's incredibly rewarding to see their progress."

Kennedy has been unsurprised, but still affected, to see that the overwhelming majority of CEO's convicted clients are men and women of color.

"At one point when I was a job coach, I had 130 caseloads assigned to me,

and out of that number only two men were white," Kennedy recalls. "When you see firsthand that the statistics you read about are true, it's eye-opening."

As contract management associate Kennedy no longer works one on one with clients; in her new role she is gaining more hands-on experience with the company's legal division. She misses coaching, but learning a different side of the business is helping her figure out the next step in her career.

"I know I want to go the policy and direct service route," says Kennedy. "And I want to get my master's—I'm looking into different programs—but I've stopped thinking about law school. I've realized I'm on a different path." ■

—Carola Lovering '07

Bridging Cultural Divides through Singing

CHRISTOPHER EANES '94 can pinpoint the exact moment when he took his first steps toward a career in music. “I still remember the minute my life changed,” he recalls. “Christopher Shepard, Taft’s choral director at the time, came to our hallway in HDT and was recruiting singers from the choir. I just put my name down.” From there, Eanes went on not only to join Collegium Musicum, but he also sang in the a cappella group, Oriocos, performed in a production of *West Side Story*, and undertook an Independent Studies Project in composition.



Now, more than two decades after that pivotal time, it’s no surprise that Eanes—who holds both a bachelor’s in music performance from Occidental College and a doctorate in music arts from the University of Southern California—is the artistic director and CEO of the Cincinnati Boychoir.

Comprised of nearly 200 boys ranging from kindergarten to high school age, the Cincinnati Boychoir was founded as the Cincinnati All-City Boys Choir in 1965. Eanes assumed directorship in 2009 and soon discovered that the 45-year-old ensemble desperately needed to adapt its mission.

“When I took over, it was still a relatively parochial organization singing quite a bit of sacred music,” he says. “I recognized that if the organization was going to survive, we had to change course.” Since then, Eanes, along with his wife, Managing Artistic Director KellyAnn Nelson, has grown the group into an organization that uses music as an important teaching tool.

“We work to foster core values in the boys—for both their personal development and their relationship with the broader community,” he says. “We are very different than what you might think of when you think of a boy choir. We will always be grounded in the Western musical canon, but really, our repertoire is anything that is going to inspire the boys to love the music that they’re performing and become more empathetic people.

“We have developed a cultural curriculum for our singers,” Eanes adds, “and we work in three-year cycles that explore music beyond our immediate world.” To do this, the Boychoir concerts focus on music from different cultures, and the group brings in special guest teachers and conductors and travels extensively. “Many conventional choirs will present a ‘world music’ concert,” he notes, “and they sing music from all around the world. But it doesn’t go much beyond that. We choose to do a much deeper dive.”

The ensemble recently completed a study of the music of black culture in the United States, which included performances not only in cities with important ties to the U.S. civil rights movement,

but also in South Africa. “We spent an entire year looking at apartheid and the music that came out of that period in history,” he says, “and when we were actually in South Africa, we dug even deeper.”

The group’s current cycle focuses on the Hispanic world. “We’ll be traveling to places where Hispanic cultures are prominent, discussing issues of immigration to the United States, of course, performing music from all over the Hispanic world,” Eanes says. “It’s such an incredibly rich musical environment, but it’s also a way of bridging the cultural divides that exist here in Cincinnati.”

Aside from the Boychoir, Eanes keeps busy with other musical pursuits. He is the artistic director of Collegium Cincinnati—a fully professional choral-orchestral ensemble that performs both Baroque music and contemporary compositions—and lately he has been working with researchers at the Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Department of Pediatric Otolaryngology on a study of the male changing voice. “I was talking with a doctor about how the research into the male changing singing voice was not really supporting what my own experiences were showing,” he says, “so we asked a bunch of boys from the Boychoir if they wanted to enroll in this study. Thirty or 40 of them went in at various stages in their vocal development to be examined. We’ve been able to collect a lot of data on healthy male singing voices in various stages of the voice change that we can analyze and eventually publish.”

In everything he does, Eanes strives to share his passion for both music and education. “I love that right now I have a teaching job that’s also in a professional musical environment,” he says. “It’s such a great balance.” ■

—Christopher Browner ’12

Christopher Eanes ’94, artistic director and CEO of the Cincinnati Boychoir, conducts a rehearsal.



Scan page to hear the Cincinnati Boychoir perform with Eanes conducting.

Learn how to use the Laya interactive app on page 2.

Styled Simplicity

“AS A CHILD, I knew I wanted to get into interior design or architecture, and that became more clear to me in college,” says Katie Putnam Martinez ’00. Having studied studio art at both Taft and Dartmouth, the skills she learned in those classes continue to inform her work as an in-demand interior designer today.

After graduating from Dartmouth, she enrolled in an interior design graduate

program at Parsons to “get the specific training and tool set required to get a job in New York,” she says. While at Parsons, Martinez interned in the office of André Balazs, the hip hotelier behind the Standard Hotel brand and the Chateau Marmont in Los Angeles.

Her appetite for the hospitality industry whetted, Martinez set her heart on working at the Rockwell Group. Like

Balazs’s organization, Rockwell, which was founded by David Rockwell in 1984, is one of the most respected firms in the world of hotels and restaurants.

“It was a really exciting and creative place to begin, and I was given a lot of responsibility and creative freedom,” Martinez says. “In hospitality, you’re trying to create an experience for people that doesn’t exist on the

the residential design firm Nicole Hollis, Martinez launched her own business in 2013. Her first major project was Sinegal Estate Winery in St. Helena, California, which “felt residential in a way,” Martinez says, because “one of our design goals was to make it feel more like a living room than a tasting room.” *The Wall Street Journal* took notice and featured the design in 2015.

While she has also worked on offices



San Francisco designer
Katie Putnam Martinez ’00
MARIA DEL RIO



A living room that
Martinez designed for
a St. Helena, California,
residence combining
antique and midcentury
pieces. DREW KELLY

residential side, so it was really a helpful place to start creatively.”

In 2008, she and her then-boyfriend (and now husband) Michael decided to move to San Francisco, expecting to stay for no more than a few years. Nine years later, they are still there and now have two daughters, ages 5 and 2.

After working as studio director at

and a store, West Coast residential projects are her main focus. Having grown up in New Jersey, she still taps into her East Coast network and recently completed a summer home on Nantucket.

Martinez describes her design sensibility as “a little bit of everything, in a way. I like rooms and places that feel layered with old and new, and I gravitate more



The main Tasting
Room at the Sinegal
Estate Winery designed
by Martinez. AUBRIE PICK

toward contemporary aspects in terms of clean lines and simplicity.” Still, she says she always tries to include vintage pieces, like antiques and textiles, in her projects. And black. “I love using black—it makes every space feel infinitely cooler,” Martinez said in an interview with *House Beautiful*, which featured her work in the July/August 2018 issue (“On the Rise”).

“I love doing everything from interior remodeling—kitchen, bathrooms, and space planning—to overseeing room details like textiles and custom furniture design,” Martinez says. “I feel fortunate to have started my business in San Francisco during a pretty significant boom time for the city.” ■

—Sam Dangremond ’05

Out of Thin Air

SCULPTOR DANIEL WURTZEL '81 has used any number of materials in his quest to make art. Clay, plaster, bronze, wood, steel—you name it, it's likely he's fashioned a piece of art from it. But he felt that he wanted to push his creativity even farther.

"I was at this place where it felt like I wanted to be completely open to making work out of any material," he says, "and you can, as an artist. You can make art out of chewing gum. Any material, everything is fair game in the world today. I was consciously trying to free my mind from the traditional constraints of sculpture making."

A fateful moment on a drive to work inspired his new medium: air.

"I saw a leaf suspended above a grate in the sidewalk like the Marilyn Monroe image. This leaf was just hanging about two feet off the ground, stem down, spinning around and around, just staying in one place. It was one of the most beautiful things I've ever seen. I thought, how hard could it be to recreate that? It turned out to be impossible, I never could," Wurtzel says.

Yet he had stumbled upon a new direction for sculpture. He is using air itself to create sculptures that dance in front of the viewer, twisting and floating on vortices of wind, meticulously designed to look effortless.



Sculptor Daniel Wurtzel '81 at work in the studio.



Wurtzel's Air Fountain at Copernicus Science Center, Warsaw, Poland.

"It got me started working with airflow and trying to understand how it works," Wurtzel says. "I went through a lot of different pieces to try to levitate objects with air. I made some discoveries along the way, I invented a few things along the way, and I ended up creating a number of different ways to make lots of different lightweight materials lift off the ground and perpetually fly in columns or waves of air."

His artist statement explains his concept further. "I am interested in creating art that is experiential, interactive, and constantly changing, and in these ways may bring

about a state of reverie or trance in the viewer, much like watching a fire. Though mostly poetic in conception, my work has a strong scientific bent, and resolving technically difficult problems in sculpture making has been a hallmark of my career," he states. "Flight has been a persistent theme for me throughout my life, and, as my work has matured, its manifestations have taken on ever more ethereal forms."

Wurtzel is based in Brooklyn, New York, but his works have been exhibited—or perhaps "performed" is a better word—around the world such as at the Musée Rodin, the

Grand Palais in Paris, the Tate Modern Turbine Hall, and the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, among other international venues, and in the permanent collections of science museums in Warsaw, Zurich, Rio de Janeiro, and Astana, Kazakhstan, among others. His *Paper Tornado* was center stage at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics Closing Ceremony. Wurtzel's work is currently featured on Broadway in *Finding Neverland* and with Cirque du Soleil's *Amaluna*.

"The work, it's really sort of at a crossroads between performance of art and science," Wurtzel says. "It's a nice intersection to be at."

His artist statement elaborates: "In my most recent work, I am interested in finding or imposing order on chaotic airflow systems. The *Air* series of sculptures and stage-sized installations involves various lightweight, humble materials such as bird feathers, balloons, flower petals, paper, Styrofoam peanuts, fabrics, fog, fire, or ordinary litter from the street that are trapped and continuously fly in columns, vortices, or waves of open air. Propelled into motion by something that is invisible, the aerodynamic properties of these materials and the underlying order within these inherently chaotic airflow systems are revealed in a way that can be continuously observed."

Using so many different materials and discovering how their varying weights respond to airflow mean that Wurtzel has had to call on different skills to create his masterpieces. Mechanics. Physics. Chemistry.

"I'm learning what I need to know as I go," he says. "I like that. If I'm not learning something, then what am I doing? That's just part of the joy of being an artist—you get to do what interests you, and for me that's learning new things." ■

—Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow '84





Jamie Flaherty
Cheney '98, founder
of Prokanga,
holds a consultant
recruitment meeting
in her New York office.
CYNTHIA DELCONTE

A Balanced Life Workforce

LIKE MANY OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL start-ups, 1998 alum Jamie Flaherty Cheney's innovative search firm Prokanga was born from a place of personal experience. While on maternity leave, Cheney asked herself the question frequently pondered by working moms: Can you care for your child and also hang on to the career that you've invested so much in? This conundrum was very real for Cheney—in addition to being a mother to three boys, she is an accomplished strategic business leader with a Harvard MBA and 10 years of experience at top agencies.

As Cheney thought about this, a powerful vision began to take hold. After her third son was born in 2013, she left the agency world to bring her ideas to life with the launch of Prokanga, a search firm blending access to traditional and flexible workforces.

To Cheney, the concept was simple. There are legions of highly skilled women from top-tier schools who have worked their way up the corporate ladder and want to stay engaged professionally while actively raising young children. There is also a growing dearth of high-level talent in the market, particularly at the relatively affordable levels that many young companies need. Matching these two groups, Cheney explains, is what Prokanga does, and does well.

A great example is an emerging hedge fund manager who has a set budget that they plan to use to hire a junior investor relations professional, she says. When this client is

presented the option to hire an experienced IR director with active contacts on a flexible schedule at the same compensation level, the solution becomes obvious. She adds, "Large cities like New York and San Francisco are teeming with sophisticated new businesses in the financial and consumer service industries. These businesses need highly skilled professionals who can hit the ground running and require minimal oversight."

"Our clients are those who care about quality over quantity—they come to us with a fixed budget and ask how they can get the best resource within that budget. Our unique access to both the traditional and flexible workforces means that we are positioned to strategically answer that question in a way that no one else in the market can," Cheney explains. "Clients see us as a cost-effective way to grow their business and ultimately their earnings."

Prokanga's distinctive approach to talent recruitment has been featured in *Forbes*, *Bloomberg*, and *Daily Worth*, among others. The company was selected to be the founding network partner for Harvard Business School's efforts to create career flexibility for their alumni through the HBS High Impact Talent Program.

Cheney spent the first few years spearheading Prokanga singlehandedly while the firm's business grew at a rapid pace. In 2016, she brought on her now-partner, Lesley Finer, another ambitious young mother and a professional with over a decade of

recruiting experience in the alternative asset management space. Together, Cheney and Finer led Prokanga to become what it is today: a highly selective recruiting firm with clients ranging from start-ups to Fortune 100 companies, and a business that generates over \$1 million in revenue annually.

With the company's growth and forward momentum, Cheney and Finer—who, true to their company's mission, currently employ consultants to support them—anticipate a third leadership hire this fall to oversee their business development. In terms of specific practice areas, they hope that 2019 will be driven by continued growth in their C-suite practice (on the full-time side) and independent director placements (on the consulting side).

Regarding balance in her own career, Cheney has found the flexibility that she craved. While her load is far from light, she's able to work between Manhattan and Rhinebeck, New York, where her family owns a small beef cattle farm—all while parenting three young boys.

"I have to give my husband credit for the name Prokanga," Cheney admits. "It was a late-night brainstorming session at our kitchen table, and he came up with Professional Kangaroo—aka, a mom who is getting it all done with a baby along for the ride. And that's the essence of Prokanga." ■

—Carola Lovering '07

In PRINT

*Dr. Benjamin Rush:
The Founding Father Who
Healed a Wounded Nation*

DA CAPO PRESS

Harlow Giles Unger '49

A biography of the Founding Father of an America that other Founding Fathers forgot—an America of women, African Americans, Jews, Roman Catholics, Quakers, indentured workers, the poor, the mentally ill, and war veterans.

Ninety percent of Americans at that time could not vote and did not enjoy rights to life, liberty, or the pursuit of happiness. Alone among those who signed the Declaration of Independence, Benjamin Rush addressed the needs of those deprived Americans as the nation's first great humanitarian and social reformer.

Rush called for the abolition of slavery, equal rights for women, improved medical care for injured troops, free health care for the poor, citywide sanitation, an end to child labor, free universal public education, humane treatment and therapy for the mentally ill, prison reform, and an end to capital punishment.

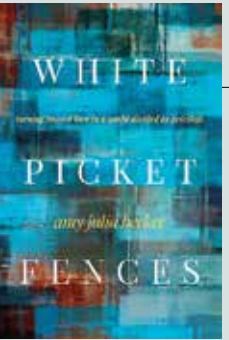
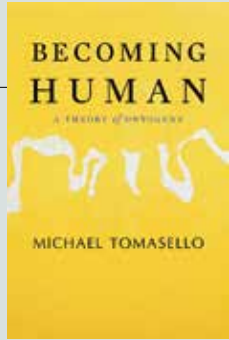
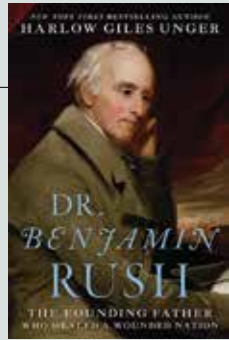
An acclaimed historian, Unger is the author of 24 books, including 11 biographies of America's founders and three histories of the early republic.

*Becoming Human:
A Theory of Ontogeny*

HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Michael Tomasello '68

Virtually all theories of how humans have become a distinctive species focus on evolution. In *Becoming Human*, Tomasello proposes a complementary theory of human uniqueness focused on development and explains how those things that make us most human are constructed



during the first years of a child's life.

Tomasello assembles nearly three decades of experimental work with chimpanzees, bonobos, and human children to propose a new framework for psychological growth between birth and seven years of age. He identifies eight pathways that differentiate humans from their closest primate relatives: social cognition, communication, cultural learning, cooperative thinking, collaboration, prosociality, social norms, and moral identity. In each of these, great apes possess rudimentary abilities.

The author argues that the maturation of humans' evolved capacities for shared intentionality transform these abilities into uniquely human cognition and sociality.

Tomasello is professor of psychology and neuroscience at Duke University. From 1998 to 2018 he was codirector of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, and his scientific work has been internationally recognized.

*Classical New York: Discovering
Greece and Rome in Gotham*

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY PRESS

**By Elizabeth
Macaulay-Lewis '98,
editor/contributor and
Matthew McGowan, editor/contributor**

During the rise of New York from the capital of an upstart nation to a global metropolis, Greek and Roman antiquity played a formative role in the development of the city's art and architecture. This compilation of essays offers a survey of diverse reinterpretations of classical forms in some of New York's most iconic buildings, public monuments, and civic spaces.

Classical New York examines the influence of Greco-Roman thought and design from the Greek Revival of the late 18th and early 19th centuries through the late 19th-century

American Renaissance and Beaux Arts period and into the 20th century's Art Deco.

Contributors from the disciplines of archaeology, architectural history, art history, classics, and history focus on how classical art and architecture are repurposed to help shape many of the city's most evocative buildings and works of art.

Macaulay-Lewis is assistant professor of liberal studies and the acting executive officer of the M.A. Program in Liberal Studies at the Graduate Center, City University of New York.

White Picket Fences

TYNDALE HOUSE PUBLISHERS

Amy Julia Truesdell Becker '94

The publisher describes *White Picket Fences* as "a gentle invitation into the challenging topic of privilege." The notion that some might have it better than others, for no good reason, offends our sensibilities, this book suggests. Until we talk about privilege, the author says, we'll never fully understand it or find our way forward.

Amy Julia Becker welcomes readers into the charm of her privileged southern childhood to her adult experience in the Northeast, and the denials she has faced as the mother of a child with special needs. She shows how a life behind a white picket fence can restrict even as it protects and how it can prevent us from loving our neighbors well.

White Picket Fences invites readers to respond to privilege with generosity, humility, and hope, opening them to questions many may be afraid to ask.

Becker is the author of several books and has written essays about faith, family, and disability that have appeared on a number of media websites and in publications. She lives with her husband and three children in western Connecticut. ■

If you would like your work added to the Hulbert Taft Library's Alumni Authors Collection and considered for this column, please email the editor (lindabeyus@taftschool.org) and mail a copy to:
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Summer Experiences



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student SPOTLIGHT

FOR MANY TAFT STUDENTS, SUMMER IS A TIME OF CONTINUED LEARNING AND PERSONAL GROWTH. FROM ADVANCED CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES AND SERVICE PROJECTS ACROSS THE GLOBE, TO LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AND HANDS-ON WORK IN COMMUNITIES NEAR AND FAR, TAFTIES SPEND THE SUMMER LIVING BOTH OUR MISSION AND OUR MOTTO.

▼ A Global Perspective / FRANCESCA NYAKORA '19

WITH FAMILY IN KENYA and relatives working for the United Nations in Nigeria, Francesca's exposure to the world outside of Taft has helped shape her interests and define her passions. It also led her to Yale this summer to study international affairs and global security as a Yale Young Global Scholar (YYGS). For nearly 20 years, the

prestigious and highly competitive YYGS program has welcomed academically talented high school students to Yale's New Haven, Connecticut, campus from all corners of the globe. Over the past three years, program participants hailed from more than 120 different countries. Which was part of the program's appeal for Francesca.



"I went there expecting to encounter very bright and accomplished students from all over the world and from all different backgrounds," says Francesca. "My expectations were exceeded."

The two-week program combined lectures by Yale faculty and field experts, followed by small-group breakout sessions; interdisciplinary discussion seminars, based on reading and research completed before each student's arrival on campus and taught by graduate student staff; simulations; a speaker series; and group Capstone projects designed to identify and develop innovative and impactful solutions to global problems.

"The dialogue during the program was just amazing, whether it was in class, at a lecture, in a seminar, or just during free time...we never quite stopped talking," Francesca says.

The program broadened Francesca's perspective on a range of issues, from China's growing role in Africa's economy to the impact of NGOs on developing nations. It forced her to examine her personal experiences and beliefs within the broader context of world affairs—something, she says, that will help her in Honors Model UN class this semester at Taft, in her leadership role with Taft's

Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention organization, and as a member of Taft's Debate and United Cultures clubs.

"People tend to think about things that happen here as things that only apply to life at Taft," says Francesca. "They don't always apply the things we see here to the larger world, or don't apply things that happen in the outside world to Taft. I think I can use my experience at Yale to help create some of those connections in our community. Understanding that the things we learn here are consequential to the larger world can only make us stronger leaders after we leave Taft."

► Meaningful Interactions / COLLIN AMELSBURG '19

COLLIN HAS ALWAYS HAD A STRONG inclination toward medicine. After a stint at Georgetown University's Summer Medical Institute in 2017, Collin hoped to dig even deeper into his passion, and he did. This summer he spent a month in Belize working directly with the residents of San Pedro Town.

Collin traveled to Belize with Projects Abroad, a volunteer agency based in the U.K. with offices and service projects in 50 countries around the world. Their public health initiative in Belize offers high school students practical experience through a variety of community outreach initiatives.

"Three days each week we set up a mobile clinic, usually in one of the more impoverished areas of the city, but also in the center of the San Pedro Town," says Collin. "We recorded patient information and medical histories, and conducted free blood pressure and blood sugar tests. Many of the people we served had never had their blood pressure taken. Others came weekly for monitoring because they have hypertension or diabetes, or because it was important to them to stay on top of their health."

Collin worked alongside a small group of high school students throughout his month in Belize, all of whom were guided by two Projects Abroad staffers, a public health professional, and a medical student



from Taiwan. The team taught them how to conduct the medical assessments and how to effectively interpret the test results. They also partnered with the Red Cross in conducting door-to-door surveys to gather and share information about mosquito-borne diseases and noncommunicable diseases.

"Every interaction I had with the members

of the community was particularly meaningful to me," says Collin. "As we went door to door, or as I took their medical history and personal information at the mobile clinic, people would tell stories. I was constantly reminded about perspective—thinking about how others see things, about what they know and what their lives have taught them."

► Changing Something in Yourself / TANIA TSUNIK '20

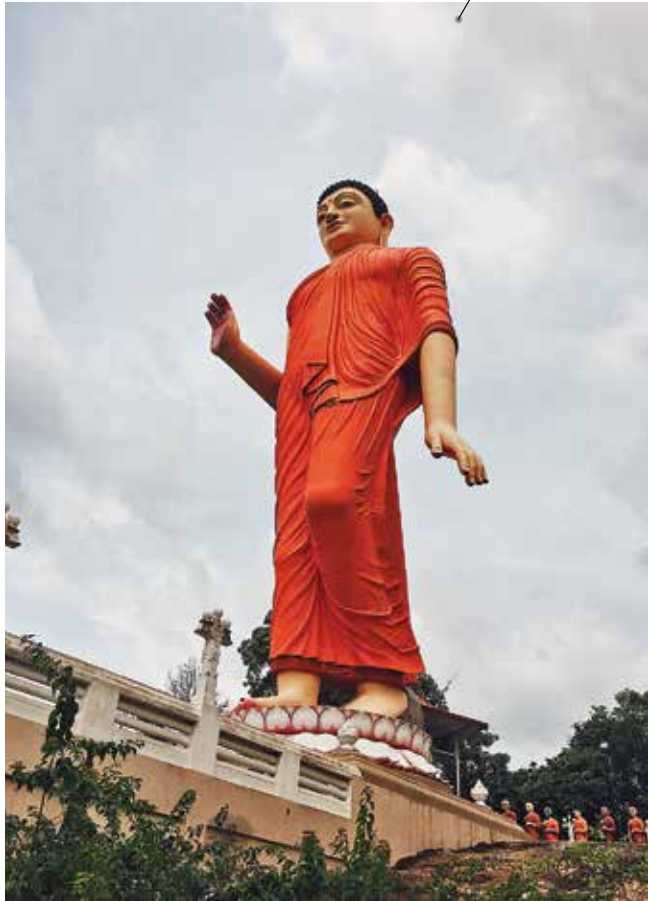
TANIA TRAVELED TO SRI LANKA through International Volunteer HQ (IVHQ), a volunteer travel organization partnering with service agencies in 40 destinations around the world. Since its founding in 2007, IVHQ has placed nearly 100,000 student volunteers in site-based programs “to have a meaningful impact, to foster cultural exchange, and to expand skills and horizons.” Tania was among the very first IVHQ volunteers to teach English to a group of young monks in a local Buddhist temple.

“My class was about 15 boys, ranging from the age of 9 to 13,” Tania says. “The monks had not had language lessons on a regular basis before, so I was teaching them basic grammar rules about sentence structure and questions, and teaching them some words, describing food, animals, professions.”

She also spent afternoons working in an orphanage for girls, some as young as 6, none older than 18.

Tania says she was drawn to Sri Lanka by the images she saw of breathtaking views, elephants roaming the streets, Ceylon tea plantations, wild rainforests, and “peaceful beaches with golden sand.”

“I saw all of that,” says Tania, “and it was absolutely beautiful. But I saw the real Sri Lanka in the eyes of a 13-year-old Buddhist monk. The very first day, at the end of the class, he didn’t want to leave, so we were just asking each other our name, age, and favorite color again and again. Then he suddenly asked me what my favorite bus was. I didn’t understand what he meant by that, so I just laughed and nodded. He gestured for me to follow him to the blackboard, where he drew a sketch of a bus, then started naming all the transports he knew in English. His favorite was Raji-bus, a long pink bus, covered in graffiti that passed through the streets with its windows wide open. Every time the Raji-bus passed their temple, the young monks would run to the road and follow it as far as they could, shouting greetings, waving to the passengers, and laughing loudly. Just as they did for me every day when I left the temple. That was the true Sri Lanka, and that was the true meaning of community service for me. I understood that volunteering is not about changing the whole world, but about changing something in the world of a small group of people and, with it, changing something in yourself.”



▼ Full Potential / JONATHAN IP '20



FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE summer, Jonathan traveled from his home in Hong Kong to the Gansu Province in the northwest corner of China to spend time working with students at a local elementary school. Jonathan traveled with the Changing Young Lives Foundation (CYLF), a Hong Kong-based organization dedicated to helping underprivileged youth in Hong Kong and Mainland China acquire the knowledge and skills they need to realize their full potential. They offer programs at their own sites, through local outreach, and through service programs like the one that took Jonathan to a remote village in Gansu.

“This is a small village on the side of a mountain that is filled with children

who have come to be known as ‘left behind,’” explains Jonathan. “It is very sad to see children as young as 3 essentially caring for themselves and traveling to and from school each day alone on extremely treacherous mountain roads.”

Government reports indicate that there are literally millions of minors who are “left behind” in China—children living in rural communities whose parents have migrated to cities to find work, or who are residing with a parent who cannot claim guardianship. Left-behind children face a wide range of serious issues, from overall health, nutrition, and well-being to basic

▼ Career Confidence / KAITLYN MACDONALD '19

THIS SUMMER KAITLYN LEARNED to suture lacerations, insert breathing tubes into patients’ airways, and start intravenous lines for administering medications. Her patients? Hi-tech medical mannequins with working “lungs,” beating “hearts,” and the ability to communicate their symptoms and concerns to a team of student doctors. It was all part a hands-on summer program for high school students at Harvard Medical School.

Kaitlyn is thinking about a career in medicine. Her time in the Harvard Medical School MEDscience program helped her more fully understand not only what it means to be a doctor, but the many paths a journey into medicine can take. Each day started with teamwork exercises and information sessions, then moved to the simulation lab, where the medical mannequins would present with a range of symptoms for the student doctors to diagnose.

“We worked to solve cases as though we were emergency room physicians,” says Kaitlyn. “We evaluated symptoms, ordered tests like CT scans, and proposed diagnoses and treatments. Initially, we used the base of knowledge we came into the program with and our best problem-solving skills and intuition. We had a whiteboard where we tracked patient information and

education and socioemotional development.

Jonathan joined the CYLF School Social Worker Project for Left-behind Children hoping to bring hope and change to the community. The program offers on-site social work and counseling services to local students. It also provides resources to improve the recreational facilities in the schools and build extracurricular activity programs, like the art and basketball programs Jonathan helped lead.

This year Jonathan also spent time with Spring Blossom Scholarship students in Lanzhou, Gansu’s capital city. Scholarship recipients are most often young girls from

the Dongxiang ethnic minority in rural Gansu; most would otherwise marry at very young age and leave school before completing their primary education. In 2017, CLYF began a scholarship program to subsidize their education. Jonathan hopes to return to Gansu next summer to spend time with the scholarship students in Lanzhou and to continue his work in the mountain schools.

“It has been a very overwhelming experience for me,” Jonathan says. “Even though we spoke different languages, we clearly understood each other’s emotions. The children’s faces reflected so much joy. I know they felt encouraged and cared for.”

developed possible diagnoses. Once we had exhausted our knowledge base, the instructors would shut the sim down and come out and teach us about the actual condition our patient was experiencing—things like heart attacks, Type 1 diabetes, and both forms of Type 2 diabetes. We learned about causes, symptoms, and treatments.”

The benefits, Kaitlyn says, go far beyond the medical knowledge and experience she gained.

“I learned so, so much about myself

during the program,” says Kaitlyn. “About how I work in teams, about how what I do affects other team members, and about how we have to work together to make each patient OK. At the end of the session, the program director complimented me on the way I handled everything and said she could really see me becoming a pediatrician. That was amazing for me to hear. That feedback—and the whole experience—has given me the confidence to continue on this journey.”





▲ Making History, Living Gratitude / KIRA SIEBRECHT '19

WITH SUPPORT FROM A WILLIAM W. Hatfield '32 grant, Kira traveled to Córdoba, Argentina, with Projects Abroad, a volunteer agency based in the U.K. and with offices and service projects in 50 countries around the world. Their human rights and Spanish initiative in Argentina offers high school students the opportunity to learn about local history and culture, while getting involved with human rights issues at a grassroots level.

On August 8, Argentina's Senate engaged in spirited and contentious debate, leading to a historic vote on the nation's 97-year-old abortion law. In the months leading up to the vote, the size and the intensity of abortion-rights demonstrations grew across the nation. In Córdoba, Argentina's second-most-populous city, Kira was among the demonstrators taking to the streets.

"I was very fortunate to be in Argentina during the vote. We joined the protestors

in the streets the night the vote was taking place," Kira says. "Seeing how passionate people were in their fight for social equality and reproductive rights was inspiring. But my host mom was very pro-life and was equally passionate about her point of view. It was very interesting and important for myself and the other students to hear her perspective, as well. Overall, it was truly one of the most eye-opening things I've experienced in my life. Seeing how alive the protest scene was and seeing so many people coming together in that way was really amazing."

In the end, the bill did not pass. That it came to a vote with endorsement from Argentina's Congress and a promise from the president to sign the bill into law was progress for pro-choice activists: In all of South America, only one country has legalized abortion.

Kira also spent time in local schools talking with students about human rights issues

and traveling to impoverished neighborhoods to provide meals to local families.

"There is a part of Córdoba where even the taxis won't go," Kira says. "Three nights a week, a single family opens their doors and cooks food for their neighbors. Families send their children with plastic containers to collect food for the family. We went there and helped cook meat and rice. In one night we served 92 people."

Kira also took time to interact with the children who came to collect food for their families. Their impact on her was profound.

"The children I met in Argentina have so little but are so very happy. It is an interesting contrast to many children in the U.S., who have so much but complain about being sad or bored," she says.

"The children I met have very simple lives; it is all they know. They are just so grateful to have each other and so grateful to be alive."

▼ Advancing Agriculture / STONE FENTON '20

WHILE RESEARCHING TOPICS for his Global Leadership Institute (GLI) essay, Stone Fenton '20 stumbled upon something fascinating.

"I found a series of articles about potato breeding," says Stone. "I read a lot of trade articles showcasing a tiny Dutch company, which was developing non-GMO, diploid, homozygous potato plants, which could be used to produce reliable seeds with genetically reliable characteristics."

A concept, Stone explains, that is revolutionary.

"Potato plants are genetically complex—the potato genome has over 30,000 genes. Unfortunately, this wide genetic variability means potato seeds produce unreliable crop results. Potato seeds are generally considered useless for planting. To circumvent the genetic unreliability of seeds, genetic cloning is used instead—a portion of last year's crop is replanted to create new plants. Farmers would love to use potato seeds—it would increase yield, eliminate seed-tuber storage costs, and dramatically reduce the need for systemic pesticide use," he explains.

Stone amassed reams of potato-seed research, then submitted it to the Dutch company pioneering the stable-seed development. They invited him to travel to the Netherlands over the summer, where he spent two weeks as an intern.

Stone worked in both the breeding laboratory and the potato fields. He assisted in replanting potato cultivars, tended crops, recorded growth cycles and characteristics, collected and weighed tuber harvests, and worked with laboratory breeders. He learned about potato genetics, cropping, and the potential for reduced pesticide use and world food security.

He also submitted his original research to the World Food Prize and was invited to the New York State Youth Institute to present his work at Cornell University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in June. He was named a Borlaug Scholar for his work there and, as one of the top performers at the Institute, was named a delegate to the

World Food Prize Global Youth Institute, to be held in Des Moines, Iowa, in October.

"I have always loved the problem-solving aspect of math and science,"

notes Stone. "My hope is that when I am older I will look back on my life and see where I used math and science to make the world a better place."



▼ Empowerment Through Education / MICHELLE LIAN '20

MICHELLE SPENT TWO WEEKS IN rural Longxi, Gansu, China, teaching young women and girls English and mathematics through Educating Girls of Rural China (EGRC), an organization working to empower women in rural regions of

western China to escape the cycle of poverty through education. Since its founding in 2005, EGRC has given 842 girls from the most impoverished regions of China the gift of education, many through high school, and even more through college.

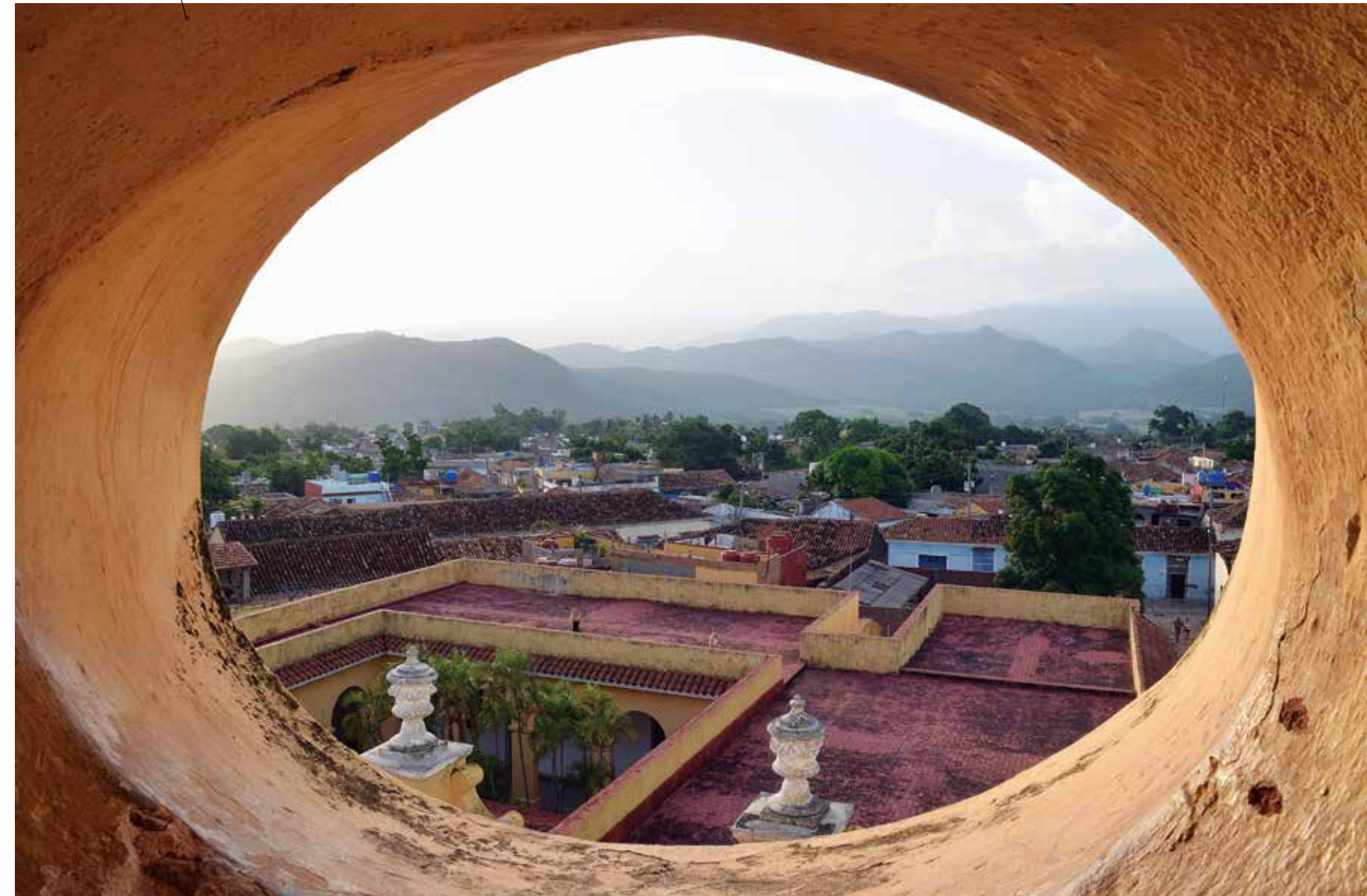
“I was instantly drawn toward the cause and mission of the EGRC organization,” says Michelle. “I firmly believe in the importance of the equal opportunity of education, and understand how great an impact schooling can make on girls as individuals and a collective group in society.”

Despite having been involved with efforts to address issues of gender inequality in China, Michelle was surprised to learn how deep and prevalent those issues were in rural western China, where tradition values and reserves educational opportunities for sons, while girls are relegated to caretaking roles.

“We got a chance to teach the girls in that area where the conservative society struggled with issues of sexism and education inequality,” Michelle explains. “During my stay I really learned to appreciate education as a privilege and not to take it for granted, because these girls are so eager to learn but they have limited opportunities.”

Michelle worked with five young women, teaching them English grammar and reading comprehension in the morning, mathematics and English language in the late afternoons. In between, they would travel together to her host’s home for lunch and a bit of downtime.

“We bonded,” says Michelle, “and shared our different experiences and backgrounds. For me, the most memorable part of this trip was all the insightful conversations and touching stories that the girls shared with us. It was shocking and heartbreaking to learn that these girls have gone through so many hardships and were forced to become mature and care for younger siblings at such a young age. When we first met each other, I could not possibly imagine that these girls had lived through such experiences—everyone was very cheerful and positive. Their stories were extremely touching and heartbreaking to hear, but at the same time they motivate me to contribute more toward the goal of gender equality. I am truly honored and thankful for this opportunity to get to know these wonderful girls who I now call my friends.”



▲ Depth of Understanding / LOGAN CLEW-BACHRACH '20

FOR 16 DAYS LOGAN AND EIGHT other high school students visited large cities, small towns, and remote mountain villages across Cuba. In addition to a Spanish-speaking guide and program coordinator, the group traveled with two professional photo-journalists who delivered formal lessons on things like basic composition, framing, leading lines, focus, and storytelling. The content of each lesson shaped the field work—and the peer and instructor critiques—that followed.

The group shot the tobacco farms and limestone hills of the Valle de Viñales and explored the Sierra Maestra, home to Fidel

Castro’s rebel headquarters. They visited Las Terrazas, Cuba’s first ecologically sustainable community, and trained their lenses on Havana’s iconic squares and architecture. Their journey culminated in Santiago, just in time for the Carnival of Santiago de Cuba, the largest, best-known, and most traditional cultural celebration on the island.

“We were in Santiago very close to the end of our trip,” says Logan. “We had been working on skills and technique for nearly two weeks. Everything seemed to build toward that one amazing night of shooting—Carnival is so bright, so colorful, and so energetic, and

our photos reflect that. It was amazing.”

Logan felt a deep connection to the people and culture of Cuba and hopes to return very soon. When she does, it will be with camera in hand.

“Photography is really a great way to see things more deeply. When you’re composing a picture, you have to pay attention to every element of the scene before you. You have to notice details and understand how each element relates to or reflects another. Your depth of understanding and appreciation for all that you are seeing and experiencing grows through photography.”



▲ Leadership Affecting Change / SEAN DUNBAR '20

SEAN'S PASSION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL issues and marine sciences made the Island School's summer program a natural fit. The rigorous, 30-day course of study included field work in local ecosystems, explorations of local communities and the socioeconomic effects of development in the region, and hands-on interaction with the functional systems that support the sustainable campus, including a look at food sourcing, access to fresh water, and harnessing natural energy sources.

"Each group of students spent one six-day rotation in each of the three formal classes," Sean explains. "In Marine Ecology, for example, we would go to class in the morning and learn about a specific part of the overarching subject. Then, in the afternoon, we would go on an ocean dive to observe the marine life we had learned about in the morning lesson. This was probably the most unique class I will ever take in my educational career."

Cofounded by former U.S. Navy SEAL officer Chris Maxey, the program also includes a strong physical health component—early

morning workouts designed to prepare students for a culminating endurance event, the Monster Run-Swim, which includes alternating intervals totaling six miles of running and two miles of swimming. Summer term students also complete a solo excursion, a time to reflect on their learning on Eleuthera, something Sean continues to do.

"The Island School has found a way to promote concrete learning in the classroom while promoting self-growth not just through the academic component, but through other events and activities that were more tailored to personal growth and reflection. I came to understand the importance of being passionate about something and doing things because you love to do them. And that I have a real power to make a difference—to make change in the world no matter how big or small it is. In the end, everything we did at the Island School supported the motto "Leadership effecting change." Going forward, I don't want to lose sight of that—I want to tailor my actions to reflect my commitment to affecting change as a leader in the community," Sean says. ■

THESE AND OTHER STUDENT EXPERIENCES WERE FUNDED IN PART BY GRANTS FROM THE FOLLOWING ENDOWED FUNDS:

- ▶ William W. Hatfield '32 Grants celebrate the ideals of Horace Dutton Taft—service above self—and are given annually to students whose commitment to volunteerism brings to life the message behind Taft's motto.
- ▶ The Kilbourne Summer Enrichment Fund, established by John Kilbourne, Class of 1958, in memory of his parents, Samuel W. and Evelyn S. Kilbourne, provides students with opportunities in the summer to participate in enriching programs in the arts.
- ▶ Meg Page '74 Fellowships honor her commitment to compassionate health care and are awarded to students who wish to explore the provision of better health care.
- ▶ Robert Keyes Poole Fellowships honor the memory of Robert Keyes Poole '50 and enable Taft students to engage in travel or in projects consistent with Mr. Poole's lifetime interest in wildlife and the environment.

Across the Pond

MEMBERS OF TAFT'S FIELD HOCKEY team traveled to London over the summer where they attended World Cup field hockey games, had practices coached by an Olympic gold medalist and Great Britain national team players, played games against local club teams, and even played two games at the field where England and Great Britain's field hockey teams train. Off the field, they took in all the sights the historic city has to offer.



Across the Country

TAFT TEACHER DAVID DETHLEFS has spent the past 10 summers guiding students and faculty through Antigua, Guatemala, building more than 30 homes in the region and lending many helping hands to a number of service projects. U.S. State Department advisories precluded travel this year, but David still found a way to honor his commitment to helping families in Guatemala through the God's Child Project with help from a Go Fund Me/Biking for Blocks initiative and a 3,000-mile bike trek across the United States. Along the way (in Bismarck, North Dakota), David met up with the team that runs the God's Child Project and took in some spectacular sights. ■





The Rhythm of the Road



FOR MORE THAN A THOUSAND YEARS, pilgrims have journeyed along the Camino de Santiago, a 500-mile network of ancient pilgrim routes leading to Santiago de Compostela where, it is said, the remains of the apostle Saint James the Great rest. This summer, Spanish teacher Jon Bender was among the travelers.

Jon began his journey in St. Jean de Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, a historic town in the Pyrenean foothills of southwestern France. The most popular of the Camino routes, the Camino Francés begins with a 17-mile (27 km) hike straight up the Pyrenees.

For nearly two weeks, Jon hiked the dirt paths, village roadways, and wooded trails that make up the Camino. He left France with a honeymooning couple from Poland, shared the road with German travelers, and walked many, many miles in complete solitude. Most days he covered 12 or 13 miles; occasionally he traveled as many as 20.

“You fall into the rhythm of the road and feel a real connection with the people who have been doing it for over a thousand years. It wasn’t a religious pilgrimage for me, but I don’t think that there’s a way to do it and not be grabbed by just the simple

history and religious aspects of it. You cannot help but be affected by being in the presence of these churches, and the things that you see in the small towns and villages, and the contemplative nature of the walk. Along the way, you quickly shed what you don’t need. That minimalism—the stripping away of most of the modern life stuff—is so elemental, and religious in its own right.” ■

Jon Bender’s travels along the Camino de Santiago were funded in part by the Lance Odden Summer Sabbatical Teacher’s Fund, the Palamar Fellowships, and the Sheppard Family Grant.

In the Gallery

ALUMNUS AND ROCKWELL VISITING Artist Peter Wiehl '72 shared his talent with Taft students through a September Morning Meeting and individual class sessions during the fall semester. His work, which includes photos, video, sculptures, and paintings, was on display in Potter Gallery through November 9.

"The goals of [the] artwork are to induce reverie, to invite the viewer to dream..."

notes Wiehl. "To contemplate the nature of time, the poetry of fire, the simple wonder of our sky, the eternal mystery of deep space and the beauty of it all..."

The Rockwell Visiting Artists program allows select artists to extend their reach beyond the gallery walls, offering a residency of sorts that creates broader opportunities for teaching, learning, and mentoring. Rockwell Visiting Artists spend

time working directly with art students in the classroom and connecting with the full school community through our Morning Meeting program. Recent Rockwell Visiting Artists have included painters, photographers, potters, sculptors, and printmakers. The program is supported by the Rockwell Visiting Artists Fund, established in 1997 by Sherburne B. Rockwell Jr., Class of 1941, and H.P. Davis Rockwell, Class of 1944. ■



Tara Westover Visits Taft:

Author of all-school summer read, *Educated*

"Increasingly I am convinced that no education can be called 'good' if it doesn't include some element of empathy, of trying to understand people who are different from you—who look different from you, who believe different things than you believe. I think we have to teach ourselves this kind of charity; that it is only by teaching ourselves this particular kind of charity that we will in some way be bound together not just by knowledge but by understanding."

—Tara Westover, author of *Educated: A Memoir*

Read more about Tara Westover's Morning Meeting talk at
www.taftschool.org/newst



Summer Renovations

WORK CREWS INVESTED much of their time over the summer in the first phase of the multistage renovation of CPT Hall. Phase I begins with infrastructure upgrades that are often invisible to the eye but the bedrock of sound and efficient renovations. And speaking of rocks... the construction of the heated bluestone walkway in Main Circle was extended beyond the center pathway, out to Route 6 and across the sidewalk areas. Work was also completed in faculty homes and apartments. ■



A Warm Welcome

THE TAFT COMMUNITY welcomed an exceptional group of new faculty members to campus in August. They are (back row, from left): Neal Allar, French; Ivan Salcedo, Video Arts; Yuna Hur, Penn Fellow, Mathematics; Tom Chestna, IT Director; Matthew Reichelt, Classics; (middle row, from left), Sean Padgett, Library Director; Shanique Garcia, Director, Multicultural Recruitment; Katelyn Skinner, Mathematics; Sierra Berkel, Penn Fellow, English; (front row, from left), Adam Laliberte, Spanish; Timothy Cary, Mathematics; Victor Cuicahua, Penn Fellow, History; Alison Frye, Science; Rosemary Danaher, Mathematics. ■

True Colors

THE FIRST WEEKEND after the start of classes brings Tafties together, first in teams designated by every color of the rainbow, then into the beautiful blending of the full community through the day of fun, friendship, and camaraderie that truly is a *Super Sunday*. ■



Living Classroom

SCIENCE TEACHER AND DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP Carly Borken worked with grounds crew member Larry Stairs throughout the spring to formally identify the many species of trees growing across Taft's 226-acre campus. Their work culminated with the addition of botanical species tags to approximately 50 trees. "I'm really excited to have our campus be a living classroom," says Borken, "and to utilize the trees as another space for learning." ■



Spreading Joy Through Music



MEMBERS OF COLLEGIUM MUSICUM, Taft's showcase choir, traveled to London and Paris in June to perform in concert at London's Holy Trinity Church and the American Cathedral in Paris.

"This trip is truly Taft and Collegium at their best," says Arts Department Head and Collegium Conductor Bruce Fifer. "This began two years go as an extraordinary partnership between our program and alumni in London, who were very eager to see Collegium perform there."

The concerts featured sacred music and American spirituals performed in breathtaking, historic venues. In between rehearsals and performances, Taft students explored both cities, taking in not just their history and culture through performances and museums, but must-see tourist destinations including Buckingham Palace and Big Ben in London and the Champs Élysées and Arc de Triomphe in Paris.

"London was the centerpiece of our tour," says Fifer. "It represents an extraordinary marriage of geography, venue, and audience. So many alumni attended our performances and the receptions after. Our welcome was warm and our connection deep."

The Collegium repertoire spans every period of music from Gregorian chant to James Taylor. They have toured extensively, delighting audiences across the globe, from China and Italy to France, Spain, and destinations throughout the United States. Travel this year was funded in part by a 2018 Whittemore International Youth Travel Grant from the Connecticut Community Foundation and the generous support of Collegium alumni and Collegium parents both past and present. ■



Music for a While



Sunday, December 2 at 4:00 pm

Wintersong

Featuring folk artists Rani Arbo and Daisy Mayhem
Walker Hall

**Tuesday, December 11
At 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm**

*Taft's 83rd Annual Service
of Lessons and Carols*
Woodward Chapel

Friday, January 11 at 7:00 pm

Jeff McFadden, Classical Guitar
Woodward Chapel

Sunday, January 27 at 4:00 pm

*Pianist Andrew Armstrong
and Friends*

A Classical Chamber Music Concert
Woodward Chapel

Sunday, February 10 at 4:00 pm

Art from the Heart:

Musica con Amore
Woodward Chapel

Saturday, March 2 at 7:00 pm

*Jazz from the Undercroft:
A Mardi Gras Celebration*
Woodward Chapel Undercroft

Sunday, April 7 at 4:00 pm

Basically Baroque
A Classical Choral Performance
Woodward Chapel

Friday, April 26 at 8:00 pm

Woodward Chapel
Sunday, April 28 at 3:00 pm
Grace Church, New York City
*Music for Great Spaces,
with Taft's Collegium Musicum*

Saturday, May 11 at 4:00 pm

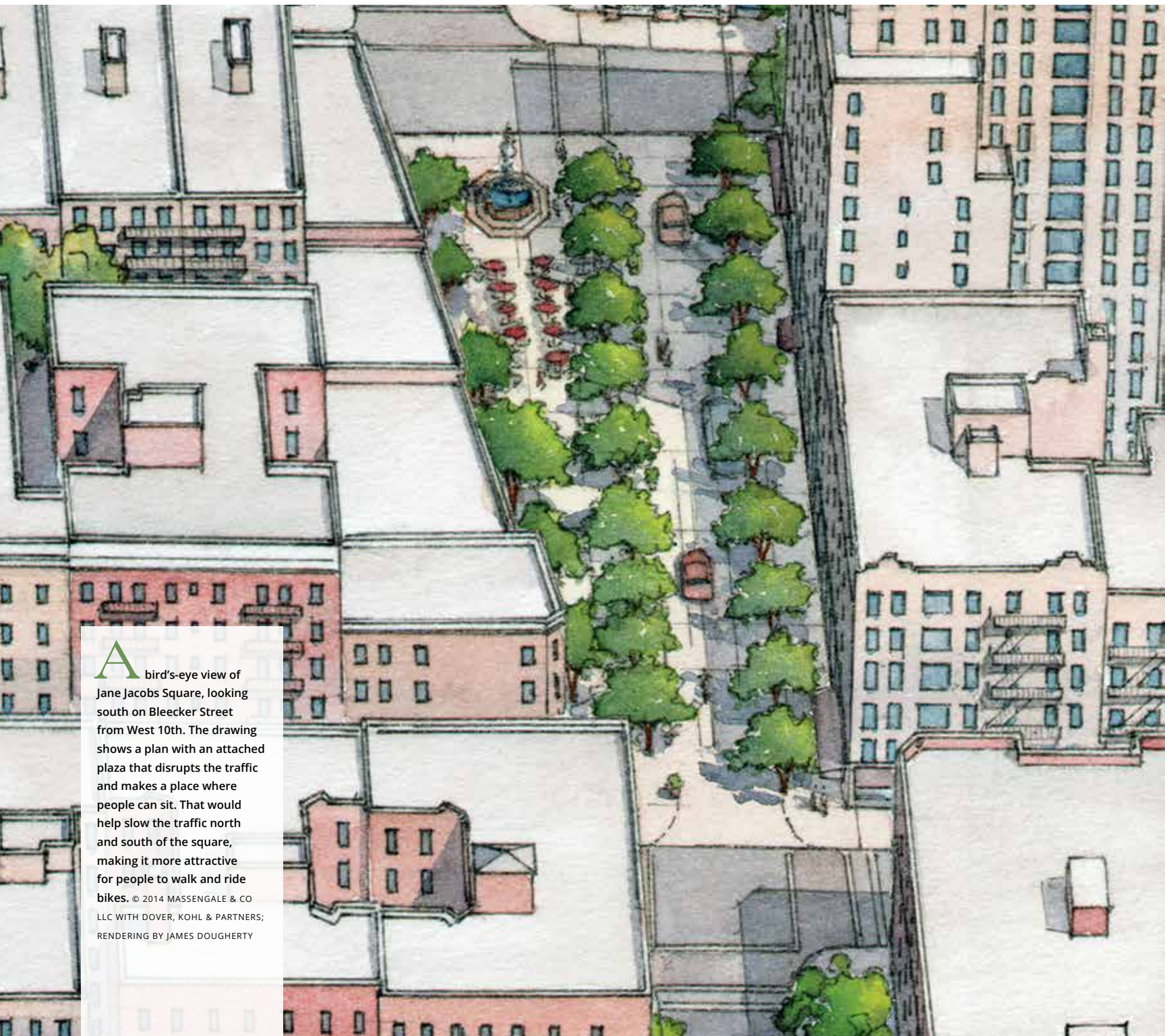
The King of Instruments
Organist Daniel Scifo
Woodward Chapel

Sunday, June 2 at 5:00 pm

Waterbury Symphony Orchestra
The Great American Songbook
Woodward Chapel



STREET



A bird's-eye view of Jane Jacobs Square, looking south on Bleecker Street from West 10th. The drawing shows a plan with an attached plaza that disrupts the traffic and makes a place where people can sit. That would help slow the traffic north and south of the square, making it more attractive for people to walk and ride bikes. © 2014 MASSENGALE & CO LLC WITH DOVER, KOHL & PARTNERS; RENDERING BY JAMES DOUGHERTY

SMARTS

How and why John Massengale '69 is trying to make New York City streets safer and more enjoyable

BY NEIL VIGDOR '95
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT FALCETTI



"We looked at streets in places like the old parts of Amsterdam, where cars share the street with people."

Architect and urban designer John Massengale '69 rides a CitiBike on Nassau Street in New York City.

"There's a saying, 'You can judge a culture by what it builds,'" says John Massengale '69.

The New York architect and planner is trying to spread the fundamentals of New Urbanism in his venerated city to help bring harmony to the hustle and bustle of vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Massengale is a key voice in the debate—one raging from City Hall to the state capital in Albany—about vehicle congestion pricing, traffic

calming, and street design in the Big Apple.

What's old is new for this longtime New Yorker, who is collaborating on a team that's working with residents of the Financial District downtown on a redesign project for the fast-growing neighborhood. It would redirect Brooklyn Bridge traffic entering Manhattan and transform Park Row into a pedestrian and bike area, as well as create a tourist trail ending at Bowling Green.

"We looked at streets in places like the old parts of



BEFORE

Jane Jacobs Square before planned improvements, looking south on Bleeker Street from West 10th Street, in Greenwich Village. JOHN MASSENGALE

Amsterdam, where cars share the street with people,” Massengale says. (Interestingly, the Financial District was once New Amsterdam.)

While the number of traffic deaths is on the decline in New York, there’s been an uptick in cycling fatalities. It parallels the popularity of CitiBike, which is modeled after similar bike-share initiatives in Europe.

Now planners like Massengale are once again looking to, and traveling to, Europe—from Amsterdam and Copenhagen to Stockholm and London—for solutions to the deadly conundrum. He supports a congestion-pricing proposal for vehicles traveling below 96th Street in Manhattan. The plan embraced by Governor Andrew Cuomo would charge motorists—but not taxis, buses, or public transportation—a premium for entering the borough during rush hour.

“People who live in Manhattan want to see fewer cars, while people in the rest of the state think they have a God-given right to drive in and out,” says Massengale, who lives on Manhattan’s Upper West Side.

Until politicians and planners recognize that speed kills, Massengale laments, the grim trend of traffic fatalities—pedestrians, cyclists, people in cars—will continue to plague the city. In addition to expanding red-light cameras, which he bemoans has been blocked by some lawmakers, Massengale says the city needs to devote less of its precious real estate to traffic lanes and more to space to make it attractive for people to walk and ride bikes.

But this award-winning architect and author is under no false illusions of how incremental progress can be in a city known for the “New York minute” and obsessed with skyscrapers. All he has to do is look at

A rendering of Jane Jacobs Square depicting a plan for people-friendly improvements. The trapezoidal space, where two old street grids come together, is the historic center of Greenwich Village. © 2018 MASSENGALE & CO LLC; RENDERING BY GABRIELE STROIK JOHNSON



AFTER

Massengale says the city needs to devote less of its precious real estate to traffic lanes and more to space to make it attractive for people to walk and ride bikes.

the redevelopment of the World Trade Center site, which Massengale says is a microcosm of the larger problems facing the city.

Some of the biggest developers, he says, wield too much power. The New York City Department of Transportation has earmarked \$500,000 to look at the redesign ideas for making the Financial District safer and better for pedestrians. It would be a study, Massengale says, and a political process.

Massengale's eponymous architectural and urban planning firm is near Ground Zero and the soaring transportation hub known as the Oculus, which resembles a fish spine. Like many of his fellow New Yorkers, he's not easily impressed. "It's a glorified shopping mall," he says. "I go there for the Apple Store." It's not Grand Central Terminal or New York Public Library, two great public buildings Massengale finds appealing.

A Harvard graduate who has a master's degree in architecture from the University of Pennsylvania, Massengale is a former board member of the Congress for the New Urbanism. The group is renowned for its work promoting the lost art of placemaking. *The New York Times* called New Urbanism "the most important phenomenon to emerge in American architecture in the post-Cold War era."

"A lot of modern architecture is about the 'wow' factor," he says, quoting one of his colleague's favorite sayings. "It's not a place if nobody's there."

Growing up in Darien, Connecticut, Massengale says he developed an early appreciation for architecture. His mother was an art historian. While visiting his grandmother in Maine, she would often take him to see examples of 18th-century architecture. By the time Massengale went to college—he spent his freshman year at the University of California, Berkeley and attended an English-Speaking Union scholars program in London—he says he was drawn to New Urbanism and Postmodernism.

His father worked in Manhattan at 57th Street, and the younger Massengale would take the train to the city, where he was allowed to roam from Lexington Avenue to Fifth Avenue. To think that a

1,400-foot skyscraper known as One Vanderbilt will soar immediately next door to the Beaux-Arts gem Grand Central is an abomination to Massengale. "I think it's too big, and its sparkling glass facade sticks out like sore thumb," he says.

Massengale's vision and institutional knowledge have earned him acclaim far beyond New York. In 2013, he cowrote *Street Design: The Secret to Great Cities and Towns*. The foreword was written by Prince Charles (the two were connected by a friend who worked for The Prince's Foundation, a charity established by the Prince of Wales). John Norquist, the former mayor of Milwaukee and former CEO of the Congress for New Urbanism, said *Street Design* is "the best book on street design ever written."

In 2015, Massengale's firm was chosen by the Walton Family Foundation as part of a pool of designers for the Northwest Arkansas Design Excellence Program. It was tasked with the design of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) as an affordable housing initiative, with Walmart's founding family paying the firm's architectural fees.

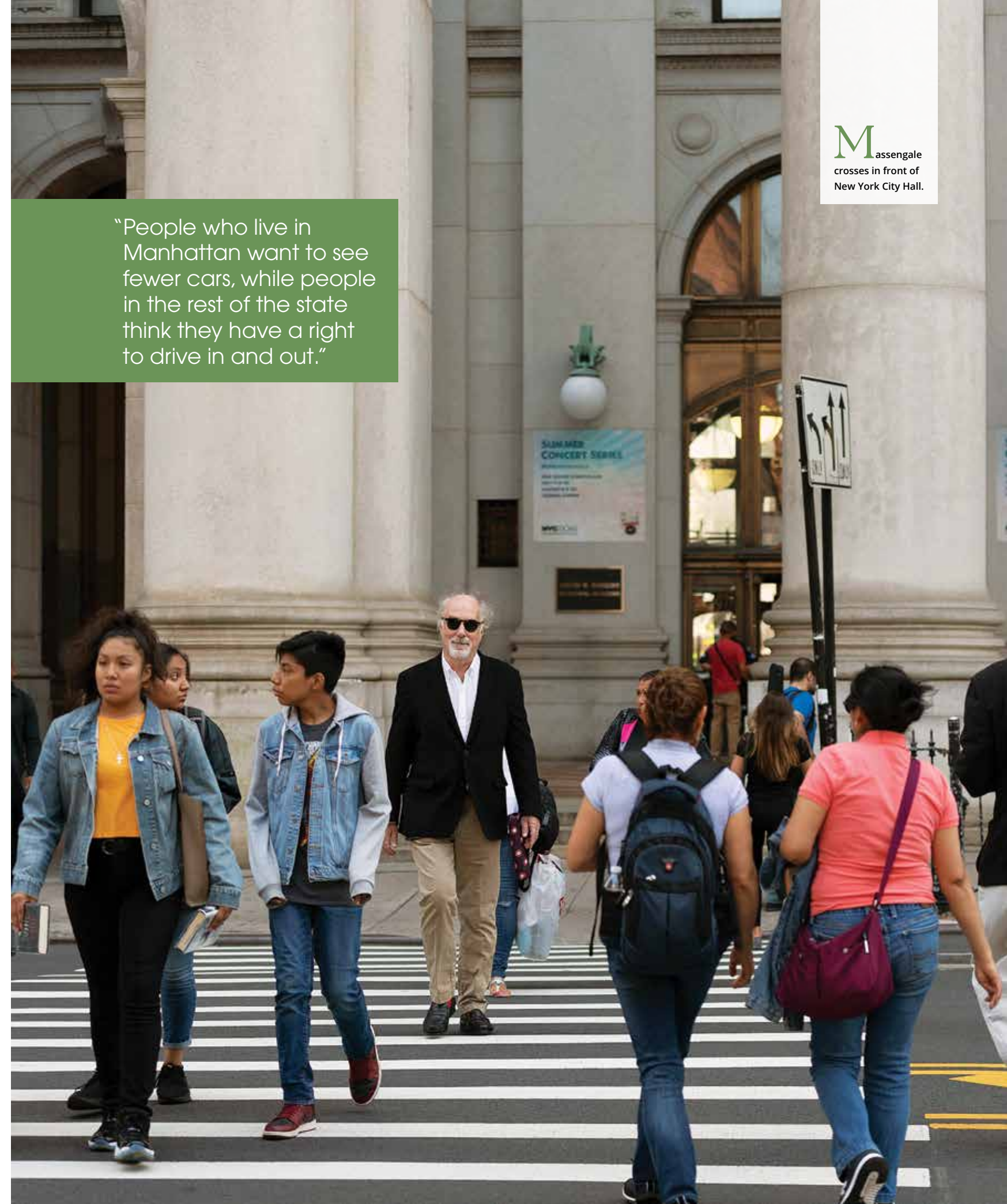


"We *must* make the most of the glorious new opportunities to build more walkable towns and cities by creating streets that are places *where people actually want to be*."

—John Massengale and Victor Dover, coauthors of *Street Design*.

Massengale
crosses in front of
New York City Hall.

"People who live in Manhattan want to see fewer cars, while people in the rest of the state think they have a right to drive in and out."





Looking south on Nassau Street, from Beekman Street. When the sun shines on these old buildings near Wall Street, there is a play of light and shadow that emphasizes the composition and rhythm in the facades, Massengale notes. The minimal “glass box” in the photo has no detail to catch the light, however. “When the eye is bored, the mind is bored,” he says. “Luckily, the old buildings are still there to catch our interest.”

The work of Massengale is more than just bricks and mortar. It’s more than bike lanes. It’s also cerebral. Last September, he cochaired a symposium in Engelsberg, Sweden, dedicated to the study of the neuroscience of space and how people react to spaces. “Place is...the common denominator for me,” he says.

Massengale is also the coauthor of *New York 1900: Metropolitan Architecture and Urbanism 1890–1915*, which was the first architectural history book to win a National Book Award. The book chronicles the transformation of the city from the end of the Civil War to the Great Depression, when Robert Moses started to put his permanent fingerprints on the area as a prominent public official.

He credits Moses with helping to develop what is now the Henry Hudson Parkway and Riverside Park. But after World War II, Massengale says, Moses championed federally funded utilitarian projects that changed the course of the city and region, not always for the better. “You could never build the Taconic Parkway today. You cannot build the Merritt Parkway now,” he says. “You’d have to build Interstate 95.”

He sees many of the same challenges facing planners and politicians today as they jump at federal dollars for infrastructure projects.

On his iPhone, Massengale scrolls through an artist’s rendering of the Financial District redesign that he is advocating for showing Park Row from the Brooklyn Bridge to City Hall, minus cars. Next, there is the tourist trail down at Bowling Green, which used to have streets on three sides. Now, it has two—the goal is to eventually go to one. “They’re small, crooked, medieval-style streets that don’t work well for lots of cars,” he says of the Financial District, which has 75,000 residents.

In May, Massengale penned a 1,600-word *New York Times* op-ed (“There Are Better Ways to Get Around Town”) extolling the virtues of the redesign as part of a broader initiative by Mayor Bill de Blasio called Vision Zero, which seeks to eliminate all traffic fatalities in the city by 2024.

Not everyone shares Massengale’s fervor for change with the redesign. “It’s not a coincidence that many of the critics are over 65,” says Massengale, who is also 65. “They enjoy driving around, and they don’t want that to change.” But like more than three-quarters of Manhattan residents, Massengale and his wife no longer own a car. ■

—Neil Vigdor ‘95 covers politics for *The Hartford Courant*.

“A lot of modern architecture is about the ‘wow’ factor.... It’s not a place if nobody’s there.”

Massengale
on Broadway outside
City Hall Park.





FACING FEARS ON EVEREST

BY JULIE REIFF

COURTNEY REARDON '03 WAS AN HOUR INTO A TRAINING HIKE WHEN SHE HAD TO TURN AROUND. IT WAS HER FOURTH DAY AT BASE CAMP (BC) FOR A TWO-MONTH EXPEDITION TO SUMMIT MOUNT EVEREST. SHE AND HER TEAMMATES HAD DONE SHORTER HIKE UP TO BC, BUT NOW THEY DECIDED TO GO ON A THREE-HOUR HIKE. BASE CAMP IS A BIG JUMP IN ELEVATION, AT 17,056 FEET. CLIMBERS ARE SUPPOSED TO “ACTIVELY REST” FOR A FEW DAYS, TO MOVE AROUND, BUT TRY NOT TO GET WINDED IN ORDER TO ACCLIMATE.

“On the flat part I was still totally fine, but as we hit scree [loose rock], it was three steps up and one step back, sucking my energy.” Reardon recalls it felt like she was stuck in cement.

“I was breathing so heavily, and my teammates seemed totally fine. I worried I was holding them back. I’d have to take a break for a minute every few steps up this little moraine. I told myself, this doesn’t feel right, but I couldn’t see the path back down in the loose scree. Afterwards, I was consumed with the thought, am I in over my head?”

Those few tough hours and the rest of that day threw everything into question.

Reardon had never had any ambition to climb Everest. She had a preconceived notion that it was crowded. “I didn’t know about the north side then. Only about a third of Everest climbers choose to climb the north side in Tibet. Helicopters are not allowed to perform rescues in China, and that keeps many inexperienced climbers away from the north side,” she says.

A director in institutional equity sales in New York City, she knew it would be tricky taking two months off work, but she’d been with her firm seven years, which is “a long time on Wall Street,” she adds. Also, she and her husband, Doug, had been married three years, with no kids, and the clock was ticking. “If I wanted to do this, it needed to be now,” she says.

Reardon decided she wanted to climb an 8,000-meter peak and did the research. She looked at each peak and noted the death rates, which were actually quite low for Everest because the mountain has a good rescue structure in place.

“It’s hard to ask for time off to climb something no one’s heard of,” she says. “It’s hard to get people excited about it.” There was some risk in asking, but her firm was supportive from the get-go.

“I had always kept my climbing plans quiet,” says Reardon. “Only close friends and a few clients knew how into it I was because I had previously climbed Denali in Alaska. I saw climbing as a

“EXPERIENCE WAS IMPORTANT,
BECAUSE I WANTED TO REDUCE THE VARIABLES SCREAMING AT ME....
SO I TESTED MYSELF WITH PRIOR CLIMBS AND PHYSICAL TRAINING.
I IDENTIFIED AND FOCUSED ON WHAT I COULD CONTROL.”

conflict with work, as time away from the office when I was not reachable, so I never let the two merge.”

But her attitude toward climbing translated over to her work environment—setting goals far out, then taking steps to accomplish them, having a process. And keeping the plan loose enough that you don’t miss opportunities along the way.

One of her work goals had been to grow several of her accounts into top 10 revenue generators at the firm—“which I’d done,” she says. “So that

gave me credibility, too, when I asked to go.”

One life lesson she’s learned is that she is a “very fear-driven, cautious person, filled with self-doubt all the time even though I’m successful,” she says. “But fear can be a good thing. It helped me to plan a safer climb, to find the best operator, to train harder as though my life was on the line.

“Fear is a great motivator,” Reardon adds. “Not fear of failing—if I fail I can adjust my preparation and try again—but fear of suffering.

A SAMPLING
OF REARDON'S
INSTAGRAM
POSTS FROM
THE MOUNTAIN



**READ REARDON'S
DESCRIPTION OF THE
DESCENT PHOTO ON PAGE 44.**

“THERE IS A NATURAL BOTTLENECK THERE AS CLIMBERS CAREFULLY LOWER THEMSELVES OVER THE 40-FOOT LEDGE WITH A 10,000-FOOT DROP ON ONE SIDE,” REARDON SAYS. “IT’S ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT SECTIONS OF THE CLIMB, PARTICULARLY ON DESCENT BECAUSE YOU CANNOT SEE YOUR FEET AS YOU PLACE THEM ON THE WOBBLY LADDER BELOW. MY SHERPA PARTNER AND I GOT CAUGHT WITHIN A CHINESE TEAM, SOME AHEAD OF US IN THIS PHOTO, WITH OTHERS BEHIND. THEY FULLY ADOPTED US, PASSING TEA AND (IF YOU CAN BELIEVE IT) CIGARETTES AMONG THEMSELVES AND OFFERING SOME TO US AS WELL. THEY WERE GREAT—THEY COACHED ONE ANOTHER AND ME DOWN THE SECOND STEP MOMENTS LATER. IT WAS A GREAT MOMENT OF TEAMWORK AMONG STRANGERS SHARING A COMMON EXPERIENCE.”

Instagram

courtreardon
Everest Base Camp

Summit 29035'/8850m
2nd Step 28140'/8577m
1st Step 27890'/8500m
Camp 3 27390'/8300m
Camp 2 24750'/7500m
North Col 23000'/7000m
Advanced Base Camp 21300'/6492m
Base Camp 17000'/5182m

mike.runs
www.alanarrette.com

April 20
Tomorrow we start our first of two acclimatization cycles. We will slowly ascend to North Col (7000 m/23,000 ft) during the next days, to allow our bodies to adjust for the higher altitudes we'll reach before the summit push.

INSTAGRAM ICONS ©2020R.COM/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



EVEREST

Q&A

COURTNEY REARDON ANSWERS SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT HER EXPEDITION TO THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT EVEREST.

How long was summit day?

It took about seven hours from Camp 3 (27,390 feet) up to the summit at 29,029 feet. We started at 10 p.m. and reached the summit at dawn, maybe 5 a.m. I spent about 30 minutes on the summit admiring a view normally reserved for jumbo jets at cruising altitude. Climbing down took 14 hours because we descended all the way to ABC that day. I don't think many, if any, other teams descended that far, but it worked for us even though it meant we were awake for almost 40 hours straight.



How many people have summited?

A total of 3,563 different people have summited Everest and survived. More have summited, but 80 percent of accidents happen on the way down. Roughly 70 percent climb the south side of the mountain; only 30 percent ascend the north side.


What was the most challenging part?

On summit day, there are three "steps," where you are climbing on rocks rather than snow/ice. This was tough with crampons (steel spikes) on your feet and massive, clunky boots because they can't grip. On the second step, for example, you must first climb about 10 feet of rock slab, then climb the near-vertical, rickety 30-foot ladder. This section is very exposed with a 10,000-foot vertical drop. It is more difficult to navigate on the descent since you cannot see your foot placement on the ladder rungs.


What was the best part?

Overcoming doubt and fear. Even before we left the highest camp at 27,390 feet on summit night, I silently thought to myself that maybe I could just stay here and call this my highest point. Yet, minutes into it, I was climbing well, quickly passing or closing gaps to climbers ahead of me. I'm most proud of the fact that I climbed up and down swiftly and crisply, never sloppily or slipping. I had it. This was within my capabilities. No more doubt.


I rose to the challenge in ways I didn't know I had in me. Everything was hyper-focused on my footwork and movement and breathing and mind control. On a prior climb, I once heard someone ask, "How much longer?" to the summit or next camp, and I decided never to do that because that's the first crack. You can't show any weakness, especially to yourself.








Instagram



courtneardon
Mount Everest



April 26
Earlier posts cover the facts of what we did. How we felt is another story. Acclimatizing is hard, really hard. Painful at times. Each of us had our moment. It makes one question everything. But, this is a fun bunch, and we were able to laugh at ourselves enough to make it through. And after 3 days at ABC we finally started to feel almost normal again!



Two Sherpa teammates on the North Col's 1,000-foot ice wall. HARALD GROSSAUER

"FEAR CAN BE A GOOD THING. IT HELPED ME TO PLAN A SAFER CLIMB, TO FIND THE BEST OPERATOR, TO TRAIN HARDER AS THOUGH MY LIFE WAS ON THE LINE."

There is going to be misery, suffering, and discomfort no matter what, but with preparation I can reduce that noise and increase my odds of accomplishing my goal. Win-win."

Back on day four at Base Camp, after the tough training hike, Reardon was questioning herself. "It was more than humiliating," she wrote in her Instagram. "Aren't we here to climb Everest?" The moment she had to turn back to camp to recover, she was plagued with self-doubt. Overwhelmed by her sense of weakness, her emotions spiraled downward.

It wasn't the first time she had put herself in a situation where she felt overextended, or in over her head, she explains. "I do it frequently, and, I thought back, I've been doing this my whole life, so it's just how I'm built."

So Reardon called her husband, Doug, and promised him that, after this trip, she would stop doing this to herself. What was she trying to prove? All of their vacations, together and apart, revolved around skill development of one sort or another—skiing, ice climbing, even their wedding involved kiteboarding, and their honeymoon was spent hiking Kilimanjaro. Why, she asked herself, can't we relax?

"Well, he was the wrong person to call," she says, because he likes to challenge himself, too, and respects her for doing the same. So the pity party turned into a pep talk. "He reminded me how much I love doing this. I'm in my element once the climbing gets going. And these teammates I was hiking with were ultramarathoners who trained in the Alps and sometimes did races that last 24 hours.



Camp 3 on Everest's northeast ridge, the mountain's highest camp at 27,390 feet (and highest in the world) within what's called the "death zone," the altitude at which point normal human function cannot be sustained and rapidly deteriorates even with the use of supplemental oxygen. Reardon's team stopped there to rest for several hours before their start to the summit.



"IN SOME WAYS,
WE CLIMBED THE MOUNTAIN TWICE
WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT
THE CHANGES IN ELEVATION
FROM GOING UP AND DOWN."

I shouldn't have expected myself to keep up with them. Doug reminded me that I should be happy to be part of such a strong, capable team. I was."

Reardon deeply believes that it's good to push herself, good for her character. "It's how you grow," she says, but even she worried that she'd overdone it. They were a really small team, so one struggling person could suck resources from others on the team.

"Experience was important," she adds, "because I wanted to reduce the variables screaming at me. If everything was new, I would have been overloaded. So I tested myself with prior climbs and physical training. I identified and focused on what I could control."

In addition to Sherpa support, Reardon's team

Instagram

courtreardon
Mount Everest

April 28

For our original hike up to IBC and onto ABC last week, we had two herds of about 50 yaks each, maybe more. One yak carries about 40 kg/88 lbs. That's roughly 4,000 kg/8,800 lbs of tents, camping gear, cooking ware, food, climbing gear, fuel, etc. moving up the mountain. In fact, our guide @ruperthauer believes our haul ended up being closer to 5,000 kg/11,000 lbs. What we don't consume, we bring back down of course.

The logistics and planning that goes into an expedition such as this is astounding. Very impressed and pleased with all the efforts of @furtenbachadventures, our Sherpa support team, and our guide @ruperthauer who make this all possible.

We head back up to IBC tomorrow then onto ABC and the North Col.

consisted of four people, including their guide, Rupert, who rescued a snow-blind American climber in 2013, while he (Rupert) was attempting a solo summit without supplement oxygen or Sherpa support. (Fewer than 20 climbers have ever done this, Reardon believes.) Their head Sherpa, Mingma, was tied for second-most summits with 21. The record is 22. "My fellow members were alpine ultramarathon runners from Austria and Germany—a consultant, an architect, and a software engineer," Reardon says. "They were great!"

But the altitude is no joke. Even Base Camp is higher than any peak in the Rockies, so all climbers, even Sherpa, have to adjust to the

ar

Scan page for a panorama video from the expedition.



"I'M MOST PROUD OF THE FACT THAT I CLIMBED UP AND DOWN SWIFTLY AND CRISPLY, NEVER SLOPPILY OR SLIPPING. I HAD IT. THIS WAS WITHIN MY CAPABILITIES. **NO MORE DOUBT.**"

altitude slowly. To prep their bodies for the summit push, climbers ascend part of the way and then climb back down, multiple times.

So she soldiered on. The team continued to acclimatize, moving up and down the mountain, waiting for the weather window so ropes could be fixed to the summit by the Chinese government.

Reardon's first acclimatizing cycle was to Advanced Base Camp (ABC) at 21,300 feet, then down to Base Camp. For the second, they went back to ABC and then climbed a 1,000-foot ice wall to North Col Camp 1 at 23,000 feet and back down to Base Camp. They rested at BC before the final summit push, in which they spent a night at each of the six camps. (This technique is only used on 8,000-meter peaks, she says.)

"In some ways, we climbed the mountain twice when you think about the changes in elevation

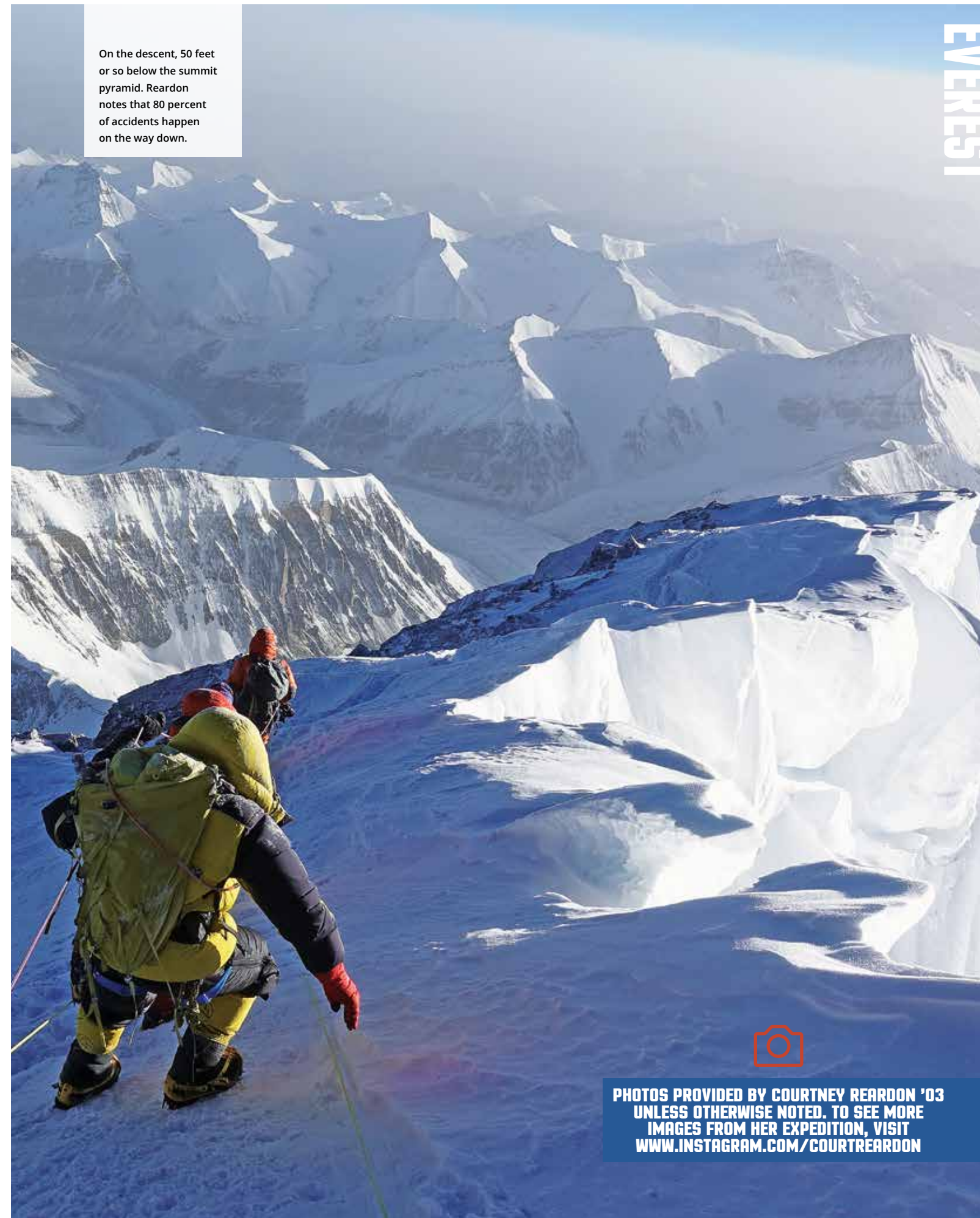
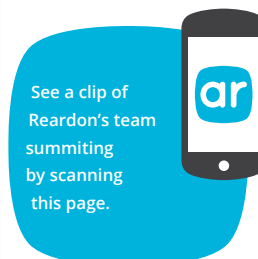
from going up and down," Reardon explains.

It was important to Reardon that she shared both her difficulties and successes during the expedition on Instagram. "I felt that if I only presented the rewarding aspects of Everest and my successes, should I reach the summit, then I'd be a fraud in making it seem easy for me," she says.

"Maybe I also wanted to hedge people's expectations of me, that maybe I wouldn't summit. But people saw me as strong and capable, and I wasn't," Reardon says. "But then it turns out I was."

On May 16, Reardon became the 68th American woman to summit Mount Everest and survive; globally she is the 475th woman to accomplish that feat and the 599th American. ■

—Julie Reiff is marketing and communications director at Gould Academy in Maine. She is the former editor of the *Taft Bulletin*.



EVEREST

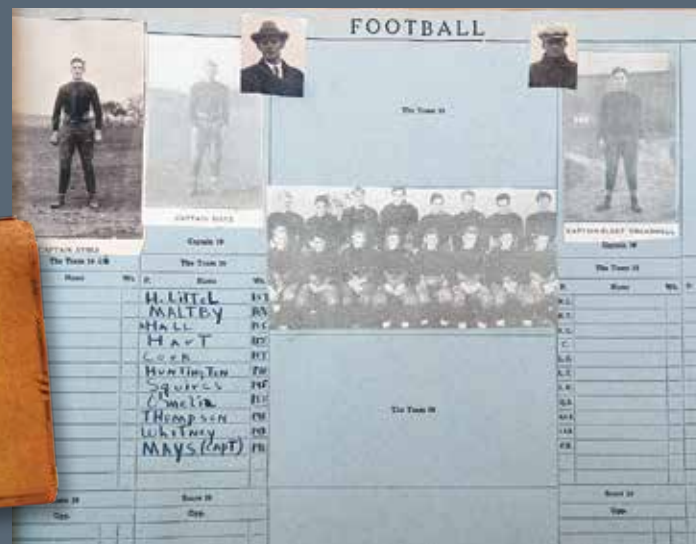


PHOTOS PROVIDED BY COURTNEY REARDON '03
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Looking BACK



Cover of a small handmade suede scrapbook/album (date unknown).



Football page from a 1930 memorabilia book of S.A. Hall '30.

Scrapbooks have gone in and out of fashion throughout the years. Did you know that at one point students had memorabilia books embossed with their name and class year? These large red books have the Taft seal on the front cover and contained pages for the student to list names of faculty members, students, and team rosters. There were also pages for photos, drawings, newspaper clippings, and more. One album from 1930 contains

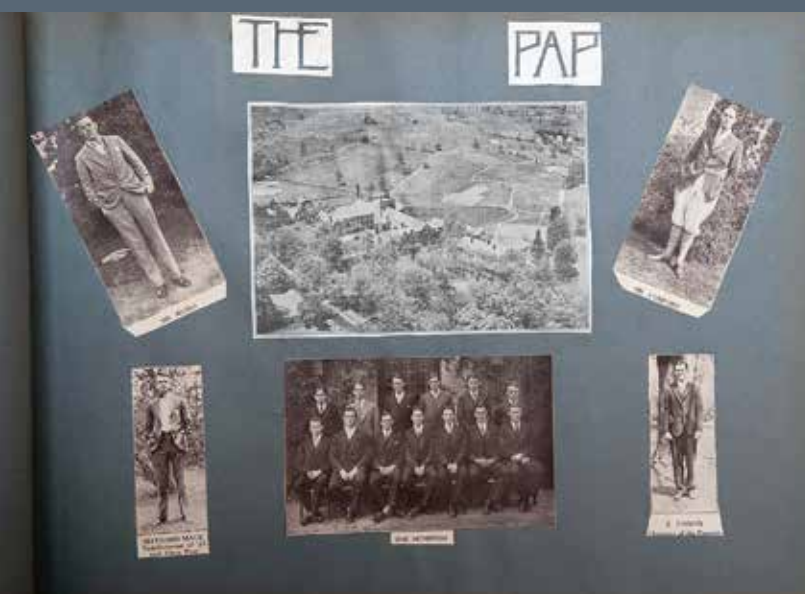
photographs of several football teams, as well as lists of friends and classmates. This book also holds articles from area newspapers on the passing of Harley F. Roberts, a notable Taft master whose loss was felt beyond the campus walls.

The Archives also hold a more contemporary scrapbook created in 2014 by three students. These students took a “then and now” approach to creating their book. Old traditions discussed in this scrapbook included

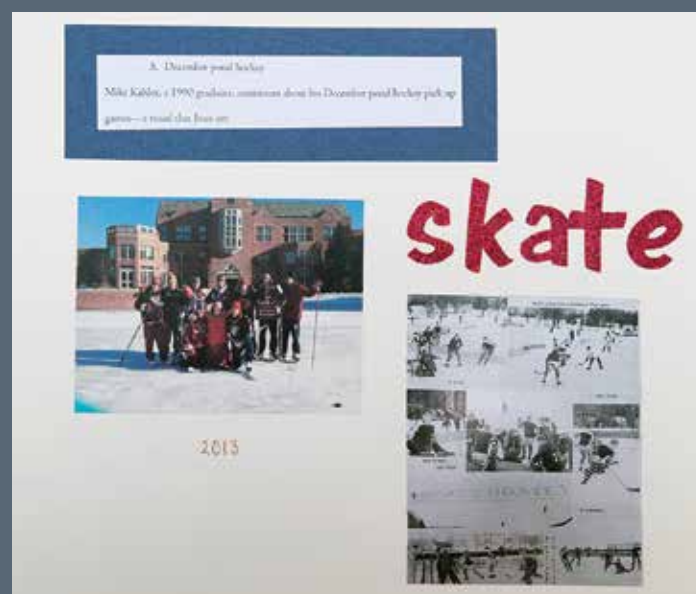
new boy ties and Alpha, Beta, and Gamma teams. It also introduces newer traditions like Super Sunday and the Red Riot Rally. One of my favorite pages is a comparison of pond hockey, which shows a photo from 2013 and a collage of *Papyrus* photos from the late 1940s.

These items are housed in the Leslie D. Manning Archives at The Taft School.

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



The Pap page from a 1930 memorabilia book of S.A. Hall '30.



Page from a 2014 “Taft Tales” scrapbook showing a pond hockey photo from 2013 and a collage of *Papyrus* photos from the late 1940s.



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