A DAY IN THE Life

Alumni Weekend

127th Commencement
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We hope you enjoy this interactive issue of the Bulletin, and look forward to your feedback!

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Photography by Robert Falcetti, Anne Kowalski, and James Shannon

52 A Day in the Life
Follow the lives of three Taft students. By Debra Meyers

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Remarks by Pressley M. Millen ’17

“Bring Me Little Water, Sylvie” drew rave reviews during Collegium’s performances in San Francisco and Santa Monica this year. Use Layar on these pages to enjoy the performance. Peter Frew ’75

We hope you enjoy this interactive issue of the Bulletin, and look forward to your feedback!
Earlier this week, I snuck out of my office and drove to New Haven, where I hide, in a wood-paneled reading room in Yale’s Sterling Library, whenever I have a talk to write. The parking meter maxed at two hours, so I twice had to take breaks, emerging blinking into the sunlight to take get some air, and to walk by the Green. In every way, the Green is the center of the city.

Colonists arrived in New Haven in 1638, seven men wintering over, and about 250 arriving in April to try to somehow wrest a life out of thick woods and thin soil. That they survived is some-thing of a miracle, but what is more astonishing is this: one of the first things they did was to plan the town Green. It’s amazing. Barely able to eke out survival and with arable land scarce, the first thing they did was to commit to a space where they could gather—to trade, worship, discuss, remediate, resolve, educate. Think of what that said about their conviction that a community of desperate and diverse voices could only endure if there was a commons. And so the 16-acre, nine-section plot has remained.

And that’s where this talk starts and finishes, where you seniors once began and now end: on a green, and with my hope that the work we have done with you will help you for life in the commons.

As you know, the history of New England is, in some ways, about how we have gathered on communal spaces; and if our discourse as a nation is inevitably imperfect, at turns divisive and rancorous and uniting and uplifting, that it even happens can be traced to our commitment to the commons.
common. Some 170 towns in this state still have a green, a commons, like the one just a few steps from this campus. Common spaces, we are reminded, are about the bringing together of citizens, around religion, trade, civics, and education. They are physical and spiritual loci, the means by which in our best moments as a people we are our most humane, visionary, and wise, and where we find ways to gather, debate, and listen, to experience literally and figuratively commonality.

The authors of a favorite book titled Common Fire write: Many Americans in an earlier time…participated in some kind of commons—a shared space that anchored the American vision of democracy. Whatever its form, the commons marked the center of a shared world. By happenstance and intention, [diverse] people met and talked together with some sense of shared state, something in common.

As the world has never been more complex and dynamic, the irony is that it has also never looked more like a colonial commons, never more in need of disparate citizens who can gather and converse to meet the pressing planetary challenges. I like to think you seniors learned here something about participation in the commons.

Here’s Common Fire again, noting that technology and transport have created a new commons—a global town green where we are inextricably tied and interdependent:

I think back to the three years I spent teaching in Taft some 40-plus years ago. Some of what I have gleaned from the notes over the years: potential vacation destinations from pictures and descriptions; books to add to my “to read” list; a better understanding of the many Taft graduates that have left—and are leaving—their mark in the world. I have learned about history from the people that lived it. I have laughed out loud at the political discussions and the inside jokes that run from issue to issue.

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I have read tidbits of wisdom and have wanted many times to thank the individual for taking the time to put it into writing. In the Winter 2017 Bulletin (page 55), it is Nick Gibble ’51 that I would like to thank for sharing his philosophy of life and his “life’s little lessons.” Having turned 60 recently, I appreciate his opening statements: “At our age it is easy to contemplate the end rather than the future. Life is still full of exciting opportunities and challenges, which motivate us mentally and physically.”

I think back to the three years I spent at Taft and can only be thankful for how my experiences prepared me for my life. I have just retired from 30 years of teaching nursing students. I never imagined myself at Taft becoming a teacher, but I know that my Taft teachers supported me, encouraged me, and influenced me. Funny, that is how my students described me at the end of each semester.

I receive a number of alumni magazines: Chatham Hall, Wheaton College (Norton, Massachusetts), and Georgetown University. The Taft Bulletin is always the most interesting and informative.

—Holly Holmes Williams RS ’74
Four-Wheeled Love Affair

NICK FIRESTONE '84 has loved racing since age 3. It's in his blood; his great-grandfather, Harvey Firestone, started the eponymous tire and rubber company that still dominates the roads today.

And while the 51-year-old has now raced among the most acclaimed drivers in the world, his decision to follow the passion may have received a boost during his freshman year at Taft—where his daughter, Annabel '20, just finished her lower-mid year. While touring colleges with his mother, in town from their hometown of Phoenix, Firestone floated the idea of borrowing $5,000 to build an off-road race car. He vowed to document the process and submit it with his college application.

"She went for it," he says, and while he ended up at Princeton, he believes Duke accepted him "on the back of racing." When he told his interviewer there that his dream was to win the Indianapolis 500, the man shut Firestone's file and the two spent the next 25 minutes talking about racing. "It got to the point that my mom came up and interrupted the interview because she was excited!" Firestone says. Firestone's racing career got a start thanks to friend and classmate Derek Mitchell '84, who reached out to another alum, Adam Bronfman '81, to sponsor Firestone. "I never would have been able to race that off-road car that many times had Adam not helped us out. It was just too expensive," he says, "so I'll be forever beholden to Adam because we got our foot in the door and got a lot of experience."

While "the car broke a lot when we were first driving," Firestone finished in third place the first time he entered the Baja 1000, the off-road race that takes place in Mexico's Baja California Peninsula. After he returned to Princeton following the palate-whetting racing experience, he got a call from 1963 Indy 500 champion and family friend Parnelli Jones, who offered to coach him over a summer.

"I've always said I can teach someone to drive, but I can't teach them the desire to win," Jones told Motor Sport in 1999. "Nick has never given up on his racing dream, and now that he's gotten the right opportunity, I plan to be track-side wishing him the best of luck."

Firestone is the first member of his family to race professionally (that's saying something considering he has 44 cousins), and he set his sights on winning the 1999 Indy 500. Jones encouraged him to get into go-karts, the training ground of the exclusive race car world. Firestone nabbed 12 top-three finishes in International Karting Federation races between 1987 and 1989. After he graduated from Princeton that year, he headed to Europe to compete with some of the most competitive drivers in the world in the Opel Lotus Euroseries and the British Formula 2 for about three and a half years before his team went bankrupt.

He returned to the United States and joined the Firestone Indy Lights series, the highest step on the Road to Indy driver development program for the elite IndyCar Series. He finished his 1993 season by achieving the fastest race lap and took sixth place in Indy Lights in 1993 and 1994.

A few years later, after going through the Rookie Orientation Program for the 1999 IndyCar 500, Firestone's ultimate dream was crushed when he didn’t make the field. "I did everything except the race, which was kind of a bummer," he says.

But it didn’t turn out so badly. Now Firestone is "back to his roots," racing the go-karts he started his career with. But unlike the five-horsepower, one-gear electric carts we might see at an amusement park, the ones that Firestone races and tunes himself have six gears and 38 horsepower, allowing them to blast from 0 to 60 miles per hour in 3.5 seconds. (For comparison, a 2017 Porsche 911 Carrera does it in four seconds.)

He’s on the national series for the karts, "has won a little bit of prize money," and races every few weeks. He recently competed in the National Off-Road Racing Association (NORRA) Mexican 1000 Rally, which is a lot like the Baja 1000 that he competed in back in his school days.

"Really," Firestone says, "I race go-karts because I was forced out of the sport before I wanted to be." But the sport he’s stumbled into is still "extremely competitive," perhaps even "more competitive than NASCAR," according to seven-time Formula One World Champion Michael Schumacher.

Firestone sums it up like this: "I'll do this until I physically can’t do it anymore, because I love it."

—Sam Dangremond ’05
A Healing Counselor

RISDON PRISON in Risdon Vale, Tasmania, can be a grim place. It houses men and women who have committed all sorts of crimes and, until recently, was cited for an outdated design that penned prisoners in cells that did nothing to help an inmate’s mental health. Enter Lila “Lee” Hass ’77.

A trained naturopath, yoga instructor, and counselor, Hass works as a high-needs support counselor at Risdon, and her role is to focus on inmates with mental health issues and other disabilities—people who have brain injuries from long-term drug use or trauma or who have other mental health issues.

“I would say that at least 50 percent of the inmates at Risdon have some kind of mental health condition, so that’s a lot of people to see,” Hass says. “I recognize that most of the people who are incarcerated have a history of either witnessing or experiencing some form of trauma, usually during childhood. Besides causing distress and offending behavior, that can also lead to substance abuse and the potential for suicide and self-harm. So a

A typical day starts with an early morning meditation class for inmates with complex needs, followed by anger management classes or a nonviolent communication class, and then she sees inmates for one-on-one counseling. Hass also oversees groups that help inmates with writing, fitness, and even basic spelling. Paperwork takes up the rest of her days.

Caring for herself is key to being able to reconcile her peaceful work and the challenge of her work counseling inmates at the prison.

“I don’t know how peaceful I really am,” she admits. “You should see me in a traffic jam, even after 35 years of daily meditation practice. But I think that what it takes is remembering who I am, my own history of struggles, and my own ability to move through adversity. So I bring some of that, and I bring the calmness I get from daily yoga and meditation practice.”

Hass also tries to walk outside every day, and on the weekends she hikes in the Tasmanian bush, commuting with the wild and wonderful natural beauty.

“Basically, I like people and being around challenging situations, so I actually feel pretty motivated, and I guess I bring that to my work,” she adds.

This summer, Hass is returning to the United States to catch up with her family, but she plans to return to Australia, and potentially her work at the prison. Meanwhile, she’ll focus on her naturopathic practice. Naturopathy is one of the oldest forms of medicine on earth. It originated in India, in the form of Ayurveda, though the Greeks also used naturopathy for healing. Naturopathy focuses on treating the whole person, rather than focusing on just treatment of the diseased part of the body. As Hass notes, the “father” of medicine, Hippocrates, often prescribed fresh air, sunshine, a healthy diet, rest, and herbal medicine as primary treatments for disease.

Hass says naturopathy involves assessment and treatment of illness in a non-invasive way. Her treatments include dietary advice, the use of supplements, and herbal medicines.

Yoga, too, plays an integral role in Hass’s life, and it’s a practice she began at Taft under the tutelage of dance instructor Janet Mariani, who incorporated sun salutations and other yoga poses as part of her warm-ups in dance classes.

“During my senior year at Wellesley, I took a yoga and meditation class as an extracurricular subject, and have been doing them both ever since,” Hass says.

She traveled to India and studied yoga, and eventually opened a yoga class and graduate school at New York University. Since then, she’s taught yoga all over the world, from the Philippines to Central America to Russia to Uganda, landing back in Australia, where she’s lived since 1993, and settling into work at the notorious Risdon Prison.

While she takes a well-earned break, Hass will continue her efforts to live a peaceful life. “Yoga and meditation every morning without fail,” she says. “Keeping fit and enjoying what I do.”

A Baker Who Serves

FROM ROSEMARY FOCACCIA and pistachio olive baguettes to Asiago sour-dough crisps and sun-dried tomato and cheese rolls, the Old School Bakery in Delray Beach, Florida, is known for fresh bread with a delicious combination of taste and texture. Since 1999, owner Billy Himmelrich ’82 has been running the bakery and providing bread to the top restaurants, hotels, and country clubs in Southeast Florida, including Palm Beach, Bonnet House, and Dade country.

Despite his passion and success, Himmelrich says he ended up in the bakery business by accident. It started with learning French at Taft. “After my mid year, I went to France and did an exchange program with the U.S. Trust for Historic Preservation and worked in the countryside.” He returned to France to study for his junior year of college. Taking advantage of a great exchange rate, he spent some of that time being wined and dined by family friends. “Within a year, I had eaten at half of these Michelin 3-star restaurants,” says Himmelrich. “I fell in love with French food, and when I went back to Emory, I taught myself how to cook with Wolfgang Puck’s Modern French Cooking for the American Kitchen.”

After college he worked at J.P. Morgan, but had a change of heart when the stock market crashed. “I told my parents I wanted to go to graduate school. They said, ‘That’s great! What do you want to do?’ I said, ‘I want to go to cooking school in France.’” Himmelrich enrolled in the second class ever held at the professional cooking school at the Ritz Hotel in Paris.

The following years included several jobs learning from famous French chefs before he moved to Washington, D.C., and got a job making the bread and pasta at Al Fcchi, a Tuscan restaurant. After a few other successful restaurant jobs, he opened his own bakery in Baltimore. In the late ’90s, Himmelrich, his wife, Shelly, and their children, Max and Charlie ’17, relocated to Delray Beach to be closer to Shelly’s family. Right away, he bought a local bakery (the original Old School Bakery) and set out to get customers. “I would bake through the night and drop samples off,” he says. “I got the Breakers Hotel as a customer. Once I got the Breakers, I found it easy to get other hotels and restaurants on ‘The Island,’ similarly in Delray. We grew organically that way, and we grew by 50 percent every year for the first six or seven years.”

Today, the bakery has evolved into mainly wholesale with a small storefront. As the bakery grew, so did Himmelrich’s involvement in the community. He expanded his philanthropic endeavors and convinced the Palm Beach
Alumni SPOTLIGHT

County Food Bank to take his unsold bread. More recently, he and his wife chaired Delray’s first Empty Bowls event—a grassroots effort to raise money for hunger relief. With the purchase of a $25 ticket, attendees receive a meal of soup, bread, and a handcrafted bowl to take home.

For the Delray Empty Bowls event, the Himmelriches partnered with the Center for the Arts and rented the public park from the city. They adopted the Empty Bowls slogan, “Eat simply so others can simply eat” and organized a strong volunteer base by involving the local high schools, churches, and businesses. “What was really cool is that our servers were ‘celebrity servers,’” says Himmelrich. “We got the president of the local university, Florida Atlantic University, the city commissioners, and the local newscaster. We had an NBA star, past mayors, and the current mayor. In addition to the artisan bowls we gave away to everyone, the student pottery that we sold was from the local schools who had made Palm Beach County Food Bank their community service project, and had volunteered to work at the event as well.”

Historically, the neighboring Palm Beach Empty Bowls event usually had 600 attendees and raised $20,000–$25,000. The Himmelriches’ Delray event attracted 1,500 attendees and raised $150,000 for local people in need. As for what he likes most about his job, he says, “I love feeding people. Not to be served, but to serve...I chose to be a baker over a chef because by baking for more than 250 restaurants, I got to participate in the lives of all 250 places.” But the truth is, Himmelrich has benefitted the lives of many more.

—Hillary Dooley

A Q&A with Max Sandvoss ’98 of First Light Farm & Creamery

Why raise dairy goats? What made you and your brother start with them, and how did the cheesemaking begin?

I have always loved goat cheese and goats, but my life didn’t head in that direction at first. After college, I was an actor for a couple of years, mostly TV and indie movies, and I lived in LA. Toward the end of my time there, my agent got me in a major car accident and was in a coma for many months. I got a chance to rethink what I wanted to do with my life.

At the time, my brother was working at a small farmstead creamery in the Pacific Northwest. I visited a couple times, and it felt right, so I moved there and learned how to care for goats and make cheese. We moved to Western New York and started First Light in 2010.

Do you still purchase milk from a neighboring organic cow farm for cheesemaking?

First Light is right up the road from an organic cow farm. Making goat milk cheese required making the switch from cow milk to goat milk. We started with goat milk and slowly made the switch to cow milk. We moved to Western New York and started First Light in 2010.

What's your time directed most?

Right now First Light is on the menus of about 150 restaurants. Our cheese is carried in many wineries and high-end co-ops and small markets in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and throughout the Finger Lakes. We’re in 52 Wegmans in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. The next step for us is Whole Foods, hopefully in the Tri-State Area and the Northeast soon. Look out for it!

Do you still do a Dairy Share CSA (community supported agriculture) program for your dairy products?

We have a dairy CSA that delivers our milk, cheese, and yogurt to members in Buffalo and Rochester.

What do you love the most about doing this work?

I love where I live. I love making the kind of food I want to eat. It’s particularly gratifying to develop friendships with chefs who love our cheese.

What are some of the hardest parts of your farming life?

The hardest part of this job is kidding season, when hundreds of babies are born. It is busy.

What's one of the craziest funny moments?

We make cool stuff. We have goats that drink “wine” that was really just melasses and water. They went nuts for it, and we got lots of awesome footage of our goats drinking “wine” from wine glasses and even right out of the bottle. Goats are pretty great on-camera talent, and they always get a laugh out of me.

Are you glad you moved back East?

Between my brother, Trystan, and me, we’ve been exposed to a lot of what’s out there, what’s possible. I’ve lived many different places, and I miss most of them, but I’m glad to be where I am.

[Ed. note: Sandvoss’s mother and step-dad happen to have a dairy farm up the road from where he and his brother started First Light. The area is perfect for dairying, with a temperate climate with fertile soil.] What's next for your business?

Our goal is to bring our cheese east to New York City, Boston, and everywhere great in between, including Connecticut, and west to Ohio and beyond. Wegmans is taking us company-wide this fall, so we’ll be in six states beginning Labor Day.

—Linda Hedman Beyus

See more about First Light at firstlightfarmer.com and Instagram.com/firstlightfarmer.

Sandvoss with his goat herd at First Light Farm & Creamery.

Sandvoss at the vat making one of the creamery’s artisanal cheeses.
A Climate of Change

AMY LYND LUERS ’84 is not one to wilt from a challenge—even as the planet warms.

When Latin American villagers needed help getting access to clean water, she answered the call. She cofounded an NGO called Agua Para La Vida to help build reliable water systems in the region.

When Google wanted to explore how it could help with environmental issues, Luers again answered the call. She co-initiated the effort, a project to use Google’s technology for monitoring of the environment and deforestation, which led to the creation of Google Earth Engine.

So, when the Obama administration came calling on Luers to join the Office of Science and Technology Policy as a climate change expert, it only seemed logical that she would jump at the offer, right? Not so fast. Uprooting her family from their Bay Area home gave Luers, who is married with a son, pause.

“Someone asked, ‘Would you be interested?’” Luers says. “I said, ‘No, because I’m not moving the family to D.C.’ My husband said, ‘That’s ridiculous. Of course, you should do it.’”

Several months later, Luers finally did answer that call, signing on to be the assistant director for climate resilience and information, a position she held for the final 19 months of Barack Obama’s presidency.

Perhaps now more than ever, Luers and her scientific peers face the toughest gauntlet in the great climate change debate. It’s not rising ocean temperatures or melting polar ice caps. It’s not super storms or smog.

It’s a political climate change—and a pivot by the Trump administration on the very environmental policies espoused by Obama.

That shift started with Trump’s appointment of global warming skeptic Scott Pruitt to lead the Environmental Protection Agency, which is trying to unwind Obama-era clean-air standards for power plants and cars.

“It’s obviously a really tough time in the context of the leaders that President Trump has brought in to lead the different areas and agencies of relevance,” says Luers, who returned to California this year to a senior leadership post at the Skoll Global Threats Fund.

The San Francisco-based foundation was created by Jeff Skoll, the first president of the online auction giant eBay and a philanthropist. Luers is director of climate change at the grant-making organization, whose mission is to “confront global threats by seeking solutions, strengthening alliances, and spurring actions to safeguard the future.”

Even more dramatic of a departure was Trump’s recent decision to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris climate accord.

“I really believe you’re not going to convince someone of something unless they’re open and willing to be convinced,” Luers says. “I do think there are folks that do think this is a very important issue for their kids, for the economy, and for our leadership in the world.”

She traces the origins of her life’s calling to Taft and to Middlebury College, where she gained an affinity for science and the outdoors.

“At Taft, I remember I took AP Physics,” Luers says. “Certainiy, I remember there hadn’t been many girls that had taken the AP Physics exam for years.”

After graduating from Middlebury, Luers moved to California, where she worked in the theater. When she saw a Science for Society magazine in a Berkeley, California, bookstore, it spoke directly to her passion for science as a means to help society. She went and knocked on the door of its nearest office to learn more about the organization and wound up meeting the colleagues with whom she started Agua Para La Vida.

Luers went on to earn a Ph.D. in environmental science and a master’s degree in international relations at Stanford University, as well as a B.S. and M.S. in environmental systems engineering from Humboldt State University in California.

She has recently been named the new executive director of Future Earth, a 10-year initiative to advance global sustainability science, and will start at the organization in September.

“It’s been a circuitous route for Luers, and thanks to her efforts at Google, scientists were able to see the forests through the clouds. The problem solver in Luers has always been able to see the forest through the trees.”

—Ned Vogler ’95

Perfecting His Craft

FOR DONALD MOLOSI ’05, it’s hard to remember a time when he wasn’t performing. Born and raised in Botswana, he spent much of his childhood as an actor and was involved in children’s shows sponsored there by UNICEF, from an early age.

“When I grew up,” he recalls, “we had no stage shows. When we did get a national TV station, I was one of the first children to ever work on TV in Botswana.” Televising was a natural fit for Molosi, who at that time was already performing in various stage shows around the country.

A top student at Maru-a-Pula School in Botswana, he won a scholarship to attend Taft for a postgraduate year. “It was such a life-altering experience in all the best ways,” he says. As soon as he arrived, he threw himself into the arts. “I was in every play and musical. I did Damn Yankees and You Can’t Take It With You, as well as many other smaller performances.”

After Taft came Williams College, an experience that also provided one of the major turning points in his acting career. There, Molosi performed Blue, Black and White, his own one-man show, as part of Dialogue One, a theater festival organized by his mentor, Omar Sangare.

Due to the success of that show, the off-Broadway festival United Solo invited Molosi to perform in 2012. Not only did that off-Broadway debut earn him critical acclaim, it also won Best Actor and Best Solo awards for his work.

Committed to perfecting his craft, Molosi continued to study, earning a master’s in theater and performance studies at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. Since then, he has performed on stage and in film, recently appearing in Side Effects, David Oyelowo and Rosamund Pike in A United Kingdom, a film focused on Botswana’s first president, Sir Seretse Khama.

Khama was also the subject of Molosi’s Blue, Black and White, which, as he explains, “tells of how Botswana’s inaugural first couple was interacial. That broke taboos, upset the British Empire, and set in motion the creation of a non-racial African republic.” That work, along with his play Motsawana: Africa, Dream Again, which looks out of that,” Luers says. “This is an area that we need to continue to lead on.”

Trump’s EPA head has come under heavy fire for saying he does not believe carbon dioxide emissions are a primary contributor to global warming. Luers shares her thoughts.

“I really believe you’re not going to convince someone of something unless they’re open and willing to be convinced,” Luers says. “I do think there are folks that do think this is a very important issue for their kids, for the economy, and for our leadership in the world.”

Taft was a crash course for Molosi. He gratefully took the tools to succeed. “Taft was the heart of all I do today. I am extremely proud of my motto, Not to be served but to serve, is at the heart of all I do today. I am extremely grateful to Taft for setting me on a path of possibility for the rest of my life.”

—Christopher Brommer ’12

Donald Molosi ’05 performs in an award-winning play he wrote, Blue, Black and White, at Matlosong Theatre, in Gaborone, Botswana. The play was also the first-ever Botswana play staged off-Broadway in New York City.
Housing the New Romans: Architectural Reception and Classical Style in the Modern World

In Mccullen’s middle grade debut novel, a girl discovers her boarding school is actually an elite spy-training program, and she must learn the skills of the trade in order to find her mother.

After a botched escape plan from her boarding school, Abigail is stunned to discover the school is actually a cover for an elite spy ring called The Center, along with being training grounds for future spies. Even more shocking, Abigail’s mother is a top agent for The Center and she has made MIA, with valuable information that many people would like to have, at any cost.

Along with a former nemesis and charming boy from her grade, Abigail goes through a crash course in Spy Training 101, often with hilarious—and sometimes painful—results. But Abigail realizes she might be a better spy-in-training than she thought, and the answers to her mother’s whereabouts are a lot closer than she thinks.

McMullen lives and works in Northern California with her husband and two children. Visit her at bethmcmullenbooks.com.

ODE TO MY AUTUMN
Victor Altschul ’52

“Like all the best poetry, Altschul’s Ode to My Autumn is written out of the poet’s sense of mortal urgency,” writes poet Clare Rosini in her endorsement.

“Whether taking on the perspective of a ruminative blue heron, exploring the tragedy of a brother’s mental illness, or coming to terms with one of the many writers, artists, and musicians who serve as co-conspirators in his art-making, Altschul tracks his thought and emotion with an intensity and clarity that draw us in.

“Tis a poet equally at home in free verse and formal verse, and the music of the poems is consistently convincing. His voice has similar range, moving from tender compassion to incisive political commentary to rueful self awareness. And the author is also capable of being scintillatingly funny in his poems, a rare feat. But finally, it’s the felt sense of the life behind the work that makes it hard to put down Ode to My Autumn.”

Altschul is a practicing psychiatrist in New Haven, Connecticut, and is a faculty member as well as a graduate of Yale University School of Medicine. His has published several books of poetry, and lives in New Haven with his wife, Laura, also a published poet.

Simple Complexity: A Management Book for the Rest of Us

Every manager knows a business is a system, yet very few have studied systems thinking or systems dynamics. This is a critical oversight, one which Simple Complexity helps remedy.

Management consultant, repeat CEO, and business professor Donaldson describes how systems naturally form and behave, and reveals systems tenets that all managers must know. The author reveals the fundamental system architecture to work in any enterprise and prescribes new ways to reinvigorate management thinking.

Simple Complexity provides a systems context that powerfully enriches traditional management thought and practice.

Donaldson is a professor of management at the Joseph W. Luter III School of Business at Christopher Newport University and has over 30 years of experience in his roles as a board member, president, and CEO of eight companies. He is the founder and president of Strategic Venture Planning, a management consulting firm that assists boards, investors, and senior management teams maximize results.

Golf...The Cruellest of Games
The Choir Press
Cheever Hardwick ’59

In his latest book, Hardwick takes an irreverent, humorous, and insightful look at the game of golf and all it involves.

Decades of struggle with the dreaded game have resulted in this work, which is based on the assumption that golf is a game—and a rather old one at that. As such, golf should be a source of amusement rather than anguish, certainly in the case of amateur players. A word of warning: This is not a book for those who take themselves or the game very seriously.

“Sports were always a bit of an obsession, but most have disappeared due to injuries,” the author writes. “I am now left with a bit of shooting, clumsy efforts at fishing, and golf! I have played golf sporadically since childhood, hence I have been witness to the silly game for over 60 years and have watched it grow exponentially over that period. I have been living in the English countryside for over 25 years and move between England, Scotland, and Portugal chasing little white balls into buckets.”

The author of several books, Hardwick graduated from Washington & Lee University with a bachelor of arts in journalism, and later received a doctor of jurisprudence from the University of Colorado Law School.

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

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Grace Dreher ’18 collected comfort items for children in foster care.

**Opening Doors to Change**

**GLOBAL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**

CHANGING THE WORLD is not an abstract concept to Taft’s Global Leadership Institute (GLI) scholars, it is an imperative. This year’s class of GLI program graduates tackled projects that not only raised awareness about global issues, but took meaningful steps toward impacting them.

“Sometimes we’re so focused on all we have to do here—sports, academics, extracurriculars—it’s hard to turn outward and remember that there are other issues in the world that we should be doing something about,” says GLI Scholar Grace Dreher ’18. “This program showed me how easy it can be. If high school kids can do something that makes such a difference, everyone can.”

Dreher was one of 10 Taft students selected to join the program’s second cohort in the fall of 2015. With 10 students from Waterbury schools rounding out the class, the group embarked on an 18-month experiential learning journey, carefully crafted to enhance their understanding of global issues, while developing the knowledge and skills they need to effect meaningful change. The curriculum includes talks by local and global leaders and scholars, teambuilding events and experiences, diversity leadership workshops, and field trips. Students also participate in a summer service internship.

“The GLI experiences are all scaffolding for the culminating project,” explains Raha Frew, who, along with Laura Monti ’89, directs the program. “Their 32-hour internships and inquiry-based research papers form the basis of the culminating project.”

Dreher adds, “Preparing a research paper builds understanding around an issue, then actually doing something hands-on makes for a very well-designed program.”

This year, GLI Scholars worked in pairs or small groups on their projects. “There were some logistical challenges with the students being spread across schools throughout Waterbury and Watertown,” notes Frew, “but it better represents the true collaborative experience we want to achieve through this partnership.”

Dreher, a senior at Waterbury’s Orousis Academy, was paired with Academy junior Heaven Begum to lessen the trauma of the foster care experience. “Our research showed us that there are a number of issues with the foster care system, and that many children end up with huge deficits due to their foster care experiences,” says Dreher. “But what struck us the most was how often children move—it is not uncommon for children in foster care to have 30, 20, or 30 homes in their lifetimes. And when they move they are often only given a black trash bag to carry their belongings—really just basic necessities—in.”

Dreher and Begum found a California-based foundation, My Stuff Bags, that provides children in crisis with pieces of comfort to call their own, things like books, clothing, toys, and school supplies. Armed with brochures about the organization and lists of the items most needed to fill comfort bags, Dreher and Begum spent an afternoon outside of a local retailer talking about foster care and collecting donations for the project. “Some people made purchases in the store,” says Dreher, “but others donated cash. We collected huge bins filled with books, toys, and clothing. It was really amazing to see how generous people were.”

Dreher also held a fundraiser on campus, selling doughnuts after study hall, which went toward the purchase of back packs. She and Begum are now sorting the donations and stuffing age-appropriate backpacks filled with comfort items, to be donated to a local My Stuff Bags affiliate.

“We’re fulfilling the Global Leadership Institute motto of thinking globally but acting locally, which is very exciting for us,” notes Dreher. Minna Holleck ’18 and Waterbury GLI Scholars Abby Hazel and Nate Rivard also took action locally to impact a problem thousands of miles away. The trio hosted a walk at Watertown’s Veterans’ Park to benefit Water for South Sudan, a nonprofit organization that brings clean, safe water to hundreds of thousands of people in remote South Sudan villages. As a middle school student, Holleck read A Long Walk to Water, by Linda Sue Park to benefit South Sudan. 

**Walk for South Sudan**

Participants experienced what it was like to carry heavy buckets of water, a fact of life for many women and children in the region.
The reality is that many, many people simply do not have access to clean water.”

“There were some remarkable projects this year,” Frew says.

Students tackled everything from renewable energy and urban gardening to LGBT rights in schools and early childhood education and literacy.

“Many of my friends are also GLI Scholars,” says Peter Horne ’18, who studied gang violence in Chicago for his culminating project. “When you sign on for a program like this you don’t realize how much it will touch every aspect of your life—that you and your friends are going to spend so much of your free time talking about your projects, sharing insights about renewable energy or gang violence. The doors this program opens are pretty amazing.”
Taft-PAL Summer Program Awarded Local Grant

THE TAFT SCHOOL-POLICE ACTIVITY
League (PAL) Summer Enrichment Academy was established in 2011 by Waterbury native and Taft faculty member Laura Monti ’89, with her husband and Taft Academic Dean Jeremy Clifford. Their goal was to provide meaningful summer opportunities for area students while opening the door to national educational doors. The original curriculum was built around SSAT preparation.

The Taft-PAL Summer Enrichment Academy was established in 2011 by Waterbury native and Taft faculty member Laura Monti ’89, with her husband and Taft Academic Dean Jeremy Clifford. Their goal was to provide meaningful summer opportunities for area students while opening the door to national educational doors. The original curriculum was built around SSAT preparation.

In each year, the progress has been measurable and meaningful: individual SSAT scores have increased by an average of six to nine percentage points in all three areas, verbal, math, and reading. “We’re very proud of the way this program has grown and the results we have achieved,” Monti says. “Helping students recognize that they have the academic ability to strive for things they might not otherwise have thought possible is incredibly important and very rewarding. We could not do any of it without the generosity of organizations like the Connecticut Community Foundation.”

The Taft-PAL Summer Enrichment Academy also receives financial support from the Edward E. Ford Foundation and the Ion Bank Foundation.

Bien Joué

TAFT STUDENTS MAY NOW JOIN the celebrated ranks of national French language scholars. French teacher Sarah Gray established a Taft chapter of the Société Honoraire de Français—the French National Honor Society—this year. Thirty-nine students were inducted into the inaugural class.

“Bringing the French National Honor Society to Taft is part of a broader initiative to create more visibility and opportunity for our language students,” says Gray. “It is important to celebrate their accomplishments within the academic realm at Taft while opening the door to national achievement and recognition.”

Students also established a French Club on campus this year, and for the first time, 16 students sat for Le Grand Concours, the national French exam. Both the exam and the Honor Society are sponsored by the American Association of Teachers of French.

“More than 79,000 students took the exam nationwide,” Gray explains. “Fourteen of our students earned awards, ranging from honorable mentions to gold medals.”

Two Taft students did exceptionally well. Magda Kusielska ’18 and Macy Toppan ’18 earned second- and fourth-place finishes in the state of Connecticut, respectively; both earned sixth-place honors at their level nationwide.

The French National Honor Society recognizes high school sophomores and above in the United States who have maintained a 90 average all year in their French language courses; its motto is L’homme qui sait deux langues en vaut deux, “The man who knows two languages is worth two men.” Community service is mandatory for members, as is a high grade point average overall, in addition to an A in French classes during the semester of selection.

Based in Waterbury, the Connecticut Community Foundation offers resources and services to nonprofits, students, and donors in 21 towns that make up Greater Waterbury and the Litchfield Hills. Learn more at conncf.org.

Center for Global Leadership and Service

2016 NATIONAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR JAHANA HAYES visited Taft to share her thoughts on the role of educators, and to reflect on the honor that elevated the Waterbury, Connecticut, teacher to the world stage. “Education is about building both knowledge and character,” Hayes told the Tafties. “Everyone has an obligation to go out into their communities and help.”

"Everyone has an obligation to go out into their communities and help."
VERONICA RISUCCI ’18 performed Ljósið, the Icelandic word for light during the Spring Dance Concert. Risucci choreographed and performed the piece with Haley Snow ’19, with lighting by Zygimantas Jievaltas ’17.

LIBBY DAVE ’17 choreographed Boys as part of her Independent Dance Tutorial. The work incorporates both music and dance moves from “boy bands” through the ages, from The Temptations to the Back Street Boys.

ERIN FARRELL ’20 performed excerpts from Giselle, featuring original choreography by Marius Petipa, with additional choreography by Meghan Buchanan.

Around the POND
STEM Students Shine

Students in Taft’s science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs routinely test their mettle against the best and the brightest students from around the globe. Taft enjoyed a particularly successful year on the international competition circuit, earning honors and accolades across disciplines. Here are some of the highlights from the past academic year.

SCIENCE

- Taft scientists Sonny An ‘17, Daniel Yi ‘18, Yejin Kim ‘18, and Portia Wang ‘18 faced 50 teams from across the Northeast at Yale University’s 19th annual Physics Olympics. The team was awarded the bronze medal after five rounds of competition. The five, 45-minute challenges were developed by members of the Yale physics faculty to test students’ knowledge of complex physics concepts, and their ability to apply that knowledge effectively and creatively to solve problems.

- Two teams of 15 students traveled to the University of Connecticut to compete in the Connecticut State Science Olympiad. Within each team, competitors worked in pairs to tackle “events” across a range of disciplines, from forensics and astronomy to physiology and ecology. At the end of 23 events, Taft’s ‘A’ team earned a sixth place finish overall in a field of 49 teams. Taft’s teams earned six medals overall, including a second place medal by Taft Team B members Bill Lu ’19 and Mihir Nayar ’19 for their robotic arm. Approximately 15,000 schools participate in Science Olympiad events across the nation.

- Taft was the regional winner in the 2017 Physics Bowl competition, sponsored by the American Association of Physics Teachers. Taft hosted perennial regional powerhouse, including the Academy of Aerospace/Engineering, for the win. Of the more than 7,000 students from nearly 600 schools around the globe that competed in the event, Daniel Yi ‘18 finished fifth in Division 2, while Sonny An ‘17 earned the second-highest score in the region.

TECHNOLOGY & ENGINEERING

- Two teams represented Taft at the 2017 Trinity College International Robot Contest. The challenge requires teams to build autonomous robots that can navigate a model home in search of a fire, represented by a burning candle, and then effectively extinguish the flame. Shasha Alvarez ’17, Jona Vithootrient ’17, and Julia Kashimura ’20 built a robot that successfully extinguished the candle on all five tries to the best Taft team has ever done. Teams are also encouraged to prepare presentations that describe the process of developing their robot. Alvarez won first place in her division for her presentation. Taft also earned a 2017 Outstanding Connecticut Robot award from the Connecticut chapter of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

- The Technology Students Association (TSA) Tests of Engineering Aptitude, Mathematics, and Science (TEAMs) competition is a one-day challenge in which teams of eight students apply math and science knowledge in solving real-world engineering problems. The theme for this year’s competition was Engineering the Environment, which consisted of three categories: an essay on the development and improvement of the use of renewable energy; an 80-question test on topics related to identified scenarios and researched by teams prior to the event; and the construction of a robotic arm that can move objects with precision, using a specific set of materials. There were separate categories for students in grades 9 and 10 and those in grades 11 and 12. In the Grades 11–12 Competition, Taft did best in the design category, with Taft A taking first place and Taft B placing third. In the Grades 9–10 Competition, Taft finished first in the essay category and second on the test, securing a second-place finish overall. Nearly 600 schools from across the nation competed for the overall prize.

MATHEMATICS

- The competitive season tradition-ally kicks off with the annual Math Bash, a competition among peer prep schools. Tafties took on competitors from Choate, Hotchkiss, Deerfield, and Kent at both the advanced and intermediate levels. Sonny An ‘17 took top honors in the advanced-level individual round, while Taft edged out Hotchkiss to secure the meet’s top honors.

- The New England Mathematics League (NEML) hosts monthly contests, running through March of each school year. NEML events consist of a set of six problems of increasing complexity. Students work individually to solve those problems, earning one point for each correct answer. The team’s 143 cumulative points earned them the top spot in Litchfield County, best- ing second-place finisher Kent School by more than 30 points, and nearly doubling Hotchkiss’s score. It also gave them the Connecticut state title and a top-10 spot in New England.

- More than 350,000 students from over 6,000 schools participate in the American Mathematics Competition (AMC) each year. Only 5 percent of all 11th- and 12th-grade competitors advance from the first round to the American Invitational Mathematics Examination (AIME), while only 2.5 percent of 9th and 10th graders are invited to move on to the prestigious second round. Taft had seven students qualify for the AIME. Peter Yu ’20 was particularly impressive, earning a near-perfect score in the competition. Yu and An were among the 500 competitors chosen to go on to the United States of America Junior Mathematical Olympiad (USAJMO) and the United States of America Mathematical Olympiad (USAMO), respectively.

"Making this cut is a significant accomplishment," math teacher Joe Zipoli ’84 explains. "We’re talking about a fraction of the top, of the top, of the top.”
And the Halo Goes To...

TAFT STUDENTS TOOK HOME TOP honors in several categories during this year’s Halo Awards. Sponsored by Waterbury’s Seven Angels Theatre and presented at the Palace Theater, the Halo Awards celebrate excellence in theater arts productions across Connecticut high schools. More than 40 awards were presented this year to nominees from 64 high schools.

Kaedi Dalley ’18 was awarded the 2017 Halo for Best Comic Female Performance in a Musical for her inspired and memorable turn as Donkey in Taft’s production of Shrek, The Musical. This was Kaedi’s second consecutive Halo, having been named 2016’s Best Featured Actress in a Musical for her portrayal of Motormouth Maybelle in Hairspray.

Taft students were also repeat winners in the Fearless category, which honors nontraditional productions that often explore social issues. Raymond Bai ’18 directed this year’s Fearless Award winner, Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead, an “unauthorized parody” that imagines the lives of the characters from the Peanuts comic strip during their teenage years. The play debuted in New York in 2004. This was also Taft’s second consecutive Fearless Award, with student directors taking home the prize last year for their work on The Laramie Project.

Tafties earned Halo Award nominations in 12 unique categories this year. Congratulations to everyone involved with all of this year’s productions.

Non ut Sibi in Nicaragua

KNOWN AS “THE CITY OF THE MIST,” Jinotega is 1,000 feet above the sea level, in a valley surrounded by spectacular mountains. Here Taft students designed English language lesson plans to meet the educational objectives prescribed in a curriculum built by their host organization, Outreach 360. The program consisted of two, two-hour English language camps each day.

Tafties mounted the Tennessee Williams classic, The Glass Menagerie.
In Focus: NYBG

TAFT IS FORTUNATE TO ENJOY A TREMENDOUS PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN. During Spring Break, photography teacher Yee-Fun Yin traveled to The Garden with five Taft students, where they were welcomed by an NYBG photographer who took them through the storied conservatory, sharing tips on the care of cameras in humid environments, and offering technical instruction on capturing great still images of flora.

Shasha Alvares ’17

Cauviya Selva ’17

Hail and Farewell

FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS, more Taftians made Georgetown University their destination than any other single school. This year the tide has turned, with the University of Virginia taking the top spot, followed closely by Colgate. Overall, Taft will be effectively represented at the nation’s finest colleges and universities.

The number of students from this year’s graduating class attending a given university is reflected in parentheses following the school name. Those with no parenthetical reference will welcome one Taft student this fall.

Amherst College (3)
Babson College (3)
Bates College (3)
Boston College (3)
Boston University (4)
Bowdoin College (3)
Brown University (6)
Bucknell University (2)
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo
Carleton College
Carnegie-Mellon University (2)
Chapman University (2)
Clarkson University
Colby College
Colgate University (5)
College of the Holy Cross (2)
Columbia University
Concordia University—Montreal (2)
Connecticut College
Cornell University (4)
Dartmouth College (2)
Davidson College
Dickinson College
Duke University (2)
Elon University (3)
Fairfield University
Fordham University (3)
Franklin & Marshall College (2)
Georgetown University (3)
Georgia Institute of Technology
Gettysburg College
Grimke College
Hamilton College (2)
Harvard University (3)
Harvey Mudd College
Haverford College
High Point University
Indiana University at Bloomington
Johns Hopkins University
Marist College
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
McGill University (2)
Michigan State University
Middlebury College (2)
New York University (2)
Northwestern University (3)
Northwestern University
Oberlin College of Arts and Sciences
Occidental College (3)
Pitzer College
Pomona College
Princeton University
Quinnipiac University
Rollins College (2)
Saint Michael’s College
Sewanee: The University of the South (2)
Simmons College
Skidmore College
Southern Methodist University (3)
St. Lawrence University (3)
Stanford University
Stonehill College
SUNY Buffalo State College
Swarthmore College
Syracuse University
The University of Alabama
The University of Texas, Austin
Trinity College (2)
Tufts University (2)
Tulane University
Union College (New York)
United States Military Academy—Army
University College London
University of California, Santa Barbara
University of Colorado at Boulder (2)
University of Connecticut (2)
University of Maine
University of Miami (2)
University of Michigan
University of Notre Dame
University of Pennsylvania (2)
University of Richmond (4)
University of Southern California
University of St Andrews (3)
University of Vermont
University of Virginia (6)
Vanderbilt University
Wake Forest University (2)
Washington and Lee University
Washington University in St. Louis (2)
Wesleyan University (2)
Williams College
Yale University (3)
Yale-NUS College
Logan Clew-Bachrach '20 cools off at Bantam Lake.
In his opening remarks at the Spring Sports Awards ceremony, Headmaster Willy MacMullen ’78 described the extraordinary success of Taft athletics this past spring:

“I have not done a thorough check of the archives and records, but by any measure, this season stands out as remarkable and probably historic in terms of wins and championships.”

Taft’s varsity teams, which all had winning records, compiled a total record of 211–65–1, just over a 76 winning percentage. Four teams were Founders League champions, two with undefeated seasons, and two were New England champions.
Girls’ Golf 12–3–1

Taft won the Founders League Tournament for the fourth year in a row, this time by four strokes over Hotchkiss. Taft had three Founders League All-Stars, co-captain Grace Dreher ’18, Portia Wang ’18, and Julia Kashimura ’20, who combined for the team-low score of 169. For the first time in five years, the Rhinos were victorious in the Pippy O’Connor New England Tournament, competing against 25 schools and over 110 individual golfers. Kashimura tied for 2nd with a round of 82 and Wang tied for 4th with a round of 83, both helping to distance Taft from the rest of the field on a rainy and windy championship day at the Watertown Golf Club. Taft shot a combined team score of 345, nine strokes better than the 2nd-place team. Key victories for the season included matches against Greenwich Academy and Loomis.

In addition to Dreher, Wang, and Kashimura, key players all season were co-captain Avery Andreski ’17, Marisa Mission ’17, and Olivia Wivestad ’19.

For more on the spring season, please visit www.taftsports.com
Boys’ Golf 11–0
• FOUNDERS LEAGUE CHAMPIONS
• ANDOVER INVITATIONAL CHAMPIONS
• WESTERN NEW ENGLAND INVITATIONAL CHAMPIONS

The 2017 boys’ golf team will go down as one of the most dominant teams in the history of golf at Taft. The Rhinos won three tournaments with a combined team stroke average of 75.4. A 16-stroke victory over Loomis in the Spring Invitational was one of the most dominant teams in the history of golf at Taft. The Rhinos won three tournaments with a combined team stroke average of 75.4. A 16-stroke victory over Loomis in the Spring Invitational was particularly memorable as Taft played excellent team golf on one of Connecticut’s top courses, Bulls Bridge, and Beau David ’17 won the individual title with an even-par score of 72. In winning the Founders League Championship for the third time in four years, Chris Gaeta ’18 won the individual title with an even-par score of 72 and paced the team to an excellent total of 375 strokes. To achieve so much on the golf course, team depth was a huge factor, and throughout the spring, the team received great efforts and low scores from co-captain Drew Powell ’17, co-captain Hunter Ramsey ’17, Jonathan Elkins ’20, Rex Riefle ’19, Henry Horne ’20, and Charles Donaldson ’17.

Rhinos dispatched Cheshire Academy and Choate in the first two rounds, and then went toe to toe again with Kingwood, a rematch of last year’s final. This time, Taft won the day and the New England title, a hard-fought 4–3 win. Throughout the season co-captain Ogden Timpson ’17 led the way at #1 singles, and with four-year player Jacques Pellet ’17 formed the #1 doubles team. Dylan Powell ’18 and co-captain Aaron Pezzullo ’17 locked down the #2 and #3 singles spots and the second doubles team, while Peter Oh ’17, Gabe Reisman ’17, and Peter Horne ’18, rounded out the singles. After their New England title, Taft had one more challenge, facing New England Class B champions Hopkins, away. This match was tighter than the tournament finals, with Taft prevailing 4–3 only with the final match when Oh came back from 1–5 down to win at #4 singles.

Girls’ Tennis 8–5
The Rhinos were a talented and dedicated team that made a strong run for the league title and qualified for the New England Class A tournament as the #6 seed. Captained by George Gould Award winner Sydney Trevenen ’17 and Eugenie Greff ’17, the team went 6–0 early on, defeating Berkshire (9–0), Deerfield (5–3), Loomis (6–3), Miss Porter’s (7–2), Westminster (5–4), and Sacred Heart (6–3), with the last of these matches played without Greff and Finn Hough ’18 due to their season-ending injuries. The second half of the season saw the Rhinos lose matches to talented teams from Hotchkiss, Greenwich Academy, and Hopkins (0–9), but rebounding with wins against Kent (7–2) and Choate (7–2). The Rhinos took on Hotchkiss (93 seed) in the first round of the New Englands but could not turn the tables on their rivals. Individual highlights included Founders League award winner Kate Zhang ’20 going 8 and 5 on the season playing in the #1 and #2 singles positions, and captain Sydney Trevenen’s impressive 6 and 3 record playing as high up as #2. Next season the team will be captained by Lily Turner ’18 and Hough, and they will be joined by returning players Kate Zhang ’20, Macy Toppan ’18, Minna Holleck ’18, Regan Brewer ’19, Kira Siebrecht ’19, and Nico Gusac ’19.

Western New England Invitational was particularly memorable as Taft played excellent team golf on one of Connecticut’s top courses, Bulls Bridge, and Beau David ’17 won the individual title with an even-par score of 72. In winning the Founders League Championship for the third time in four years, Chris Gaeta ’18 won the individual title with an even-par score of 72 and paced the team to an excellent total of 375 strokes. To achieve so much on the golf course, team depth was a huge factor, and throughout the spring, the team received great efforts and low scores from co-captain Drew Powell ’17, co-captain Hunter Ramsey ’17, Jonathan Elkins ’20, Rex Riefle ’19, Henry Horne ’20, and Charles Donaldson ’17.

Boys’ Tennis 18–0
• FOUNDERS LEAGUE CHAMPIONS
• NEW ENGLAND CLASS A CHAMPIONS

This may have been the best tennis team in the history of Taft, and the Rhinos have been on a roll, making the New England finals three times in recent years. This year’s team was the deepest in school history, as Taft marched through the regular season with 6–1 or 7–0 wins against Deerfield, Choate, Hotchkiss, and Loomis. The real tests came against power Kingwood, last year’s New England champ (4–3 win) and Brunswick (4–3 win), and those two wins sealed Taft’s #1 tournament ranking for the third year in a row. The
**Girls’ Lacrosse 12–3**

The Rhinos were focused and ready to put in the work necessary for a successful season from the first day this spring. Finishing in 2nd place in the Founders League, Taft came away with big wins against Deerfield (12–8), Hotchkiss (10–9), and Choate (15–4). Taft’s crew of seniors made for a deep and well-balanced team, led by co-captains Eliza Denious ’17 and Nina Garfinkel ’17, as well as fellows seniors Bridget Shewum ’17, Katherine Queally ’17, Sam Manfreda ’17, and Natalie Muskin ’17. Denious and Paisley Eagan ’18 led the team in total points and goals scored, and Eagan earned All-America honors. A great group of returning players, including co-captain-elects Katie Fischnik ’18 and Natalie Wikowsky ’18, will lead the team next year.

**Girls’ Crew 50–15**  
(Individual boat record)

This season Taft fielded seven full boats (four varsity, three lower boats) and over 30 rowers. The Rhinos raced well early but really proved their talent at the Founders Day regatta, where each boat earned a spot in the afternoon heats and the team earned an overall 5th place. The following weekend, the girls’ first boat earned a 2nd place behind Winrose in the DuPont Cup, winning over St. Mark’s, Miss Porter’s, Gurney, and Pomfret. The whole team swept the final varsity race of the season, winning the Alumnae Cup for the third year in a row over Gurney, Berkshire, and Canterbury. All four boats were seeded well going into the NEIRA, and both the first and fourth boats earned spots in the final races. The first boat—Lily Thebault ’18, Emma LaRose ’18, and tri-captains Sophie Kamhi ’17, Emily Drakeley ’17, and Sumi Kim ’17—went on to place 9th in New England. The fourth boat became Taft’s first-ever New England champion: Sarah Ince ’18, Kaia Whiteley ’18, Phoebe Autio ’18, Taline Almasian ’19, and Megan Seg ’19 won the Grand Final. With only four seniors on this year’s squad, the Rhinos will be an experienced and talented crew again next year. Kamhi will continue her rowing career next year at Dartmouth.

**Boys’ Crew 57–22**  
(Individual boat records)

In their dual meet races and regattas, Taft’s four varsity boats compiled an overall record of 57 wins versus 22 losses. The first varsity lineup of co-captain Ben Olsen ’17, Thomas Muller ’18, Jay Lavallée ’17, co-captain Ben Moffa ’17, and Taro Sochi ’18 (cox) earned a bronze medal at the Founders Day regatta. The second varsity boat, with Jack Esing ’18, Ben Roberts ’18, Jason Rab ’17, Nick Mortimer ’18, and coxswain Zoe Eberstadt-Beattie ’18, was beaten by only two opponents all season long, posting a record of 20–2. This same boat won a silver medal at Founders Day. All four varsity boats qualified for the New England Championship regatta; three of four qualified for the afternoon finals—the first boat doing so for the first time since 2004. At the end of the day, Taft finished 5th in the team-points trophy—its best showing in the 25-year history of the program.
Boys’ Track 11–7

After dominating the sprint events for the past several years, the Rhinos used a balanced lineup this past spring to earn a record of 11–3 and race to a 2nd-place finish in the Founders League meet, falling just short of champion Loomis, but edging out Hotchkiss by half a point. There were many heroes that day as the boys scored in 14 of the 17 events, led by tri-captains Michael Wassertein ’17 (800m, 1,500m, 4x400m relay), Andrew Farrier ’17 (discus and javelin), and Matteo Mangiardi ’17 (400m and 4x400m), who together accounted for 38 of Taft’s 83.5 points. Trevor Easiku ’27 (300m hurdles), Marcus Alleyn ’27 (4x400m relay, 200m) and Sammed Bawa ’20 (200m, long jump, 4x100m relay) also contributed crucial points. At the New England meet, Wassertein had a great day, winning the 800m (1:58), placing 6th in the 1,500m, and combining with Alleyn, Mangiardi, and Calvin Palmer ’18 (4th, 800m) to finish second in the 4x400m relay.

Girls’ Track 10–3

This strong team of multisport athletes won the Founders League title in dramatic fashion, coming from behind to nose ahead of Choate by 2 points on the final event. This was the Taft girls’ first Founders League title since 2005 and the 4th overall. In a true team effort, many athletes scored in multiple events: So Kim ’17 (800m, 1,500m, 4x400m relay), Molly Lohuis ’18 (100m hurdles, 300m hurdles, 4x400m relay), Mary Alice Ewing ’18 (4x100m relay, 4x400m relay), Taylor Jacobs ’18 (800m, 1,500m), and Tia Ben-Ekta ’17 (javelin, discus). But no one typified the all-in effort more than Kayla Robinson ’19, who scored in the shot put, triple jump, long jump, and 4x100m relay, and Liz Barré ’20, who won the pole vault and scored in the 4x400m relay, 300m hurdles, and high jump. The Rhinos also had a great day at the New England meet as Kim (1,500m), Jacobs (800m), Lohuis (300m hurdles), Barré (100m hurdles, pole vault), and Robinson (shot put) all placed in their events with personal records. Top sprinter and co-captain Jada Newkirk ’17 won the 200m and finished 4th in the long jump, breaking the school record in a leap of 17’10.5.

Softball 9–5

Taft reached the Western New England Semifinals again as they finished the season with a 9–5 mark. Playing one of the tougher schedules, Taft earned a #4 seed in the playoffs and hosted a strong Deerfield team. In a closely contested battle, Taft won 4–2 and played the following day against undefeated Westminster. The team battled but could not find a big hit in a 2–5 loss. With a team batting average of .396 and an 8–4 regular season mark, Taft’s offensive attack was led by tri-captains Mary Collette ’17, Anna Rasmussen ’17, and Morgan Sperry ’17. Rasmussen led the team in hits, runs, and RBIs and won the Softball Award for her outstanding play. Collette earned Founders League honors and was a stalwart behind the plate. Another Founders League All-Star, Alli Kalvaitis ’18, pitched well, including four shutouts and 106 strikeouts to only six walks on the season. For their excellent seasons, Rasmussen and Kalvaitis were named Western New England All-Stars. The team will miss the leadership of Collette, Rasmussen, and Sperry, as well as three-year starter Reece Olmstead ’17.

Baseball 11–7

Senior tri-captains Eric Holzman ’17, Kevin Mulhearn ’17, and Nick Cutler ’17 led the team to an 11–7 overall record, and an 8–6 Colonial League record. Holzman (pitcher/first base) was 3–3 with 1 save, hit .342, and will pitch at Army next year. Mulhearn (pitcher) was 2–1 with 1 save and will pitch at Holy Cross next year, and Cutler hit .326 for the season. Troy Shepherd ’17 (McGill next year) led the team in hitting with a .410 average and 18 RBIs. The team beat Choate twice in the same season for the first time in recent history, and just as they did last year, beat Hotchkiss twice. Zane Segalas ’18 and Winston Salk ’18 will serve as co-captains next year.

Middlers Dylan Kim, Nolan Grooms, Beau Root, and Dom Patille, and lower middlers Walker Wonham, Cole Torino, and Stefan Kim saw significant playing time this season and will form the core of the team for the near future.
With another solid year for the Annual Fund on the books, I am very pleased to announce that we exceeded this year’s budgeted goal with contributions of $4,518,232 from 43% of alumni and 92% of current parents. I know that I speak on behalf of all of Taft in expressing my gratitude to our Annual Fund donors for their generosity and devotion, and for the example they set for the rest of our community to follow.

We owe much of the success of the Annual Fund to the commitment of an incredible team of volunteers, including the Parents’ Committee, Marietta Lee and Jeff Keeler, P’16, ‘18, Parents’ Fund Chairs; Stuart and Jean Serenbetz, Annual Fund Chairs; Stuart and Jean Serenbetz, Annual Fund Chairs; Dylan Simonds ’89, Annual Fund Chair; Joanie Dayton, Chair of the Grandparents’ Fund; hundreds of Class Agents across more than a half-century of class years. I am grateful and humbled to work with such a wonderful group of talented and dedicated people. I also want to take this opportunity to extend special thanks to the staff of the Alumni and Development Office for keeping the Taft community connected and strong—they work tirelessly and without much fanfare, but their impact is great and deserving of our sincere appreciation.

It takes consistent, deep, and broad support from all corners of our community to build and sustain the Taft we know and love. And while we are fortunate to be able to build upon a strong foundation of past giving, the future wellbeing of Taft has been entrusted to our stewardship.

I am truly grateful to all of the donors who have made this year’s Annual Fund a success, and I look forward to working with many of you to reach higher and achieve even more in the year and years to come.

With my warm regards and thanks,

Dylan Simonds ’89, Annual Fund Chair

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A highlight of the Annual Fund year was the May 1 Day of Giving, which generated both enthusiasm within each class and a healthy competition between classes from each decade. I would like to congratulate the Classes of ’11, ’39, ’75, ’04, ’99, ’67, ’57, ’84, and ’46 for achieving the highest level of Annual Fund participation for their respective decades during that successful one-day campaign. Each winning class was recognized with a seat plaque in Bingham Auditorium. The Class of ’99 deserves special mention for having the highest participation (over 21%) on the day.

Our alumni raised over $191,851 from 501 alumni in 24 hours—more than double the goal of 240 donors—so my hat’s off to the hundreds of donors and Class Agents who made it all possible.

The Parents’ Fund also successfully participated in the May 1 Day of Giving, which resulted in an astounding $130,661 raised from 88 donors—far surpassing the goal of 50 donors! Congratulations to the parents of the Class of 2019 for having the highest participation—also recognized with a seat plaque in Bingham Auditorium.

Snyder Award
Largest Annual Fund amount contributed by a reunion class 50 years or less
Class of 1987: $67,470
Head Class Agent: Cinda Goulard Lord

Chairman of the Board Award
Highest percent participation from a class 50 years or less
Class of 1987: 51%
Head Class Agent: George (Bill) McCarter

Mccabe Award
Largest Annual Fund amount contributed by a non-reunion class
Class of 1990: $112,305
Head Class Agent: Ben Levin

Class of 1920 Award
Greatest increase in Annual Fund dollars from a non-reunion class
Class of 1990: Increase of $61,800
Head Class Agent: Ben Levin

Young Alumni Dollars Award
Largest Annual Fund amount contributed from a class
Class of 2009: $7,563
Head Class Agent: Ben Brauer

Romano Award
Greatest increase in participation from a non-reunion class less than 50 years old
Class of 1990: 42% from 54%
Head Class Agent: Ben Levin

Young Alumni Participation Award
Highest participation from a class 10 years or less
Class of 2019: 10 new donors
Head Class Agents: Margot Huber Heckler and Wendy Wortzbarger Schmid

Spencer Award
Highest number of gifts from classmates who have not given in the last five years
Class of 1977: 16 new donors
Head Class Agents: David Wang and Nana Chiu

Thank You!

Marietta Lee and Jeff Keeler, Chairs
Hilary and David Allen
Michelle Andrews
Barbara Baratta
Lisa and David Barr
Sonia and John Batten
Fam and Scott Bowman
Melissa and Michael Bradley
Victoria and Timothy Brewer
Rhys and Amanda
Sheppard Brooks ’81
Leilie and Kevin Coleman
Marie and James Crouch
Mary and Michael Darling
Lisa and Christopher Dawe ’81
Becky and Michael Erad
Clare Everett-Shane and Steven Shae
Stefanie and Paul Fiskelson ’85
Sue and Bill Groer
Debbie and Paul Guiney
Abby and Brian Hall
Shelly and Bill Himmick ’82
Stephen ’85 and Laura
Black Hill ’85
Kim and Fred Knieble
Winnie and Barry Ma
Gigi and Averell Mortimer
Eileen and Michael Nelson
John and Joan Atwater Nolan ’71
Liza and John Nugent
Tom Olsen and Mary Bosalls
Nir and Benoit Pellet
Victoria and Kirk Ponsmany
Brigitte and Doyle Quilty
David Rupert and Sarah Ondaatje
Elizabeth and Robert Russell

Sara and Robert Savage
Marni and Bill Schwartz
Lisa and Harry Segalas
Anne and Joe Sherehan
Angela and Kevin Siebrecht
Laure and Scott Sommer
Kylar and Brooke Sheppard Stahl ’84
Cheinle Umeh
Lydia and Ted Verheggen
David Wang and Nana Chiu
Karen and Ray Wintsch
William ’79 and Lisa Zonino
Woodworth ’79
Jenn and Joe Yamin ’85
Kimber and Harry Yerkes ’82
Liza and John Zonino
Alison and Scott Zwoliner ’83

Parents’ Committee 2016–17

Thank you!
Six hundred alumni, with family and friends, returned to campus this past May and didn’t let spring showers prevent them from celebrating. From the 70th Reunion for the Class of ’47 to the 5th Reunion for the Class of ’12, three days of gatherings helped renew friendships and foster new ones, and give alums a glimpse into the life of an exciting and ever-changing school that also honors tradition and its long history.

Since a picture is worth a thousand words, we hope you enjoy a look at some of the gatherings and familiar faces.

Photography by
ROBERT FALCETTI, ANNE KOWALSKI, AND JIM SHANNON
1. A little fun with Taft’s mascot in the Registration Tent.

2. Faculty Emerita Patsy Odden and Headmaster Emeritus Lance Odden with Pam and Willy MacMullen ’78 outside Woodward Chapel, after the Service of Remembrance.

3. Several alumni learn about Taft’s admissions process during a Back to Class session led by Taft’s director of admissions, Mike Hoffman ’97.

4. Three generations of Tafties of the Offutt/Hodges family, with friend Emmett Berg ’19 (at far left): Nalty Hodges ’19, Bill Offutt ’57, and Jane Scott Offutt Hodges ’87.

5. Limbo time at the 5th, 10th, and 15th Reunion Bash!

6. Faculty members Greg Hawes ’85 and Rachael Ryan reunite with Ashley Barronette ’07 during the Headmaster’s Dinner.

7. Emily Moore ’07, Carra Herron Fraker ’07 and husband Jonny Fraker ’06, and Kara Iacoviello ’07 enjoy Dinner at the Headmaster’s.

8. Dedicated marchers at the Alumni Parade were undaunted by the spring rain.
1. Alumni Weekend’s poignant Service of Remembrance at Woodward Chapel.

2. 2007 fun at the Reunion Bash for the 5th, 10th, and 15th Reunions at the Heritage.

3. Former faculty and staff members Andi and Will Orben ‘92, back at Taft for his 25th Reunion, with daughter Beatrice.


5. H.K. Seo ’07 visits with faculty member John Piacenza and former faculty member Jean Strumolo Piacenza ’75.

6. Wick Shreve ’97 with his husband, Craig.

7. 1962 classmates, celebrating their 55th Reunions, proudly march in the Alumni Parade.

8. Jim Sylvan ’87, Towt Dunn ’87, and John Weld ’87 with their wives at the 50th Reunion Cocktails.

9. Noel Pena ’97 and his family enjoy the Headmaster’s Dinner.
1. 1974 classmates return to Taft to celebrate classmate Joyce Poole receiving the Horace Dutton Taft Alumni Medal; from left, Paul Klingenstein, Brian Lincoln, Jim Mooney, Marian Reiff Cheevers, and Hank Brauer.

2. Enjoying the Class of ’82 get-together at classmate Jon Wilson’s home, Harry Yerkes, Shawn Brazo, and Chris Hunter.

3. Eliza Davis ’12, with her mom, former faculty member Linda Saarnijoki, and former faculty member Jim Mooney ’74.

4. Art Johnson ’57 and Ellie Rittman with former Taft staff/faculty members Ledlie and Ben Pastor ’97 at the Headmaster’s Dinner.

5. Bob Gries ’47, at left, celebrating his 70th Reunion, and Jim Morrison ’43, visiting his alma mater from Colorado, share a moment with Headmaster Willy MacMullen ’78 at the Old Guard Luncheon.

6. 2012 classmates Jordan Stone, Kevin Trotman, and Taylor Persechini catch up at the 5th, 10th, and 15th Reunion Bash.

7. Head monitors Eliza Denious ’17 and Nick Cutler ’17 lead the way for the Alumni Parade.

8. Jack Crombie ’92 and his family enjoy the Headmaster’s Dinner under the tent.

9. Silvia Bonachea-Cabrer ’97 and her family with Taft’s friendly rhino.

For more photographs from the weekend, including reunion class photos, visit www.taftphotos.com/Alumni-Weekend-2017.
A DAY IN THE Life
BY DEBRA MEYERS
Tuesday
APRIL 18

Devoted to service and a natural athlete, Mary combines her passions as student head of Taft’s Service Through Sports programs.

Mary will pursue a career in the sciences, following in the footsteps of her mentor and AP Biology teacher, Laura Monti ’89.

G BLOCK, 8:15–9:15 AM
AP Biology

It is late April and Advanced Placement (AP) exams are just around the corner. A senior who was accepted early decision to Bates, Mary is carrying six courses, three of them APs. Science teacher Laura Monti ’89 is thoroughly and methodically working through reams of material to make sure her AP Biology students are ready for the exams: This week: body systems—the immune system, the nervous system, and the endocrine system.

“This is my thing,” Mary says excitedly. “This is why I’m going to be a neuroscience major. I love the nervous system. How do we think? How do our muscles move? How do our bodies send signals that cause chemical changes? It’s all amazing to me.”

All In —MARY COLLETTE ’17

The best part of Mary Collette’s day, she says, is the time she spends with her large circle of friends—on the sofa in Lauren’s room, soaking up the sun on Jig patio, rowdy meals in the Dining Hall. But spend a little time with her, and you’ll find it hard to call any one part of her day better than the next. She is “all in” with everything she does, bringing heart, soul, and a pure joie de vivre that is nothing short of contagious.
A DAY IN THE Life

A BLOCK, 1:50–2:35 PM
Jazz Workshop

Tomorrow is Grandparents’ Day, a standing gig for Taft’s Jazz Ensemble. Mary plays bass guitar with the group, and has traveled with them across the U.S. and around the world. While class typically meets in the Band Room, today they are on stage in Bingham, running the Grandparents’ Day set and blocking their positions on stage. Mary is front and center, and in her element.

After a quick sound check, warm up, and a few runs through Santana’s “Oye Como Va,” the group is on to Count Basie’s “Jumpin’ at the Woodside,” a clear favorite for Mary, and one in which she performs a solo. They practice their bows, and Mary is off.

“I need to run home and get my things for softball practice,” she says. Run…literally: Mary is a day student who grew up on North Street, just on the edge of campus.

“Growing up, I thought of Taft as my backyard. It wasn’t until I was older that I realized that the place I played ball with my dad at night was one of the top boarding schools in the nation.”

C BLOCK, 12:30–1:15 PM
Lunch

This won’t be one of those treasured lunch blocks with her friends, it will be a working lunch for Mary. Another look at the material for an upcoming AP Statistics quiz, an email to the Taft community reminding them to come to Wednesday night drum circle, and then a quick look at her training schedule: Mary is running a half marathon at the end of the month, and has just started to taper her training.

“I’ve run some 10ks,” says Mary, “but never a half marathon. I think it’s going to be fun. I like to challenge myself and do new things. I like setting new goals, then working hard to achieve them.”

And on race day, like most of her Sundays, Mary is already double-booked: “I just signed up to perform at Taft’s Coffee House the night of the half marathon,” she says. “I hope I’ll have the energy!”

A BLOCK, 1:50–2:35 PM
Jazz Workshop

Mary has traveled the world playing bass guitar with Taft’s Jazz Ensemble.

AFTERNOON EX
Softball Practice

A natural leader, Mary is one of the captains of the softball team. She and her teammates are still pumped from Saturday’s 16–0 win over Canterbury, and hoping to take some of the energy into tomorrow’s game against Westminster.

“We definitely have a strong drive to beat Westy this year,” notes Mary. “They always seem to be a tough tournament opponent for us. I’m excited to give them our best effort tomorrow.”

It’s a good practice, with everyone on their game. Mary shares some positive and motivating words with her teammates, but has other business to conduct. She needs to talk with Coach Tom Antonucci about trying to schedule a softball clinic with students from Waterbury’s Police Activities League (PAL) program. Mary is the student head of Taft’s Service Through Sports program, and hopes to fit in both the clinic and a stuffed animal drive for young patients at area hospitals in the next few weeks.

Evening

Team dinner in the Dining Hall is one of the best parts of Mary’s day. But after a long day, she is also looking forward to getting home to play a little guitar, do some homework, and spend time catching up with her parents. Like most nights, Mary hopes to be asleep by midnight. She will sleep well after a full but rewarding day.
A DAY IN THE Life
BY DEBRA MEYERS

Monday APRIL 3

A Study in Balance
L.J. FOLEY ’17

In many ways, L.J. Foley is the quintessential Taftie. He is bright, articulate, and involved. He is an academic, an artist, and an athlete. He is a leader and a role model. L.J.’s days are long; his commitment to the Taft community is deep and unwavering. For L.J., each day is a study in balance.

9:30-10:25 AM
Admitted Student Events

It is Admitted Student Day at Taft, when the school welcomes newly accepted, prospective students to campus for a full day of events and programming. L.J. has been tapped to greet families and escort parents to class, but first he will perform for them in Lincoln Lobby:

L.J. is a member of Oriocos, Taft’s nearly century-old, student-led, a cappella singing group. L.J. joined Oriocos as an upper mid, one year after he successfully auditioned for Collegium Musicum, Taft’s showcase choir. He will perform with Collegium later today, giving prospective families another look at the depth of the arts program at Taft.

"Collegium has been great because it gives me the opportunity to explore my love of music while allowing me to get to know a lot of kids I might not have met otherwise,” says L.J.

The Oriocos performance leaves L.J. with only a few minutes to drop into his Monday morning Mons meeting with Director of Student Activities Sarah Koshi. The School Mons meet with Koshi every Monday morning to plan activities for the coming weekend.

"Next weekend is an open weekend, so we want to do something smaller scale that’s relatively easy to plan and execute,” says L.J., “since there may be fewer people on campus than usual.”

The group votes to show movies in the common rooms, and L.J., heads off to take visiting families to his AP Human Geography class. He will answer questions from prospective parents along the way, sharing details about his time at Taft and of the depth of his Rhino pride.
A DAY IN THE Life

Evening

When his practice schedule and workload allow, L.J. heads back to the Athletics Center after dinner.

“If it’s soccer season I might play an hour of wall ball to practice lacrosse skills, or during lacrosse season I may just go back and lift,” L.J. says. “After dinner is usually a good time to work out.”

Today’s schedule was exceptionally full, so L.J. skips the gym and heads straight to the library. He has an hour or so to study before reporting for duty in CPT.

“As a Mon, I am on duty every Monday night in my dorm,” explains L.J. “I get there by 7:50 or so to check kids in for study hall.”

Today’s schedule was exceptionally full, so L.J. skips the gym and heads straight to the library. He has an hour or so to study before reporting for duty in CPT.

As a Mon, it’s my job to sign kids in for study hall or nightly check-in,” says L.J., “but it also my job to just be here, always setting the right example.”

AFTERNOON EX

Lacrosse Practice

L.J. is a talented athlete and a serious competitor. He played soccer, hockey, and lacrosse in each of his four years at Taft.

“I like being competitive, and I like the camaraderie,” says L.J. “I consider myself pretty close to all of the kids on each of my teams. I appreciate that I was able to play all three sports at Taft, and to play them successfully.”

Mondays start in the locker room, de-briefing Saturday’s game. This week’s 16–7 win over Canterbury means spirits and energy are high as the players make their way out of the locker room for “Madden Madness,” Coach Robert Madden’s eponymous, 12-minute plyometric workout, built to increase individual speed, strength, and agility in his players. It is a Monday tradition, and an important part of the team’s conditioning routine.

E BLOCK, 1:00–1:40 PM

AP American Government

It may be “senior spring,” but L.J. is still carrying a full course load—three of his six classes are APs. With political science on his radar as a potential college major, AP American Government is one of L.J.’s favorite classes. Teacher Rachael Ryan is preparing students for an upcoming in-class essay exploring civil rights and civil liberties. The preparation includes a student presentation on North Carolina’s repeal of portions of the so-called “bathroom bill.” L.J. offers details of the economic implications of the bill, noting that both the NBA and the NCAA bailed at holding events in that state when the bill that limits LGBTQ protections was enacted. The events, L.J. notes, are big revenue generators for the state; their loss was akin to non-governmental economic sanctions.

“I think repealing portions of the bill should help North Carolina,” L.J. adds, “because it shows an effort to resolve some of the issues that originally concerned both organizations.”

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Giving Voice to Passion

—KAEDI DALLEY ’18

There is a quiet rhythm to Kaedi Dalley’s day. She is not a cog in a wheel, but the wheel itself—a driving force, moving everything around her forward with subtle, yet unwavering intent. She is a passionate voice in the Taft community, with a gift and spirit that inspire and resonate.

F BLOCK, 8:15–9:15 AM
Collegium Musicum

There is a good deal of work to be done today: Collegium will perform twice in the next three days—not on campus Friday evening and in New York City on Sunday. There isn’t time to run the full set list for the concerts, but Director Bruce Fifer leads the group through at least a part of each song, including Kaedi’s solo, “Sound Over All Waters.” It is a stunning piece, and one that Kaedi has performed with Collegium many times, most recently in San Francisco during Spring Break with its creator, Paul Halley, in the audience. And while her peers have heard Kaedi perform the number many times over the last year, they are still visibly moved in class on this day, and applaud her breathtaking performance.

G BLOCK, 9:30–10:15 AM
Upper Mid English

Derek Palmore’s class taps into Kaedi’s strengths: She is a natural leader and a deep thinker. She is passionate in her convictions, and eager to give voice to that passion.

“English is the course I like the most,” says Kaedi. “Mr. Palmore allows everyone to articulate themselves in whatever way they feel is most appropriate; for me, that’s speaking more so than writing. His acknowledgment of my eloquence is encouraging—it inspires me to be very active in class discussions and analyses.” And today is no exception. The class has been reading Shirley Jackson’s The Haunting of Hill House. Kaedi quickly joins the conversation, and quite naturally slips into the role of leader during the small group breakout sessions. Palmore’s easy, open style invites full participation and thoughtful dialogue, and Kaedi responds in kind.
Evening

JV Golf team practice ("It’s very calming—just you and the ball..."), dinner, study hall, and, of course, music.

"I practice in the piano rooms in the evenings," says Kaedi. "Going to the camp that I went to last summer made me realize that this is the career I want to pursue. I would like to be a professional singer—a performer in the music industry."

With support from Taft’s Kilbourne Summer Enrichment Fund, Kaedi traveled to Los Angeles last summer to attend the A Cappella Academy. Only 13 percent of the high school-aged students who auditioned for a spot at the academy were accepted. She will return this summer, having been accepted through an even more competitive audition process.

"I am always working to mature my voice and grow as a performer," says Kaedi. "Taft’s resources and opportunities have helped me do that—that I take advantage of every opportunity here that I can."
“The 21st century is going to provide you with no shortage of opportunities to BE BRAVE, to STAND UP to bullies, to NEGOTIATE with and OCCASIONALLY DEFY authority, and to HELP those in extreme circumstances.”

— PRESSLEY M. MILLEN
“People are what make Taft a special place…. High school is a time for learning how to be comfortable with yourself, for figuring out who you are, and we have spent the last two, three, four years growing up together. Like any team that needs to discover how to work as a unit, we stumbled at first, but now we have merged the two pieces, togetherness and independence, and have come to be a true family.”

“Graduations are a celebration of moving on to a new life milestone, but maybe more importantly, to celebrate the memories we have made together at Taft. Together, the key word, is one that we as a class use quite frequently. We do everything as a group. We eat meals together, do afternoon activities together, hang out together, and are curious and creative…together. Mr. Mac has said throughout the year that our community is a table, and for the community to function properly everyone must have a seat and a voice at the table.”
named Hiram Bingham, whose father was a U.S. senator from Connecticut. And Hiram was more than happy—against direct orders from Washington, by the way—to issue as many visas as he could, even ones with fake names.

It’s reasonable to think that the things Fry learned here were the same qualities that made him successful in Marseille.

What kind of person can just show up in a place where he knows absolutely no one and immediately get the lay of the land and begin to act effectively? Maybe someone who’s done that same thing when she’s come to a school like this.

Fry had learned how to work with others—not just as an individual—toward a greater shared goal, which is something else you all have learned here.

"Fry had learned how to work with others—not just as an individual—to toward a greater shared goal, which is something else you all have learned here.”
had a knack for knowing when to safely ignore authority. And—not lightly—he knew when to defy authority.

His bravery was impressive, but, as Mr. Mac puts it, there’s always the important question of whether you are effective. And was Fry ever effective! In 13 months in Marseille, with the Gestapo and Vichy authorities breathing down his neck and with Fry breaking the law every day, he was credited with saving over 2,200 refugees from what would almost always have been certain death. Among those were the artist Marc Chagall, who later designed the famous Peace Window at the United Nations in New York. He also helped save Hannah Arendt, who became the world’s foremost philosopher on the subject of totalitarianism. And Claude Levi-Strauss, acknowledged as one of the 20th century’s greatest anthropologists. All of these were people whose nationalities or politics or heritages had them on the run.

In 1994, 28 years after his death, Fry became the first American citizen to be honored among the Righteous of Nations at Yad Vashem, the Israeli Holocaust memorial. This honor is given only to those who voluntarily risked their own lives to help the victims of the Holocaust. Only four other Americans have been so honored. Varian Fry’s heritage is now your heritage as Taft graduates. The 21st century—as we’ve all learned—is going to provide you with no shortage of opportunities to be brave, to stand up to bullies, to negotiate with and occasionally defy authority, and to help those in extreme circumstances. In short, opportunities to put into practice the things you’ve learned here.

“About a month ago, I was hiking with my dad, and he asked me the one thing that I learned the most at Taft. He was fascinated when I told him that I learned to interact and engage with people, rather than any academic concept. As part of a community, we have learned this incredibly important skill of interacting with others. And the unique togetherness that our class exemplifies will also help us engage with others in the future. With such a global population at Taft, I encourage you all to reach out and maintain these powerful connections that we have made.”
These complimentary brochures offer additional information and details about the advantages of planned giving for you and the school.

Arranging a planned gift can be easily done. For example, a gift through your 401(k) or 403(b) is as simple as naming Taft a beneficiary or co-beneficiary by contacting your plan administrator to request a change and requires no expense.

For a brochure, or if you have questions about planned giving, please contact Paul Parvis, Director of Planned Giving, at 860-945-7751 or paulparvis@taftschool.org.

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