

Taft

B U L L E T I N

YOUNG *Alumni*
MUSICIANS



WINTER 2017

In this **ISSUE**



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Swept Up in Sound

The Working Lives of Four Young Professional Musicians

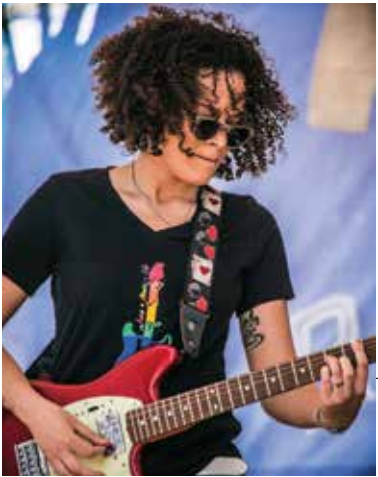
By Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow '84

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Making Art Real

For nearly 20 years, the Rockwell Visiting Artists Program has helped bring the arts to life at Taft.

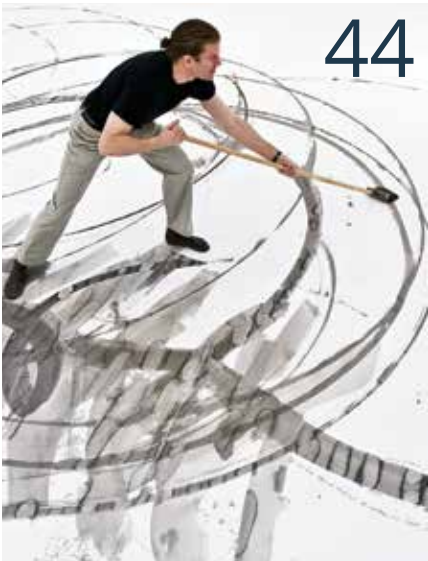
By Julie Reiff



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▲ Taft's fall theater production, *Shrek the Musical*, offered stunning set design, highly technical production and choreography, and make-up challenges that include prosthetic pieces to create its whimsical characters.

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COMMENTS? TELL US!

We'd love to hear what you think about the stories in this *Bulletin*.

We may edit your letters for length, clarity, and content, but please write.

Linda Hedman Beyus, editor

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On Main Hall

A WORD FROM HEADMASTER WILLY MACMULLEN '78

AT THE TABLE: ON STRIVING FOR ROBUST AND RESPECTFUL DEBATE

It will not surprise you that this fall, with its unprecedented presidential election, we had a challenging and productive campus dialogue. We work very hard each year to create a community with a really diverse student body, with the kind of difference of perspective and experience you would expect with 600 bright students from all over the nation and the world. That kind of community will inevitably have robust debate, disagreement, and discussion, and these things are the very foundation of a good education and a necessary rehearsal for democratic citizenship. After all, each day in the classroom is about *exploring contesting views*—be it a discussion of *Macbeth* or a calculus solution—and that exercise inevitably, and healthily, spilled into the campus dialogue about the issues that dominated the presidential campaign. So, there was *a lot* of discussion this fall.

But saying that the conversation is happening does not mean that it is an easy one to have. After all, there were plenty of American families who found themselves arguing emotionally over the Thanksgiving table. If you think of the Taft campus as a really big family at a really big table, you can easily imagine how much more challenging this can be. And so we, too, as a school, had to work really hard to find ways to disagree productively, listen respectfully, and speak thoughtfully. But if you believe in the basic goodness and intelligence of students, faculty, and staff, and if you believe as well that a strong institution is one with the capacity to hold really diverse views together, then good things can happen.

I found a couple of books helpful. Sharon Crowley, an Arizona State University English professor, argues in *Toward a Civil Discourse* that the ancient art of rhetoric, the skill of finding *means of persuasion*, can serve us well as we work to manage competing claims in the civic sphere. Properly exercised, rhetoric, Crowley writes, “allows those who are familiar with [its concepts and vocabulary] to intervene fruitfully in disputes and disagreements.” Positions are changed, ideas are modified, and often agreement is uncovered.

Debate conducted in this way is *productive*. To engage in a rhetorical discussion, Crowley says, obligates you to very hard work, to be willing to submit your claims to inquiry and dispute, to respect and encounter opposition, and perhaps to risk having your mind changed. These are all good lessons for Taft students. Here’s how she puts it: “[Rhetorical] argument...requires an advocate to recognize that an opponent has a position on the issue at hand....[and] it requires willingness to be addressed by another.” It’s good counsel for a school.

The second book was *Difficult Conversations* by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen. It’s more of a corporate guidebook, but it was helpful for us as well. The authors seemed to understand what members of a community like ours carry when we enter these kinds of

“We...as a school, had to work really hard to find ways to disagree productively, listen respectfully, and speak thoughtfully.”



ON THE COVER

Freddy Gonzalez '05 performing with the Underground Horns in New York City in 2013; one of our four young professional musicians in the feature on page 34. SEAN T. SMITH

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Students engage in a lively discussion with the authors of *All American Boys*, Taft's all-school summer reading selection.

“We are still gathered together, trying to make intellectual elbow room for everyone, debate fiercely and respectfully, and listen seriously and empathically.”

conversations and write, “Any time we feel vulnerable or our self-esteem is implicated, when the issues at stake are important and the outcome uncertain, when we care deeply about what is being discussed or about the people with whom we are discussing it, there is potential for us to experience the conversation as difficult.”

When I shared that quotation with the school leaders, they agreed that every phrase in the sentence was “spot on” at Taft—and very helpful. The authors also note how important it is to have realistic goals, something all of us on campus needed to be reminded of: “Achieving perfect results with no risk will not happen. Getting better results in the face of tolerable odds might.” And they argue that we see these difficult conversations as the sharing of stories: “We have different stories about the world because we take in different information and interpret this information in our unique ways.”

We stumbled some, experienced strong emotions, learned a lot. It was not easy, and we were not “perfect,” whatever that means. After all, on a campus like ours, this hard work never ends. But we might close with that metaphor of the table, and it’s one we have used all year. Horace Taft opened the school with a handful of students sitting together at a dining room table in Pelham Manor in 1890, and at our most *essential* level, not much has changed. We are still teachers and students, if more in number, and more diverse and inclusive, but we are still gathered together, trying to make intellectual elbow room for everyone, debate fiercely and respectfully, and listen seriously and empathically.

Willy MacMullen '78



? Taft TRIVIA

Who donated this fine beast to Taft, and where is it located?
Send your guess to the editor (lindabeyus@taftschoool.org).
The winner, whose name will be randomly chosen, will win a surprise Taft gift.



► Congratulations to Roger Stacey, former Taft faculty member (English), who, along with several others, correctly guessed that the bronze sculpture is in an alcove opposite the Mark W. Potter Gallery. No, the sculptor is not Remington, as some thought—it is by Joy Clinton Shepherd in 1928 and was donated by the Fownes family.



CORRECTION

In our fall issue’s Alumni Spotlight article “Rocket Woman,” on pages 10–11, we neglected to include the byline of Julie Reiff, former editor of this magazine.

Alumni **SPOTLIGHT**

Building Energy's Future

FOR MICHAEL KLEIN '10, a typical day at the office is anything but typical. One day he might be joined by a dozen executives in a corporate boardroom, while the next will find him in cowboy boots, jeans, and a T-shirt working on a job site in the Arizona desert. The diversity of Klein's role as a project engineer for AMEC Foster Wheeler, an international engineering and project management firm specializing in energy and infrastructure, keeps him excited about being a civil engineer.

For the past two years, Klein has helped manage multiple projects aimed at producing energy for local communities using natural, renewable resources—including the Mesquite Solar complex in Tonopha, Arizona, and the Black Oak Getty wind farm in central Minnesota. Both facilities are projected to have major impacts on energy production in their local areas. The 39 turbines at Black Oak Getty will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about 213,000 tons annually, and the Mesquite facility expects to generate enough power to run a city the size of Fresno, California.

A childhood fascination with hydroelectric power introduced him to the world of green energy. "I know this is going to sound super nerdy," he laughs, "but I always thought that dams were the coolest thing. We build these massive structures to retain a massive amount of water, and then that water is forced through a turbine, which basically looks

like a jet engine on the inside, and create this massive amount of energy."

As a freshman at Southern Methodist University, Klein had another career path in mind. "When I first went into school, engineering was not what I wanted to go into," Klein says. "I was more interested in business or management." But in the back of his mind, he couldn't shake his early fascination with building. "My father has been a licensed civil engineer for basically his entire life, so I grew up knowing the benefits of engineering," he adds.

Ultimately, though, he discovered that a career in civil engineering could combine these interests. "I have always been more interested in the construction side of the industry instead of the pure engineering, because I always enjoyed the management side of construction," he says.

For Klein, each day working with green energy is like solving another exciting

puzzle. As he explains, he and his colleagues are constantly discovering better ways to power communities. "We have the technology, and we know how to apply it, but on our end it's all about how to apply technology in the best way that gets the most efficient product for not only our clients, but also for the general public and for these local communities."

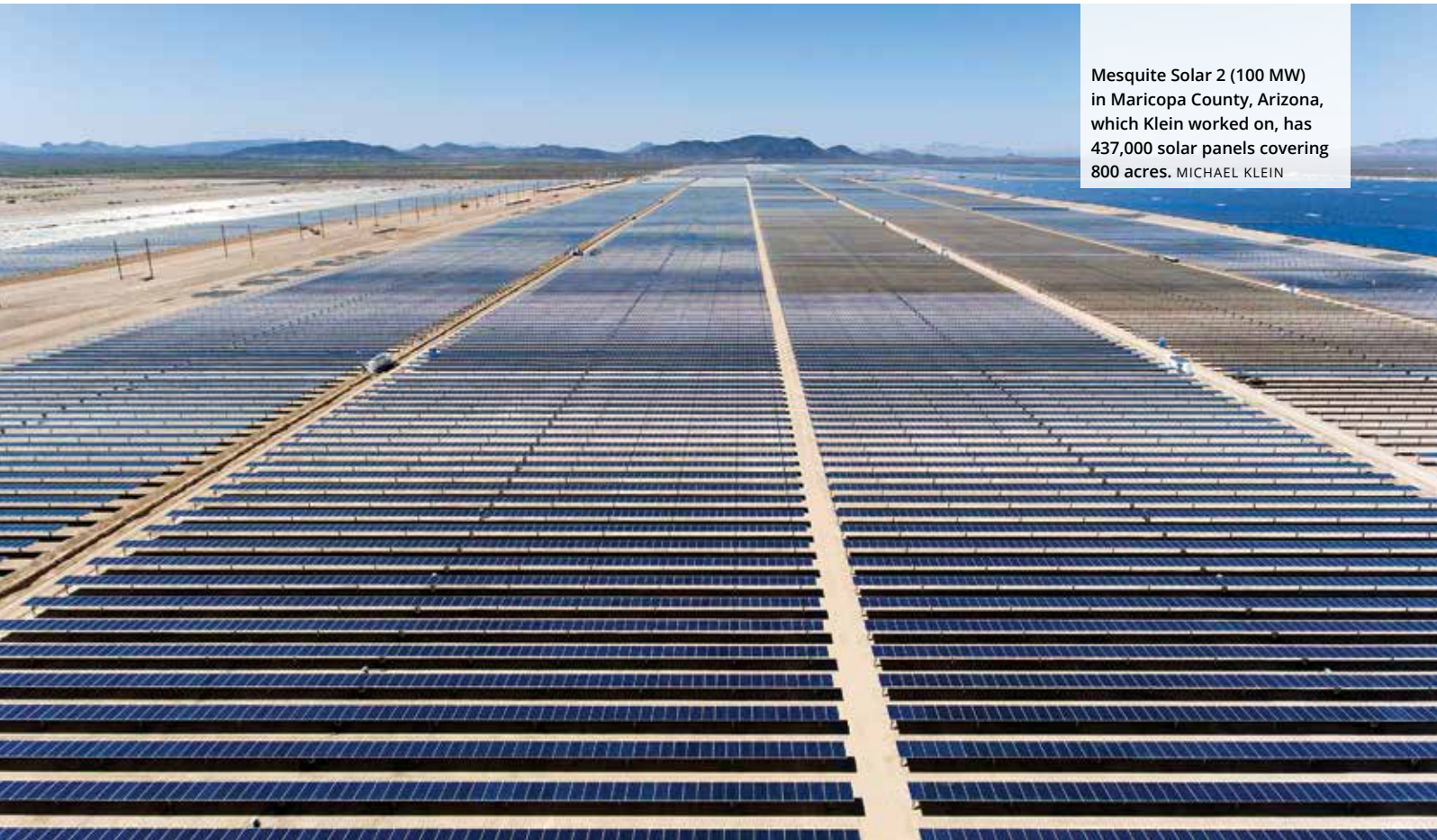
Over the next few decades, Klein expects advances in green technology will become essential to fulfilling the world's great energy needs. "It's good to invest in these technologies now," he notes, "because in 30 years, a mixture of solar, wind, geothermal, hydroelectric, nuclear, and natural gas will be needed to meet our future energy demands and security needs. The capital and operation costs for renewable projects are now on par with equivalent-sized traditional power sources."

But Klein is dedicated to seeing green

energy succeed despite the years of hard work ahead. He credits one particularly impactful experience at Taft for instilling him with this exceptional drive. As he remembers, "There was one day that we were in precalculus, and no one was really paying attention. Mr. Richards just raised his voice and said, 'You guys have to pay attention to what you're learning. You have to be passionate about what you're doing.' He then launched into this 10-minute talk about caring and being passionate about what you're doing. That really stuck with me throughout the years."

That passion continues to push him to tackle whatever challenges he may face, confident that with each innovation, he helps move dozens of communities closer to a cleaner and more sustainable energy future. ■

—Christopher Browner '12



A Nose for the Business



▲ Perfumer Ashley Wilberding Balavoine '90 works on designing scents for the international company Firmenich. SABINE DE TSCHARNER

SPICED APPLE TODDY. Iced blackberries. Sugared amber. Cappuccino truffle. When you get to work each day creating scents like these, life is pretty sweet.

As a perfumer for the leading privately

owned fragrance company in the world, Ashley Wilberding Balavoine '90 gets to create the scents that, whether we realize it or not, are in products that most of us use every day: shampoos, soaps, candles, and fragrances. "Every day I get to travel with my nose," effuses Balavoine.

Balavoine works for Firmenich, a 120-year-old Geneva-based company with 6,500 employees scattered among 63 facilities around the world. Firmenich develops flavors and fragrances for everything from foods and beverages to soaps, candles, and perfumes for multinational companies. Some of Balavoine's clients include Mary Kay, Henri Bendel, Ralph Lauren, L'Oréal, and Crabtree & Evelyn. For a current project for Bath & Body Works, for example, Balavoine is developing a fall scent, choosing just what formula of florals, citrus, greens, and fruits will make the best fragrance for their product line.

"There are a lot of similarities with music," explains Balavoine of the process. "You need to know how to make a chord, with top, middle, and base notes.

We use a mass spectrometer during the process." An artful operation that clearly has its scientific component, the job of perfumer requires not only a refined nose, but also years of training, including learning and being able to identify over 1,000 raw materials.

Balavoine must also keep abreast of the trends in fragrance, which she points out are very connected to each culture, and vary by country. "Now woody scents are very prevalent—heavy, dark notes—as people are tired of concrete and want to escape into the woods," she says, noting a proclivity of Americans to find comfort in their fragrances (think vanilla and butterscotch).

Of the five senses, smell is a person's strongest link to memories. Balavoine has been using her own nose as a grounding force as long as she can remember. "I would put everything to my nose. When I was four I started making potpourri from my garden. I'd also never eat anything until I smelled it first!" she recalls.

With a father whose international



job took the family overseas, Balavoine lived abroad for the majority of her childhood, calling Japan, London, and Saudi Arabia home, a lifestyle that regularly immersed her in a rich and exotic palette of smells. "I discovered countries through my nose. You could call me an olfactive anthropologist," she remarks.

It was not until she traveled to the International Museum of Perfume in Grasse, France, during college that Balavoine realized she could turn her olfactory prowess and passion into a career. After a few detours, including a job with Merrill Lynch and six months in Sweden playing professional women's ice hockey (with a potential opportunity to try out for the U.S. women's Olympic team), she began her career as an apprentice perfumer in 1996 for V. Mane Fils in Le Bar-sur-Loup, France.

Since then, her nose has taken her to Beijing, where she opened new offices

◀ Balavoine smells the narcissus flowers in Mane, France, before the petals are distilled into essential oil.

for V. Mane Fils, and to their Mexico City office, returning to the United States in 2005. Seeking a bigger opportunity, Balavoine seized the chance to work for Firmenich, at the top of the industry. As one of 11 perfumers in Firmenich's New Jersey office, Balavoine spends her days developing scents for predominantly body and home care.

While she says she is lucky to merge her passion with her profession, Balavoine notes that her job is not without its challenges, and that the creation of a scent is not a simple endeavor. "Development can take anywhere from weeks to years. Making a fragrance for Procter & Gamble, for example, can take up to eight years," she explains. "You have to be really resilient. We have a whole team that critiques the fragrance...and then, of course, there's the customer."

Yet, she stresses, the job perks don't exactly stink: "I get to do coffee with cardamom next week!" ■

—Phoebe Vaughn Outerbridge '84

An Invisible Art

WHAT EXACTLY DOES A FILM AND television editor do?

Cecily Rhett '83 is used to answering the question.

"It's one of the great things about it," says Rhett, whose recent editing credits

include the A&E series *Bates Motel*, a contemporary prequel to *Psycho*.

"I don't think anyone really knows what we do, and it's kind of an invisible art."

"I work with a lot of screens—I have four screens," says Rhett, who explains

her role this way: "On set they'll shoot for eight days and they send me all of that footage. I have a script from a writer, and I have the footage, and I make the episode out of all the footage. It's super creative in that I'm choosing which shot I want to keep in, what the frame is going to look like, and which performance to use to try to create an emotional feeling in the scene."

A TV editor also adds sound and music and then screens each episode with the director, who may offer feedback like, "This character seemed a little bit aggressive," or, in the case of *Bates Motel*, "I want you to focus more on Norman's character in this scene."

Central to her role, but as Rhett describes it, "the last component of my job," is continuity—making an episode or

a film "look continuous and fluid so you can suspend disbelief and enter the world that we're creating for you." It takes skill to make sure viewers are not "aware of all of the breaks in time that actually are happening—the breaks in performance and the lunch breaks and all the other things that are going on," she says.

While there are Oscars and Emmy awards for editing, sometimes editors' work only gains attention when there are mistakes in continuity (YouTube has a few examples) or on blooper reels, to which Rhett doesn't pay any attention.

"I don't like to look at the actors out of character," she says. "What I love about my job is that I am invited to live in a world that is completely make-believe, from really the first

moment of my day until the last, so I live in that world as much as I can."

Rhett says that "people always think editors want to be in a dark room," but she works in a Universal Television office in Los Angeles—the city where she lives with her husband, a writer, and their daughter—that has actually has windows with views of palm trees and hills. (She and her colleagues close the blinds only when they're screening something that was shot at night with dark footage.)

She got into the business after studying Russian language and literature at Columbia and then working in theater and choreography in New York and San Francisco, where she created and performed experimental theater at The Lab performance art space. "I was also working as a

paralegal to make money, and I thought, I don't know how I'm going to survive being an experimental dance choreographer, so I got interested in film and somehow I ended up at the University of Southern California, which is a very commercial industry school," she says. "I was a real experimental outlier there, but also learned about traditional storytelling and became really fascinated by storytelling in film."

With 16 editing credits to her name on IMDb and work in documentary television, dramatic television, reality television, and feature films (her most recent, *Sister Cities*, was an indie that premiered on Lifetime in September), Rhett has found a job that clearly needs no edits. ■

—Sam Dangremond '05



Film editor Cecily Rhett '83, seated, working on *Bates Motel*, an A&E series, with director Sarah Boyd. DISHA PATEL-WEBB

The Treasures of Trade

THESE DAYS IT'S COMMON TO HEAR people talk of living in a global age as if it were a relatively new phenomenon. In reality, asserts Karina Corrigan '88, many were experiencing such an interconnected world as early as the 16th century, and certainly by the 17th century, because of trade.

Corrigan should know. As the Peabody Essex Museum's H.A. Crosby Forbes Curator of Asian Export Art, she is charged with overseeing the world's most comprehensive collection of fine and decorative art made in Asia for export to the West. "Founded in 1799, the Peabody Essex Museum's collection is among the finest of its kind, boasting superlative works from around the globe and across time. Some of these works of art haven't moved much more than 200 yards in 200 years," she says. By exploring these cross-cultural works of art from multiple perspectives, Corrigan explains, we can tap into our own global history.



▲ Karina Corrigan '88, curator of Asian export art for the Peabody Essex Museum, shows His Majesty Carl XVI Gustav of Sweden a covered punch bowl with a depiction of the Chinese pavilion at Drottningholm, the estate where the King currently resides. The bowl bears one of only two known images of the pavilion built in 1753 as a birthday gift for Queen Louisa Ulrika of Sweden. The 18th-century porcelain bowl is part of the collection that is not currently on public display, but available to visiting researchers. PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM, KATHY TARANTOLA

◀ Covered punch bowl and stand with a depiction of the Chinese pavilion at Drottningholm, 1762–63, artists in Jingdezhen, China, porcelain. Peabody Essex Museum purchase, 1999. PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM, DENNISH HELMAR

Over the course of her tenure at PEM, Corrigan has dedicated herself to revealing the information harbored in the museum's myriad works of art, organizing eight exhibitions, including last year's *Asia in Amsterdam: The Culture of Luxury in the Golden Age*, which PEM co-organized with the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Comprised of 200 outstanding examples of Asian

and Dutch works of art, the landmark exhibition explored the "transformative impact that Asian luxuries had on Dutch art and life in the 17th century" and brought new understanding to the Dutch Golden Age and its relationship to Asia.

"The exhibition and accompanying catalog generated a great deal of new scholarship and presented a lot of information that was not previously available in English," Corrigan says. *Asia in Amsterdam* was named

scholarly essays to the accompanying catalogue. "I'm only just recovering," she says wryly. "I've worked on a number of exhibitions in my career, but this one was my favorite, as well as the largest I've undertaken to date. Ideally, I'd love to have the chance to work on a few other shows of this scale by the time I retire."

Corrigan's interest in these types of cross-cultural issues stretches back years. She earned a B.A. in art history and medieval Renaissance studies from Wellesley

Taft instructor Mark Potter '48 introduced her to the joys of art history. "I think it was pretty unusual to have the opportunity to take an art history class in high school, but I'm so grateful that I had that exposure because I absolutely loved it," she adds.

That course clearly left an indelible mark—this summer Corrigan will celebrate her 20th anniversary as a member of PEM's curatorial staff. "I feel very fortunate to do the work I do," she concludes. "No two days are the same,



An installation from the *Asia in Amsterdam* exhibit curated by Corrigan. PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM, ALLISON WHITE

the Best Thematic/Historical Show in a Top 10 list by the *Boston Globe* art critic Sebastian Smee for 2016.

Although on view for just five months, *Asia in Amsterdam* occupied Corrigan for much longer. She began thinking about the show in 2009 and then dedicated four years of intensive work to making her vision a reality. Objects were drawn from the collections of the Peabody Essex Museum and the Rijksmuseum, as well as from some 60 lenders from around the world. Thirty authors contributed

College; an M.S. in historic preservation from the University of Pennsylvania—writing her thesis on the influence of Turkish design on late 19th-century interiors—and an M.A. from the Winterthur Program in American material culture.

But it is retired Taft history teacher John Wynne whom Corrigan credits with initially helping her to understand that history wasn't just battles and kings. "I wrote a paper for him on the changing nature of fashion before and after the French Revolution," she says. At the same time,

and I have a lot of autonomy as to how I spend my time. I've had the chance to travel extensively throughout Europe and Asia on behalf of the museum; I have many opportunities to research and write, which I love; and I'm able to lecture frequently about the collection. I feel that my role is to share arts, culture, and history with others through tangible links to the past, and this job makes that possible. It's incredibly rewarding."

—Lori Ferguson

No Small Feat: Bangkok’s Swing Craze

THERE ARE NO SIGNS TO SPEAK of—not at this speakeasy. Word of mouth keeps them coming. Up three flights. Flappers. Guys in high-waisted pants and suspenders.

Nestled in the heart of Bangkok, a hustling and bustling city of 6.3 million, is a place they call The Hop. And the king of it is Chayapong Naviroj ’07. His friends and family call him “Oat.” And now, his pupils. “It’s spread like wildfire,” Naviroj says. “It’s like, how is it possible this art has become accessible in all major cities of the world? I’m not American, but I’m so proud of this American art form.”

Naviroj, 28, is a cofounder of Bangkok Swing, the cultural phenomenon behind the dance revival in his native megalopolis. Like the Lindy Hop or Charleston, it’s a movement. It started in 2011 with just

two expats. Now, it’s become a community of 1,000 strong, hosting classes and weekly dances at its hidden-away studio on Silom Road, fittingly known as The Hop, in addition to charity workshops. “It’s become something I never imagined,” Naviroj says. “You walk up three flights of stairs and you turn around, and there’s people from all walks of life, and all ability levels, dancing to 1930s music. That’s quite foreign here in Thailand.”

For \$6, the adventurous can take a 30-minute class and then practice their moves, from the triple step to the rock step, and swing out, during a social dance. A drink is included. For the more committed, and, perhaps less coordinated, there is a six-week swing class. It’s a no-judgment zone, per Naviroj, whose prodigies

have gone on to become instructors. “There are people who can’t clap on the beats,” Naviroj says. “It’s like two left hands to begin with. Two left feet is more normal. At the end, persistence is the ultimate test. Eventually, if people listen and people move, it’s something they can learn and they can adapt to.”

By day, Naviroj runs A-Best, a farm produce company started by his mother. By night, it’s Benny Goodman, Count Basie, and Duke Ellington. “It’s the fashion. It’s the music. It’s the people. It’s the dancing. It’s the history,” he says.

So how did Naviroj go from tennis team captain and Jazz Band member at Taft to debonair swing impresario? As a freshman at the University of Pennsylvania, a flier advertising a free swing class caught his eye. “I saw a picture of a guy throwing a girl in the air, and that looked pretty cool,” he says.

Little did Naviroj know that the class turned out to be an audition for the West Philly Swingers, a UPenn dance troupe. “I never danced before,” he says. “Believe it or not, the best thing I got from college was swing dancing. I felt like most of my development happened at Taft.”

In Southeast Asia, Naviroj has become a swing ambassador, winning a recent competition in Beijing and drawing acclaim from TEDx. The global ideas initiative invited him to speak at its August symposium in Bangkok. He’s helped organize a block party outside Thailand’s largest pagoda and swing workshops for the disabled.

“We show that the joy of this art supersedes people who don’t have legs,” says Naviroj. “Sometimes people in wheelchairs are better than people who have every component of their body. It’s a way of spreading joy.” ■

—Neil Vigdor ’95

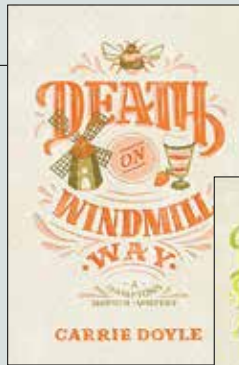
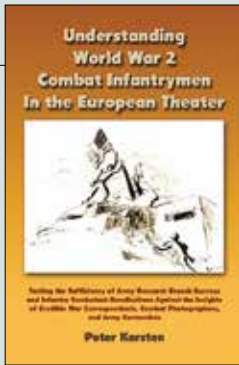
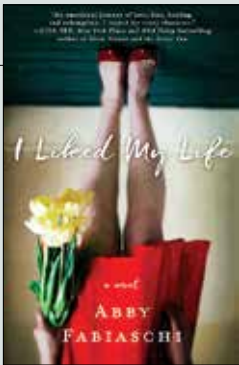
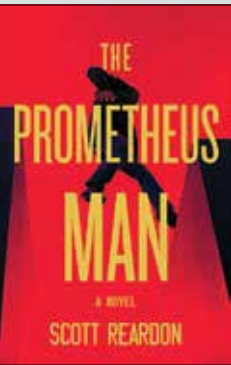
◀ Naviroj, cofounder of Bangkok Swing, does some swing-style moves with his dance partner, Young Ji Kim. PETER FREW ’75



▼ Oat Naviroj ’07, far right, with Taft Admissions Director Peter Frew ’75, during his Bangkok visit, and Mega and Suriyon Srirathaikul, parents of Proof ’19.

▼ Naviroj with a swing dance club passport.

IN Print



THE PROMETHEUS MAN
Mulholland Books
Scott Reardon ’98

When several bodies are found in Paris, CIA agent Tom Blake hustles his way onto a major case: tracking a man with enhanced abilities, the test subject of a secret government program. There’s just one problem: the man using Agent Blake’s identity is not Agent Blake. He’s Tom Reese, a man without a family or a home. Reese is searching for his brother’s killer. He stole Agent Blake’s identity two months ago and bluffed his way onto the team investigating his only lead. But his time as a CIA agent is accelerating toward its expiration date. Soon the CIA will find out that Agent Blake is in two places at once, and the augmented man will come looking for him. And soon both will discover that Tom Reese carries a secret even he doesn’t know about. He is the last test subject of Project Prometheus. Scott Reardon is a graduate of Georgetown University and Northwestern Law, and currently works at a venture capital firm in Los Angeles. This is his first novel.

I LIKED MY LIFE
St. Martin’s Press
Abby Fabiaschi ’98

Abby Fabiaschi’s debut novel is a poignant look at the sacrifices of motherhood and the nuances of mourning between a hormonal teen and a powerful alpha male father. *I Liked My Life* unfurls the story of the Starlings, a seemingly happy family whose matriarch dies tragically in what is deemed a suicide and was the glue that held her family together. Through alternating points of view,

Fabiaschi reveals her characters: matriarch Madeline, postmortem, as she attempts to make things right for her family; Brady, as he struggles to balance his high-powered career with the demands of single fatherhood; and Eve, as grief thrusts her into adulthood and she grapples to find her identity without her mother. The result is an intimate portrait of a father and daughter trying to redefine their understanding of family and a striking depiction of the power of unconditional love. Abby Fabiaschi is a human rights advocate and the director of the board for Made by Survivors, an international nonprofit that uplifts victims from sex trafficking and extreme abuse. She and her family divide their time between West Hartford, Connecticut, and Park City, Utah. Learn more at www.abbyfabiaschi.com.

UNDERSTANDING WORLD WAR 2
COMBAT INFANTRYMEN IN THE
EUROPEAN THEATER
Merriman Press
Peter Karsten ’56

Most scholarship on the American role in the European Theater of Operations (ETO) during World War II has addressed the large issues of strategy, campaign outcomes, command leadership, and logistical support. Other, generally more recent research has provided insights into the experiences of the individual combatants. In this publication Peter Karsten offers a better grasp of these latter efforts, using evidence that has been underutilized. What he asks in this unique work is whether the media (journalists, broadcasters, combat photographers, cartoonists, and

artists) in the ETO during World War II significantly improved our understanding of the world of the American infantryman there. Peter Karsten is professor of history at the University of Pittsburgh and co-director of the Pittsburgh Center for Social History.

DEATH ON WINDMILL WAY:
A HAMPTONS MURDER MYSTERY
Dunemere Books
Carrie Doyle ’90

The Hamptons may be a summer playground for the rich and famous, but for the other nine months of the year it is a small town with small-town problems. The scenic stretch along Long Island’s East End is renowned for beautiful beaches, quaint villages, spectacular houses—and murder, in Carrie Doyle’s new series. Lead character Antonia Bingham, a divorced gourmand and proprietor of the Windmill Inn, has a personality that inspires people to confide their secrets to her. Having escaped to the Hamptons to get away from a harrowing past, she finds herself in more danger than ever, as she learns she is the next doomed innkeeper in a series of innkeeper murders. Will her overly inquisitive personality be her downfall as she searches for the killer, or will she live to tell the tale and solve the crimes? In this first book of the Hamptons Murder Mystery series, author Carrie Doyle has brought to life a character that will entrance readers into the series’ second book, *Death on Lily Pond Lane*. Doyle is a contributing editor of *Hamptons Magazine* and has written for *Harper’s Bazaar*, *Town & Country*, and other publications. She has also co-written screenplays and several books. ■

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For more information, visit
www.taftschool.org/news

Around the POND

BY DEBRA MEYERS

Tackling Global Problems



BEN LAUFER '18 has a keen interest in food. What started as a passion for the array of ethnic foods readily available during his childhood in Brooklyn, soon gave way to something much greater.

"I spent my freshman summer interning at restaurants in Connecticut, New York City, and Martha's Vineyard," Ben says. "They were farm-to-table-type restaurants, which got me more interested in agriculture and where our food comes from. That blossomed into a general interest in sustainability and environmental issues."

He is an EcoMon at Taft—a student leader and ambassador for the environmental programs and initiatives across campus. He received a Poole Grant last summer to attend the Dartmouth Environmental Leadership Institute and to study permaculture in Costa Rica. He is also a Global Leadership Institute Scholar, a Global Studies and Service Diploma candidate, and part of Taft's inaugural AP Capstone program, which explored, in part, the relationship between population and environmental sustainability. But it is his work outside of Taft that has earned him acclaim on the global stage: Ben was recently a delegate and presenter at the youth summit of the 2016 Borlaug Dialogue International Symposium, part of the World Food Prize event in Des Moines, Iowa.

The Road to Iowa Begins in Philly

His path to the Borlaug Symposium started more than a year earlier, when he first heard about the Ideas for Action 14–18 competition, sponsored by the World Bank and the Zicklin Center for Business Ethics Research at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. The competition invited teams of two to five students to submit solutions to global problems.

Zach Mariani '18 saw that Ben had liked a Facebook post about the Ideas for Action competition; interest piqued, the two reached out to Lauren Pelosi '18, a friend and able wordsmith.

"With Zach's acumen in finance and credit markets and Lauren's skill as a writer, I knew we had the

potential to develop and present a very good proposal," says Ben.

And they did. The team drafted a proposal for a pilot program blending modern microfinance, traditional agriculture techniques, and ongoing education to optimize the productivity of small-scale farmers in Ethiopia. The problem in Ethiopia is staggering, but not unusual in developing nations: Approximately 80 percent of the population is engaged in agriculture, yet 31 million Ethiopians suffer from malnutrition and food insecurity.

"A large number of Ethiopians engage in subsistence farming and livestock production," Ben explains, "but they lack the education and monetary resources they need to yield harvests of more than six to nine months worth

of food for themselves and their families. There is not enough to get them through the year, let alone excess to sell in markets. They have no way to generate income that could be reinvested in their farms, so the cycle continues."

Zach adds, "We chose to center the project in Ethiopia primarily because of the stability of the Ethiopian Birr deflation (in comparison to the dollar), and the steady GDP and population growth. I brainstormed ideas on how to reliably get capital into our model, Ben was able to help come up with ideas on how to put the money to good use, and Lauren was able to help us merge the two in writing."

The model, which proposes improving agricultural productivity by bringing small-scale irrigation and water-lifting devices to the region, relies on the coordination and cooperation of government



▲ Ben Laufer '18, Lauren Pelosi '18, and Zach Mariani '18 were honored for their work in the World Bank Ideas for Action competition.

agencies in Ethiopia, and the initial financial backing of philanthropic organizations. Ben, Zach, and Lauren met weekly over the course of four to five months, constantly researching, refining, and reassessing their proposal.

"As is true with most good ideas, the key was in presentation," says Lauren. "My role on the team was mainly to help articulate our complicated economic ideas. In communicating the modifications of standing economic concepts that we were proposing, and with so many parts to our long-term plan, it was important to write well and concisely. We needed to mix precision with succinctness and completeness with clarity."

The team was named one of six finalists in the inaugural Ideas for Action 14–18 competition. All of the finalists saw their papers published online by

Wharton, with an abstract published in documentation related to the annual proceedings of the World Bank.

They also traveled to Penn, where they presented their proposals to a panel of senior fellows and professors at Wharton, as well as World Bank dignitaries.

"When Ben and Zach invited me to help them develop an essay dealing with the economics behind sustainable farming in Ethiopia, I was initially apprehensive," Lauren says. "I considered myself to be more of a writer than a businesswoman; to me, economics and humanities were distinct schools of thought. Ideas for Action and our trip to Wharton taught me that interests in the two are not mutually exclusive—they're in fact inextricable. A good plan for global change requires an empathetic understanding of others' conditions. It requires cooperation. When an idea is being put to action, it requires clear and persuasive argumentation."

Borlaug Bound

Ben, Zach, and Lauren have continued to work on their proposal, building on suggestions from the panel that heard their presentation at Penn. They were also invited to judge next year's competition. But Ben felt compelled to continue exploring the common question raised throughout the team's Ideas for Action research: How can countries continue sustainable development and still decrease their dependence on foreign aid? He initiated a new project, this time studying Rwanda. It was that research that earned Ben an invitation to the World Food Prize event in Iowa.



Ben Laufer '18 was chosen by his peers to present to World Food Prize dignitaries and the World Food Prize event in Iowa this fall.

Established in 1986 by Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Norman E. Borlaug, the World Food Prize is a prestigious international award given each year to honor the achievements of agricultural scientists working to end hunger and improve the food supply. It is often referred to as the “Nobel Prize for Food and Agriculture.” Over the past 30 years, the World Food Prize has been awarded to laureates from Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, China, Denmark, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Israel, Mexico, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Laureates are named each year at the Borlaug Dialogue International Symposium, held last year in Des Moines, Iowa.

“During my first two days in Iowa I was able to attend a number of the Dialogue presentations. I listened to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, the president of the African Development Bank, the current president of Mauritius, and Joyce Banda, the former president of Malawi, considered the most powerful woman in Africa,” says Ben.

The program culminated in the youth summit, where 200 student delegates prepared proposals. Ben was chosen by his group to present their findings before a panel of 75 dignitaries that included several World Food Prize laureates, the former president of Malawi, the president of The World Food Prize, distinguished scientists, and university professors.

“These experiences have helped spark a greater passion for learning in general,” he says. “I came back from the conferences eager to do more research and reading on the topics and sustainability initiatives I heard about there. It has also made me more appreciative of the situation I am in, and reminds me how fortunate I am. While I am not certain whether I want to work on the policy side or the research side of sustainable development and economics, or sustainable development and environmental advocacy, I do know I want to go into a field dedicated service—a field where I have the opportunity to make some kind of a global impact.” ■



Sonny An '17, Daniel Yi '18, Yejin Kim '18, and Portia Wang '18 were awarded the bronze medal at the Yale Physics Olympiad in October.

Exponential Success

TAFT'S MATH AND SCIENCE scholars are making their mark throughout New England in a series of high-level competitions, including the annual Math Bash, the prestigious Harvard-MIT Math Tournament (HMMT), and the Yale Physics Olympiad.

Competing as the Galois Group, Taft's math team took on competitors from Choate, Hotchkiss, and Kent at this year's Math Bash. Taft fielded four, four-person teams, two at the advanced level and two intermediate squads. The event pits top math students against each other and the clock, and features individual and group events. Sonny An '17 took top honors in the advanced-level individual round. An is a repeat winner in the individual event, setting the standard with his first win as a lower mid in 2013. The Galois Group edged out Hotchkiss in the advanced-division Guts round, earning An, Yejin Kim '18, Peem Lerputtipongporn '17, and Daniel Yi '18 the meet's top honors.

HMMT is one of the largest high school mathematics competitions in the world. The tournament draws bright students from around the globe,

including top scorers from national and international math olympiads.

“The competition is pretty rugged at this event,” says team coach and Taft math teacher Joseph Zipoli '84. “It draws a very talented, international field. And the problems the team wrestled with were extremely difficult.”

The tournament includes three components: individual tests, the Team Round, and the Guts Round. Taft had its best result in the Team Round, where they scored in the top fifth of the nearly 1,000 competitors.

Fifty teams from across the Northeast competed at Yale University's 19th annual Physics Olympiad in October. Sonny An '17, Daniel Yi '18, Yejin Kim '18, and Portia Wang '18 were awarded the bronze medal after five rounds of competition.

The Olympiad is a pentathlon: Each of the five events is designed to test students' knowledge of physics as well as their creativity and ability to work as a team. The timed events this year required competitors to complete complex calculations, construct functional machinery, and applied general physics knowledge. ■

Stepping Into the Conversation

ALL AMERICAN BOYS authors Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely visited Taft in October for Morning Meeting and Q&A sessions around campus.

Taft's all-school summer reading selection, *All American Boys* is the story of perspective—of how bias and experience both inform and misinform. Reynolds, who is black, penned the voice of Rashad, a black teen falsely accused of shoplifting. Kiely, who is white, gives voice to Quinn, the white teen who witnessed the event and the violence that followed. And in Bingham Auditorium, as they did in the book, Reynolds and Kiely told their stories, from their perspectives, informed by their experiences.

“It's important for us to frame it for you so that you see these two perspectives that fueled the book,” said Kiely. “Our daily lives are part of a bigger story, and we can't forget that we all have a

role to play in that bigger story....We are hoping that by reading a book like this you choose to step into that story, into the conversation. That you will choose to not look away. That you will choose to say, ‘How do I listen in a way

that I haven't listened before?’ We can't learn to love each other if we haven't learned to listen first. We can't learn to respect each other if we haven't learned to listen first. All we are asking is that people just find the courage to listen.” ■



► All-school summer reading selection authors Jason Reynolds (left) and Brendan Kiely visited Taft this fall.

▼ Students engaged in spirited conversation with authors Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely over lunch at Taft.





Taft Joins Area Colleges in Campus Sustainability Week Initiative

THE TAFT COMMUNITY took part in a weeklong initiative designed to both raise awareness about environmental issues and actively engage in sustainability-driven activities.

“Our program was both modeled after and coincided with a statewide higher education collaboration,” explains Taft’s Director of Environmental Stewardship Carly Borken. “Colleges and universities across Connecticut hosted events throughout the week that not only stimulated conversation but also built connections and inspired action. It is a concept and opportunity that lent itself well to our own community and to Taft’s commitment to sustainability.”

At the college level, the event is coordinated by the Connecticut Alliance for Campus Sustainability. At Taft, Borken worked closely with student EcoMons to plan a week that combined fun with learning, while shining a light on campus sustainability. The program included a Morning Meeting and conversations with Elizabeth Kolbert, author of a Taft summer reading selection, *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*; a debate around the question, “Can capitalism and the climate ever be friends?”; a silent dance; an energy audit competition; and movie screenings.

Teams of students also sent original fashion made from trash and other natural materials down the Bingham “runway” during Taft’s first “Trashion Show.”

“It was an opportunity for a little fun and a lot of creativity. It allowed us to celebrate art and individuality while embracing thoughtful recycling and sustainability,” Borken says. ■

◀ Marley Thompson '18 models a dress made from trash and sustainable materials in the Sustainability Week Trashion Show. Thompson crafted the dress along with Louise Gagnon '18 and Hannah Kallin '18.

▶ Elizabeth Kolbert, author of a Taft summer reading selection, *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*, visited Taft for Morning Meeting and extended conversations during Sustainability Week. From left, science teachers Dr. Amanda Benedict, Carly Borken, Kolbert, and science teachers Jim Lehner and Mike McAloon.

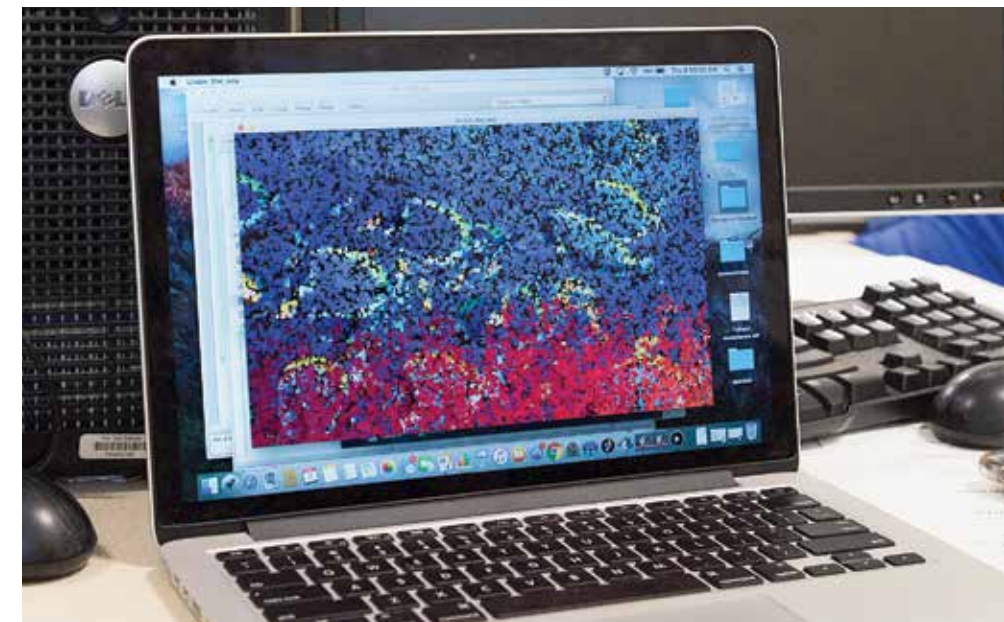


At the Intersection of Art and Science

TAFT STUDENTS ARE COMBINING creativity and design with mathematics and science to produce animated imagery known as generative art. The algorithmic animations were the first project Michael Scaramuzzino’s students tackled in his yearlong Advanced Placement (AP) Computer Science course.

“This is truly an intro-level AP course,” explains Scaramuzzino. “Most students arrive with little or no prior coding experience. The goal is for them to be fluent in Java by the end of the school year.”

Generative art is built using complex computer algorithms—well-defined processes and procedures structured for problem solving. The art visually represents the optimization of



Raya Petrova '17 creates “new worlds” using generative art.

those processes in the form of music, graphics, or design elements. For Scaramuzzino’s students, it is a good place to begin learning about code.

“The images the students used in their animations came from a pre-built library,” says Scaramuzzino. “This library allowed them to see a high-level view of object-oriented programming. Now we are pulling back the veil so students can see the level of complexity that was occurring behind the scenes as well as start to understand

how this computer graphics library was developed. The next project requires students to use that knowledge to program several classes that will act as blueprints for building their own virtual objects.”

Raya Petrova '17 came into the course with no real experience in computer science. At home in Bulgaria, she briefly studied Pascal, a somewhat outdated programming language. Raya’s interest in art, combined with a fascination with computer animation work being done

by both Pixar and Dreamworks Studios, led her to Scaramuzzino’s classroom.

“My idea for the animation was to copy the motion of ripples in water. I wanted to play with the structure, and manipulate variables to replicate the motion,” explains Petrova. “I was able to do so by manipulating oscillation in the ‘y’ direction, and in the ‘x’ direction.”

The end result of Petrova’s work is an animation featuring fish moving back and forth in a dappled and variegated sea. Petrova is now applying her understanding of object variables to creating the hierarchical information sets that will drive code representing her family.

“There are different variables for each ‘class,’” says Petrova, “family, grandparents, parents, and siblings. Some inherent attributes, like age and gender, will trickle down through the class levels. Other variables will be class-specific, and will be added using different methods and aspects of code.”

And although computer science is new to Petrova, she plans to continue her studies when she moves on to college next year.

“That I am creating a new world by just typing letters and numbers is amazing,” says Petrova. “It is just incredible.” ■

Living Our Motto: THE ULTIMATE TAFT TRADITION

MEMBERS OF THE TAFT COMMUNITY, nearly 700 strong, fanned out across greater Watertown for the 22nd consecutive year in a tradition of service and selflessness that dates back to 1995 and embraces our 125-year old school motto.

“This year we wanted students to think not only about the idea of service but also about the idea of community,” says French teacher Sarah Gray, who coordinated the October 24 event. “We share our time and talents because we value both the community that surrounds us and our relationships with its members.” ■



THE 81ST ANNUAL SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS, one of Taft's most beloved seasonal celebrations, took place in Woodward Chapel December 13.

Celebrating the Life of the Mind CUM LAUDE INDUCTIONS

“THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS we do here in a given week,” Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78 recently told the Taft community. “We play sports, put on plays and concerts, serve in the local community, and take part in clubs. But obviously we are first and foremost a school. And at the center of student life, and where we devote the majority of our hours and energy, is our academic classes and the life of the mind. Today is the day we celebrate that.”

Cum Laude Society induction honors the “highest levels of scholarship on campus,” noted MacMullen. “It is reflective of Taft's robust and vibrant academic life.”

Taft's newest Cum Laude Society members, all seniors, are: Seung Hwan (Sonny)

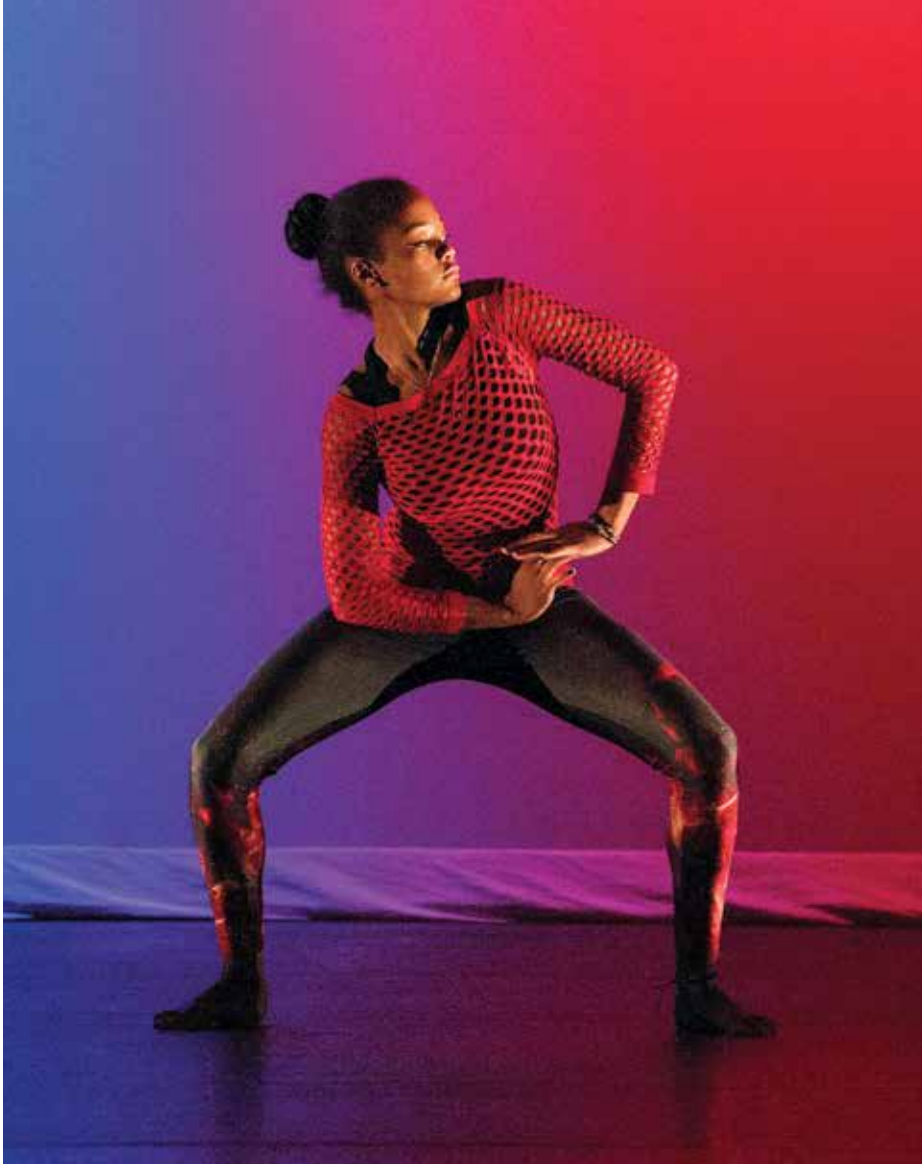


An, Karalyn Rose Baird, Riley Kathleen Bragg, Lauren Grace Fadiman, Eugenie Reid Greeff, Gabriela Nicole Gura, Joseph Han, Zemima Hossain, Zygmantas

Jievaltas, Sophie Valentine Kamhi, Marisa Nicole Mission, Juste Marija Simanauskaite, Luke Austin Sommer, Sydney Trevenen, and Cristofer Zillo ■

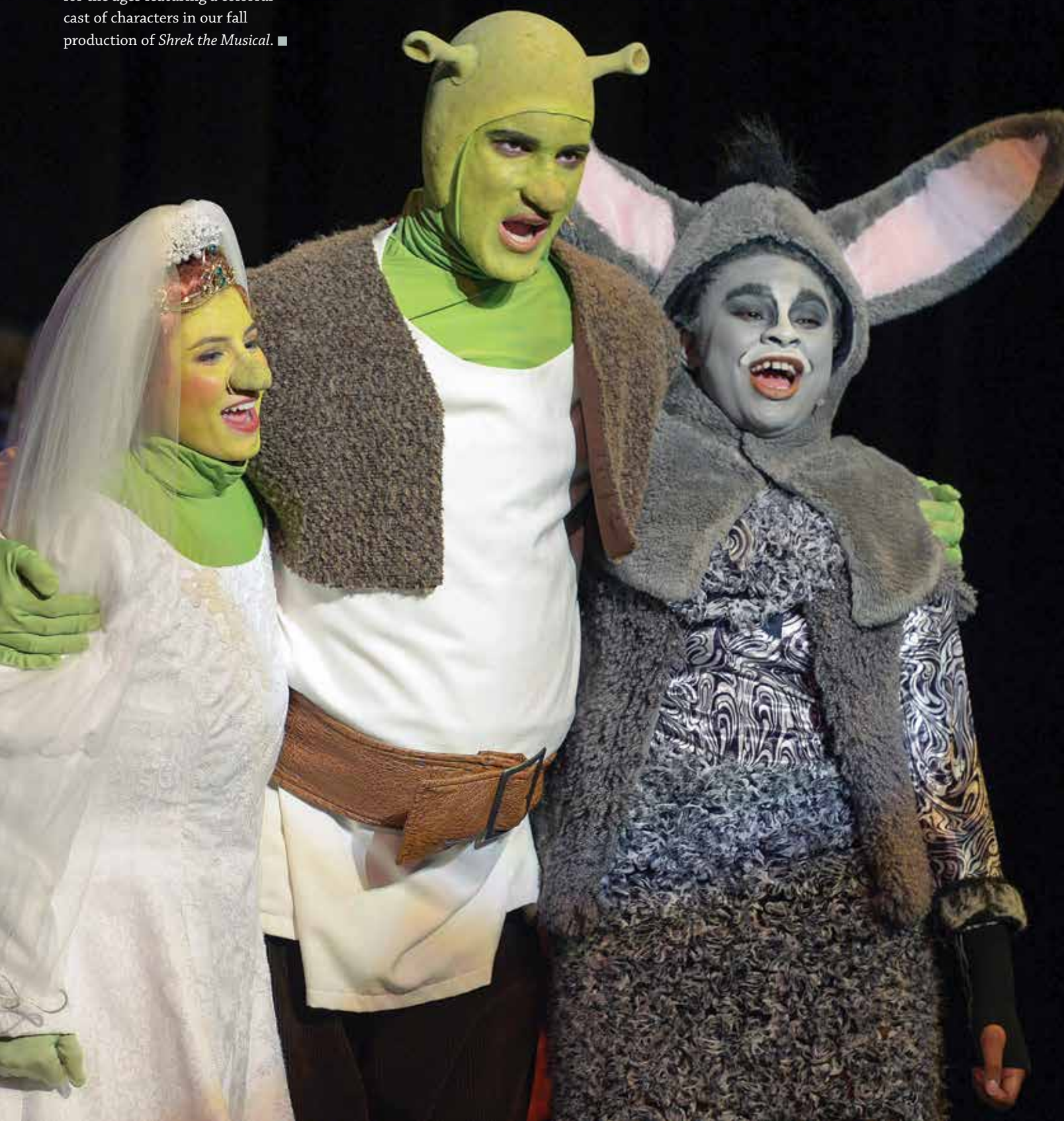
Fall Dance Concert

Students in Sarah Surber's fall semester dance programs performed in a culminating fall concert in December. ■



Shrek

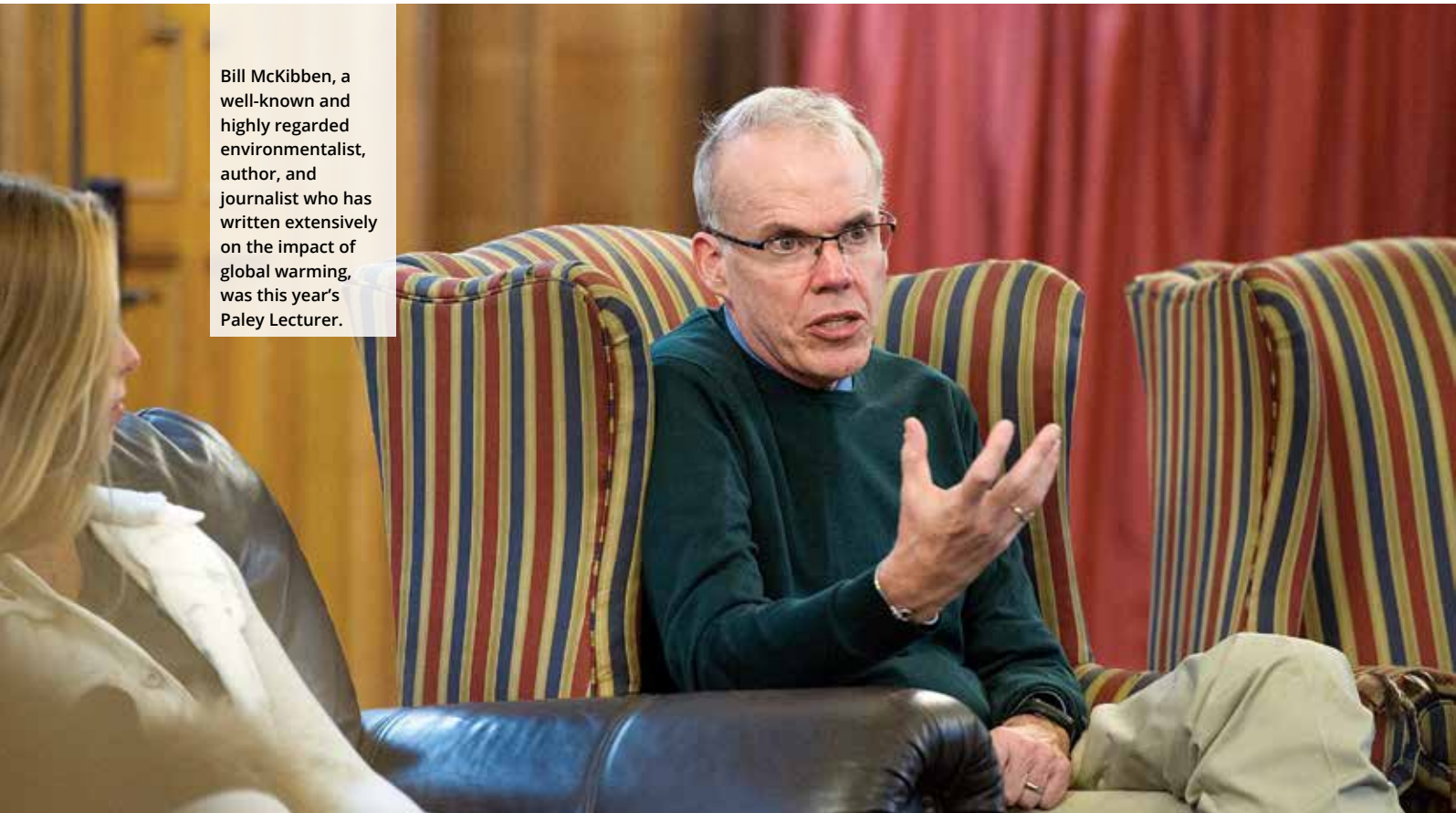
WHAT BEGAN AS A LONELY
TALE OF LIFE in an ogre's
swamp blossoms into love story
for the ages featuring a colorful
cast of characters in our fall
production of *Shrek the Musical*. ■



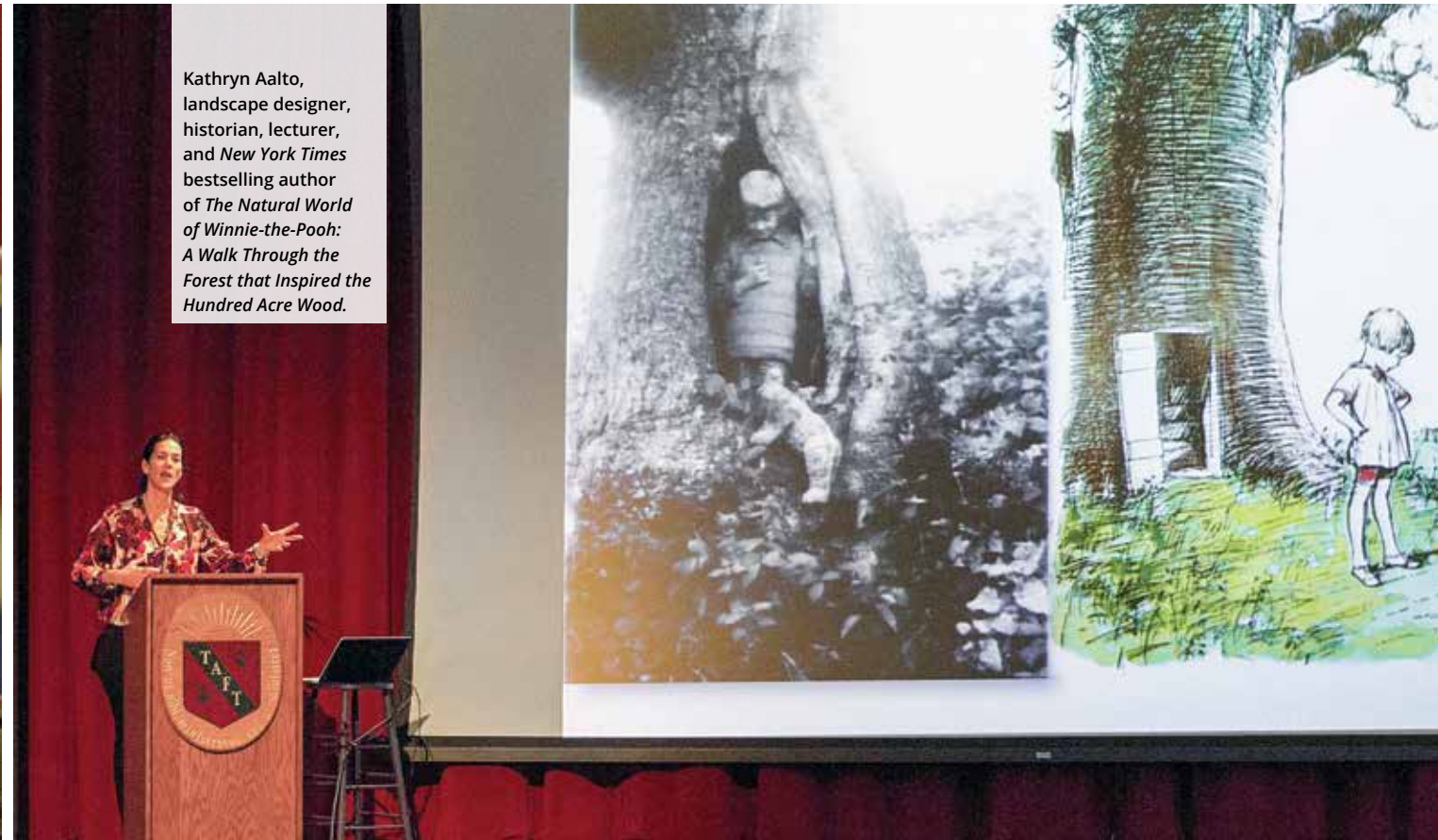
Morning Meetings

Taft welcomed renowned faces, familiar faces, and fascinating faces to morning meeting during the fall term, including:

To see these and other Morning Meeting presentations, visit our Vimeo channel at <https://vimeo.com/taftschoo>



Bill McKibben, a well-known and highly regarded environmentalist, author, and journalist who has written extensively on the impact of global warming, was this year's Paley Lecturer.



Kathryn Aalto, landscape designer, historian, lecturer, and *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Natural World of Winnie-the-Pooh: A Walk Through the Forest that Inspired the Hundred Acre Wood*.



Beloved former Taft School teacher and navy fighter pilot Colin Farrar.



A prison reform panel made up of, from left, Waterbury Mayor Neil O'Leary; George Camp '56, Connecticut co-executive director of the Association of State Correctional Administrators and president of the Criminal Justice Institute; and Connecticut Department of Corrections Commissioner Scott Semple.



Ibram Kendi, author and assistant professor of African-American history at the University of Florida.

“The relationships within the team are really strong and special.”

—Head Coach
Ozzie Parente



The World’s Game Brings a World to Taft

THE BOYS’ VARSITY SOCCER TEAM had an impressive season with an overall record of 17–2. They were Founders League Champions, New England semifinalists, and the Western New England Prep School Soccer Association (WNEPSSA) Class A runner-up. Having one of the most successful soccer records was a major accomplishment, but this season it was more about the team itself—about an internationally rich team where players brought not only their soccer skills to the field, but also various parts of their cultures and different playing styles, all of which

helped make the team stronger.

The team represented six countries, including Zimbabwe, Ghana, Spain, Jamaica, Canada, and the U.S.

“Every day at practice you would hear multiple languages on the field,” Head Coach Ozzie Parente says. “I would just sit back in awe. We have two boys from Zimbabwe who are speaking to each other in Ndebele. There are two boys from Spain, and our assistant coach, Phillip Koshi, teaches Spanish, so they’re speaking in Spanish. We have a boy from Montreal, and our goal-keeper spent some time in France, so

they are speaking French together.”

The players embraced each other’s unique qualities, which translated into success on the field and genuine friendships off the field. For example, the three teammates from Africa were invited to spend Thanksgiving at a different player’s house. One went to New Jersey, one went to New York City, and one went to Maine. The way the players cared for each other was also evident in smaller gestures, like when the team got together for Sammed Bawa’s birthday. He’s from Ghana and hadn’t been home or spoken to his parents since arriving

◀ Captains-elect for the 2017 season, Mthabisi Tshuma ‘18 and Carter Veley ‘18.

▶ Miguel Ridruejo ‘17, Mthabisi Tshuma ‘18, Jay Lavallée ‘17, and Matteo Mangiardi ‘17 celebrate after a goal.

▼ Several teammates having fun after a game.



▼ Marvin Sibanda ‘19, Carter Veley ‘18, and Beau Bradley ‘17 in high spirits on the field.



at Taft, so the team surprised him with a cake and sang Happy Birthday.

“Outside observers see this amazingly talented product on the field, but the relationships within the team are really strong and special. That’s what I’ll remember in addition to the performances on the field,” says Parente.

While part of the success this past season is attributed to individual players blending their talents to form an inclusive and powerful team, another contributing factor was the senior leadership. In addition to co-captains Michael Hennessey and Matteo Mangiardi, there were 13

other seniors who were ready to step up. They were ambitious about what they wanted to accomplish, and it paid off.

For the first time since 2009, the boys’ varsity soccer team beat Hotchkiss. They won against Loomis 2–1 (the game that would secure the Founders League Championship) by scoring two goals in the last five minutes. And the Rhinos came from behind to defeat Salisbury, Kent, and Deerfield.

The seniors set the bar high and proved to be good role models in the hallways as well.

“I’m really proud of the way the team

conducts themselves,” notes Parente. “I think they make great contributions to the school. They behave humbly. They care about Taft and want to be part of the school in other ways. They are really close-knit without being exclusive.”

The 23 boys who laced up their cleats this past fall were hardworking and ready to compete. They embraced each other, challenged themselves, and wanted to win. With three of the four top goal scorers coming back, Parente is sure the younger players are eager to carry that on. ■

—Hillary Dooley

For more on the fall season, please visit www.taftsports.com

Fall Sports WRAP-UP

BY STEVE PALMER

Photography by Robert Falcetti



Michael Hennessy '17 makes a strong defensive play against Deerfield Academy.

Boys' Soccer 17-2

FOUNDERS LEAGUE CHAMPIONS
NEW ENGLAND CLASS A
SEMIFINALISTS

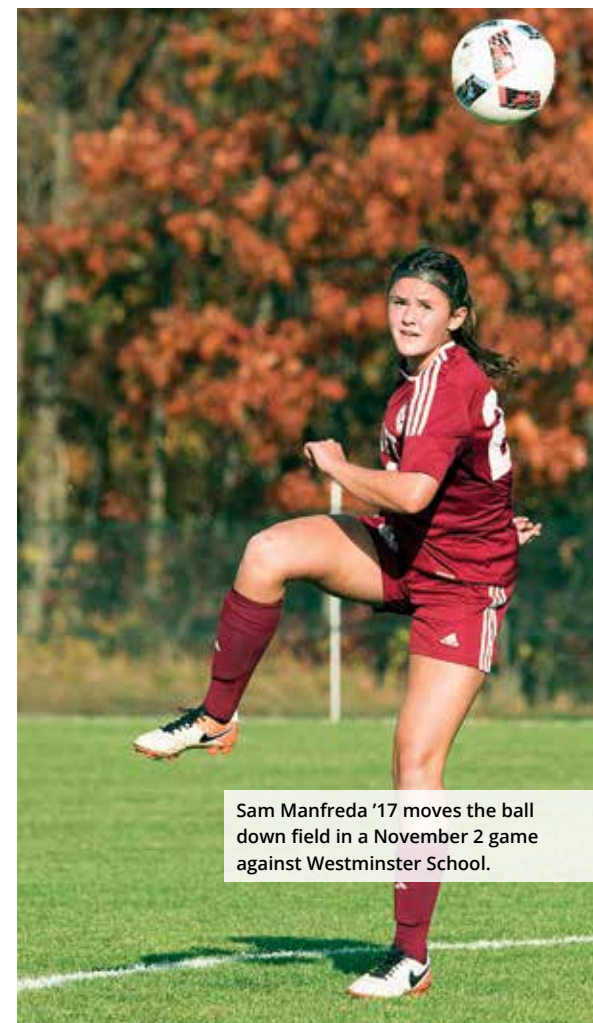
In what was one of the most successful seasons in team history, Taft went undefeated in and dominated the Founders League (8-0), and reached the New England Semifinals before falling 1-0 to the eventual champion, Berkshire. Taft began the season with an eight-game winning streak, highlighted by convincing victories over Avon Old Farms (6-1), Deerfield (5-1), and Andover (3-1). After Taft's lone regular-season loss to Berkshire, the Big Red closed out the regular season with another eight-game winning streak. In the process, Taft earned comeback victories over Salisbury and Kent, both by a score of 2-1. Taft then shut out Choate 3-0 on the road to keep its undefeated Founders League record intact before clinching the championship with a 2-1 road victory against Loomis. After trailing for 85 minutes at Loomis, Taft scored twice in the final five minutes to win the title. Taft finished the regular season with a 5-0 thrashing of rival Hotchkiss and then cruised to a 6-1 home victory over Loomis in the New England quarterfinals. The offense on this team was lethal, tallying 75 goals in 19 games, led by Matteo Mangiardi '17 (21 goals, 6 assists); Mthabisi Tshuma '18 (17 goals, 8 assists); Marvin Sibanda '19 (12 goals, 6 assists); and Carter Velez '18 (5 goals, 6 assists). Postgraduates Beau Bradley '17 (4 goals, 1 assist) and

Michael Candelori '17 (2 goals, 13 assists) were important additions to the team, while Miguel Ridruejo '17 and A.J. Barre '17 patrolled the midfield for the Rhinos. Defensively, Taft got outstanding contributions from Michael Hennessy '17 and John Nugent '17, and goalkeepers Eric Sodero '17 (11 wins) and Jacques Pellet '17 (6 wins) were excellent on the season.

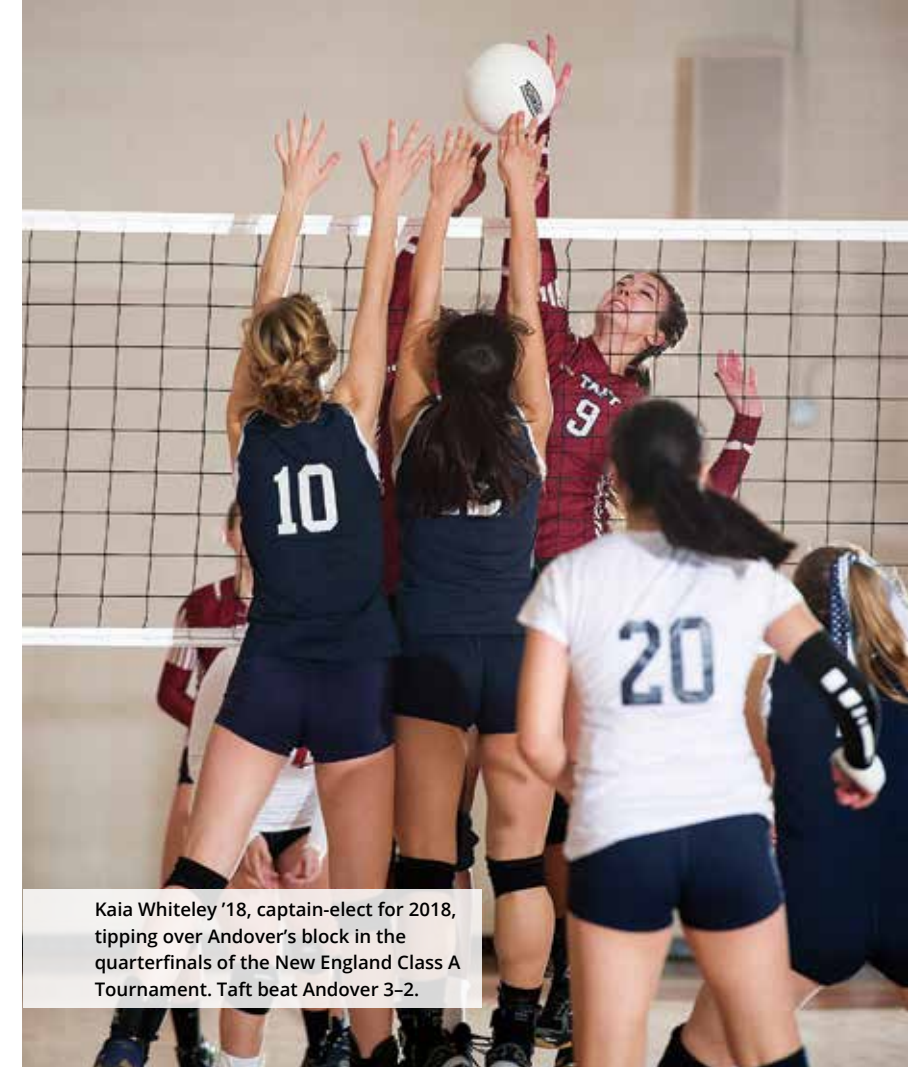
Girls' Soccer 14-3-1

NEW ENGLAND CLASS A
QUARTERFINALISTS

With a strong group of returners and leadership from co-captains Sam Manfreda '17 and Eliza Denious '17, Taft powered through the season to post a 14-2-1 record and earn the No. 4 seed in the Class A New England Tournament along with the program's first home game in the playoffs in over 15 years. The Rhinos were strong offensively and defensively, scoring 54 goals while allowing just 14 goals. Sojung



Sam Manfreda '17 moves the ball down field in a November 2 game against Westminster School.



Kaia Whiteley '18, captain-elect for 2018, tipping over Andover's block in the quarterfinals of the New England Class A Tournament. Taft beat Andover 3-2.

Kim '17 (10 goals, 4 assists, WWNEPSSA All-Star, CT All-State Prep Team), Paisley Eagan '18 (15g, 5a, New England All-Star, CT All-State Prep Team), and Emilee Adami '19 (8g, 6a, WWNEPSSA All-Star) had breakout seasons on the offensive end. The defense, led by Taylor Jacobs '18, Juliana Yamin '18, Mary Alice Ewing '18, and goalkeeper Katie Piechnik '18, posted seven shutouts, including a stretch of four consecutive wins to end the regular season. Grace Adams '17 and Kristin Manfreda '18 controlled the center of the field for Taft, while four-year team members Riley Bragg '17 and Kyra Thomas '17 both earned All-Founders League distinctions. The team played their best soccer down the stretch, going 8-0 in the final eight games of the season with 30 goals for and just 2 against. That stretch included wins against strong teams from Williston (4-0), Kent (5-1), and Hotchkiss (2-0). Taft would eventually fall in the first round of the tournament to Nobles, the team they defeated in the first round last year.

Taft Volleyball 16-4

NEW ENGLAND CLASS A
NEPSAC FINALIST

In the past 16 years, Taft volleyball has gone to the New England Tournament 13 times, with four trips to the championship finals. This year, it was No. 1-ranked Choate vs. No. 2-ranked Taft in the finals. Both teams were evenly matched all season long with identical 16-3 records and split head-to-head contests. In the penultimate regular-season match, Taft found itself down 0-2 before rallying for a dramatic 3-2 win at home, but that pattern was not to be repeated in the final, as a tired Taft team lost the title to Choate. However, the final loss did not define this team that brought the school together, displaying so much school spirit in Cruikshank Gym, especially during the night game vs. Convent of the Sacred Heart, a raucous 3-2 victory. In early September, the Rhinos captured back-to-back victories over Andover (3-0) and



Recently retired Taft math teacher Don Padgett visited the boys' cross country team and coaches Al Reiff, Stuart Guthrie, and Steve Palmer at the New England Cross Country Championships at Phillips Exeter Academy.

Exeter (3–0) to kick off the season. From that first set of wins through to the final game, the team theme of “Our House, Our Time” motivated the girls. Captain Karalyn Baird ’17 won the Volleyball Award as well as earning New England All-Star recognition. She was joined on the All-Star team by seniors Tise Ben-Eka ’17, Mary Collette ’17, and Kaia Whiteley ’18. Founders League honors went to Collette and Ben-Eka. All of the returners of this team were recognized by the AVCA All-Academic Team for outstanding achievement in the classroom.

Boys’ Cross Country 0–7

Taft boys’ cross country went about the difficult task of rebuilding after graduating a core of its varsity runners the previous year. This season was led by co-captains Calvin Palmer ’18, the lone varsity returner, and Zygimantas Jievaltas ’17. The team had some close, hard-fought races, but was unable to squeak out a dual-meet win; however, the 2016 season was marked by individual accomplishment, pride, and perseverance, and several harriers broke into the top 30 performances by Taft runners on the home course, including Nick Mortimer ’18 (19:13), Philip Huang ’18 (19:00), Jievaltas (18:46), Nick Carolan

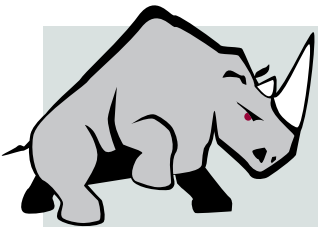
’17 (18:07), Palmer (17:12, 5th), and Ben Roberts ’18 (16:30, 1st). The season was capped by a strong performance at the NEPSA Division I Championships at Exeter, as every varsity runner had a career or season personal record, beating out Avon, Brunswick, Milton, and Trinity-Pawling. Roberts had a breakout first year in the sport as Founders League All-Star (8th place) and All-New England honors (12th place). Additionally, he set the home course record for a Taft athlete (16:30) and was the recipient of the John B. Small Award. Palmer and Roberts will lead next year’s team as co-captains.

Girls’ Cross Country 2–6

The season record of 2–6 does not reflect the achievements of the 2016 girls’ cross country team. Racing a tough dual-meet schedule against several non-Founders League teams, the girls faced close losses throughout the season, but ended up earning regular-season victories over Miss Porter’s and Kent before placing fourth at the Founders League Championships. The successes of the team were owed to the pack running of Hanna Murphy ’18, Juste Simanauskaite ’17, Claudia Vira ’18, and Caroline Winicki ’17, who



Emma Vermynen ’17 takes a shot against Sacred Heart School.



FALL ATHLETIC AWARD WINNERS

- | | |
|--|--|
| John B. Small Award
(Boys’ Varsity Cross Country)
Ben Roberts ’18 | Black Football Award
Alex Akpata ’17 |
| Girls’ Cross Country Award
Caroline Winicki ’17
Juste Simanauskaite ’17 | Cross Football Award
Eric Holzman ’17 |
| Volleyball Award
Karalyn Baird ’17 | Livingston Carroll
Soccer Award
Michael Hennessy ’17
Matteo Mangiardi ’17 |
| Field Hockey Award
Katherine Queally ’17
Emma Vermynen ’17 | 1976 Girls’ Soccer Award
Sam Manfreda ’17
Eliza Denious ’17 |

traded places between first and fourth all season. Talented newcomers Katie Bootsma ’20 and Michelle Lian ’20 added welcome depth and scored for the varsity team in each meet. Murphy and Vira were named Founders League All-Stars, due to their top finishes throughout the season, while Simanauskaite and Winicki received the Girls’ Cross Country Award for demonstrating the most dedication and enthusiasm for the team. Next year’s team will be captained by Murphy.

Field Hockey 5–9–2

There were a lot of close games for this talented team, including seven one-goal losses. The highlight of the season was one of these hard-fought losses, a last-minute 3–4 battle versus rival Greenwich Academy. Taft led 3–1 for most of the game and was the only team to score three goals on the team that went on to be the No. 1 seed in the NEPSAC tournament. Key wins came against a very strong Ethel Walker team (3–1), which was also a No. 1 seed in the NEPSAC tournament, and against the eventual D2 New England champion Canterbury (1–0). Co-captains Emma Vermynen ’17 and Katherine Queally

’17 were central to the team’s success on and off the field, and both were chosen to be Western New England All-Stars. The team leader in goals and assists was Liv Santini ’19, while Anna Rasmussen ’17 and Nina Garfinkel ’17 were chosen to be Founders All-Stars for their hard work and dedication. A number of talented young players will return next year, including goalie Phoebe Autio ’18 and center mid Eva Baurmeister ’19, who is the first under-classman elected captain in over a decade.

Football 3–5

The team bonded quickly in a great scrimmage against a talented Lawrence Academy team, leading to hopes of competing for the league title. Unfortunately, lack of execution and attention to detail led to a tight loss to Salisbury during week one and an overtime loss by one point to Williston in week two. The Rhinos rebounded by beating an undefeated Brunswick team on their home field, 29–26. It was Brunswick’s first loss on their home field since 2013. Taft then struggled through some inconsistent play to find its rhythm to win the last two games, a result of great senior and postgraduate leadership. Highlights of

COACHES RECEIVE CONNECTICUT AWARDS



Rob Madden, head coach of girls' varsity soccer and co-director of athletics, as well as an admissions officer, was named the Connecticut Prep School Coach of the Year.



Ozzie Parente, head coach of boys' varsity soccer, upper mid class dean, and science teacher, was named Connecticut Soccer Coaches Association Prep School Class L Coach of the Year.

these two wins include defeating Berkshire at home 47–7 and coming from behind to defeat rival Hotchkiss 34–31 in the final game. Captain Alex Akpata ’17 (Black Award and All Founders League) led the team on offense at running back with 923 all-purpose yards and eight touchdowns. Dual-threat quarterback Nolan Grooms ’19 had an outstanding first year at the helm, contributing 16 touchdowns through the air and nine on the ground. Elliott Brown ’17 (All Erickson League) finished with 53 catches in eight games and was one of the most feared wide receivers in the league. Eric Holzman ’17 (Cross Award) had an exceptional senior season by leading the team in touchdown catches (7). Gerrik Vollmer ’17 (All New England) and Moriz Schildorfer ’17 anchored the offensive line from the right side. Vollmer, who will attend a major FBS school, was one of the most dominant linemen in the league. On the defensive side of the ball, Ricardo Llanio ’17 (All Erickson League) led the team with 74 tackles and 11 tackles for a loss. Caleb Martin ’17 provided relentless pass rush with seven sacks and 10 TFLs. Captain Marcus Alleyne ’17 was responsible for covering every team’s top wide receiver, and he provided a spark on kick returns. ■

SOUND

Sweet
LP in

The Working Lives of Four Young Professional Musicians

By Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow '84

MAKING IT IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS IS A DAUNTING TASK, BUT THESE FOUR TAFT ALUMNI ARE CARVING THEIR OWN PATHS AS PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS AND CREATING BEAUTIFUL MUSIC THAT SATISFIES THEIR SOULS.



Mia Borders '05

Mia Borders couldn't escape music growing up in New Orleans. Her mother and grandmother instilled a love of music in her through visits to the New Orleans Jazz Festival every year. Piano lessons gave her a base, though Borders says she hated piano because she wanted to play guitar like the rock stars she watched who played with their "guitars on fire."

sang with Taft's female a cappella group, Hydrox, beginning in her mid year. She co-headed Hydrox her senior year with Elspeth Michaels '05, who created the cover art for Borders' new album.

She's recorded nine albums and appears regularly on stages in New Orleans (including at that same New Orleans Jazz Fest she attended as a

festival, Jazz Fest, and getting to bring my family and have it come full circle, that's pretty awesome," she says.

But don't try to label her as simply a jazz singer. "I don't want to make it easy," she says. "There's a little bit of everything" in her songwriting and performing.

"I really enjoy singing," Borders says. "I sing every day to the point that I irri-

Mia Borders '05 wanted to play guitar like the rock stars she watched who played with their "guitars on fire."

Borders sang in the choir in elementary and middle school, and she sang pretty much everywhere else, too, like right outside her grandmother's bedroom while her grandmother was trying to nap. Her musical tastes ranged from Celine Dion to Aerosmith to Simon and Garfunkel, and that range has served her well since graduating from Taft. Borders

child) and around the country. Her soulful voice and blazing guitar bring a deep intensity to songs she wrote like "Mississippi Rising" and "Mama Told Me." Her performance of Stevie Wonder's "Superstition" at the Kennedy Center will give you goosebumps.

"Just being from New Orleans and playing at this huge international

tate my family. Is everything a song? Yes, it is. Even if I wasn't a professional musician, I would be singing every day."

Performing didn't come naturally, though. She says she had terrible anxiety when she first began performing in public.

"It got to the point that I got sick before every show," she says. A band-mate suggested she wear sunglasses, and now she wears them every time she performs. This has the added benefit of cutting the brightness of the stage lights too, she says. (That by wearing the sunglasses she looks like a female version of Lenny Kravitz has not escaped her notice, either.)

Her most recent album, *Fever Dreams*, came out in September, and she says it's a bit of a departure for her.

"I wanted to make a happier album," she says. "We're experimenting with different sounds, mixing electronic instruments with live instruments. My drummer and I started sending music files back and forth. I'd send him a guitar track, and he'd send me a drums track. I really enjoy it. Emotionally it's a lot lighter. I have my nieces singing on it."

◀ Mia Borders '05
RICK MOORE

▶ The cover for Borders' latest release, *Fever Dreams*, with artwork by classmate Elspeth Michaels '05.



Graham Dickson '03

As a guitarist for the London-based band Crystal Fighters, Graham Dickson is used to playing in front of huge, enthusiastic, rhythmically swaying crowds across Europe. The band's focus is on

it's time to hit the road. Other members have come and gone, including Laura Stockley, whose grandfather was a Basque from Spain. As Stockley's grandfather aged, he began writing an opera that

fall to promote it, Dickson wants to take some time to focus on his other musical love: producing. Dickson has been finding and developing new musical talent, along with fellow Tafties. He started Axis

“The live concert is putting the soul in the actual performance of the music itself.” —Graham Dickson '03

making music for live shows, and the group is a natural next step for fans of the Grateful Dead and Phish (which was headed by Taft's own Trey Anastasio '83).

“We've always focused on our live shows,” Dickson says. “The live concert is putting the soul in the actual performance of the music itself.”

Growing up, Dickson was inspired by his parents, who “forced” him into piano lessons when he was still quite young. At 10 or 11 years old, he was able to start playing guitar and drums, and by his sophomore year at Taft, he started writing music. He says he found at Taft a place that nurtured his creativity, and says Taft's music teacher T.J. Thompson was, and remains, “a huge inspiration.”

“I did an independent study on jazz appreciation with T.J.,” Dickson says, which led to Dickson performing at Morning Meetings and coffee houses and in the Jazz Band. Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78 was also a “huge supporter” of Dickson's musical aspirations, encouraging him to perform whenever possible.

After graduation from Taft, Dickson attended Edinburg University in Scotland, and there he met a guy who went to high school with the two musicians who became the core of Crystal Fighters, Sebastian Pringle and Gilbert Vierich. The three make up the foundation of Crystal Fighters, adding touring members when

included the phrase “crystal fighters,” which the band adopted as their name. Stockley also got the band members interested in Basque music, leading Dickson to learn to play the txalaparta, a historic Basque wooden percussion instrument.

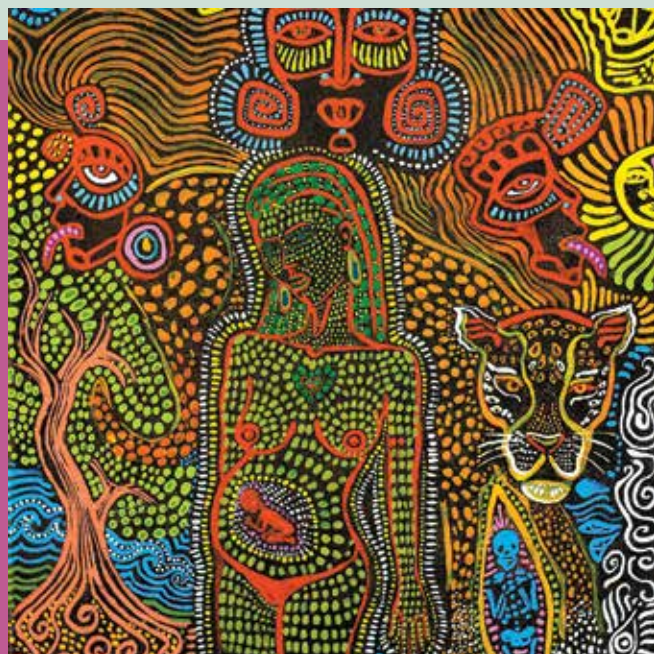
When the band isn't touring, its members return to their home bases, which for Dickson is in Far Rockaway in New York City.

“We all write the music, we all write the songs,” he says. The band's third album, *Everything Is My Family*, was released in September, and after touring this past

Mundi Records with Bill Toce '01; and Caroline Toce '05 also works with them, along with help from Alex Biederman '03.

“It's been really great to be able to put together a studio,” Dickson says. “I always hope to be more behind the scenes in the music. It's just so inspiring. To have bands interested in my input is a real honor. And I love the idea of teaching eventually.

“Music has given me a lot and allowed me to achieve a certain type of lifestyle,” Dickson adds. “I like to try to give back as much as possible now.”



► Graham Dickson '03, performing with Crystal Fighters at Paradiso in Amsterdam. KEVIN SMITH

► *Everything Is My Family*, Crystal Fighters' recent release.



Freddy Gonzalez '05

For a guy who has earned the nickname “Fuego,” you’ll expect a certain fierceness when he performs. And Freddy Gonzalez does not disappoint. His performances on the trombone are hot, spicy, and tinged with an intensity that Gonzalez himself acknowledges.

“I was in a band in the underground hip-hop scene and...I was playing these really angry solos,” he says. “One of the band leaders started calling me Freddy Fuego, and it just sort of stuck.”

Gonzalez comes from a musically talented family. “Everyone in my family plays an instrument,” he says. “My dad plays sax, my uncle plays piano, another one sings—music was always sort of around the family. There’d be a jam circle, a lot of jam sessions. It was always around.”

But Gonzalez didn’t seriously focus on the trombone until after hearing a trombone teacher play the Darth Vader theme from *Star Wars*. Gonzalez laughs when he remembers thinking, “I have to learn how to do that.”

As a student at Taft, Gonzalez played in the Jazz Band under the direction of T.J. Thompson, who encouraged Gonzalez to go to the Berklee College of Music after graduation. But Gonzalez was worried he wouldn’t make a living playing music, so he went to Fordham University and studied more conventional subjects while still performing on the side. A performance in 2006 at the Blue Note in New York City changed his

trajectory. “I lost myself in it,” he remembers. Performing “never felt like work.”

Gonzalez knew he needed to follow his heart so he transferred to Berklee in 2007. At first, he just studied performance, but he began to soak up the influences of all the other musicians around him—absorbing classical, hip-hop, funk, and reggae styles. After a stint at The New School, Gonzalez started teaching in New

a graduate student at Berklee Valencia in Spain. “I spent all my time composing,” Gonzalez says. “For a final master’s project, we had to compose for and conduct a 51-piece orchestra at Abbey Road Studios in London.”

That experience led him to his biggest break, when a representative for Alejandro Sanz, a multi-Latin Grammy-winning performer who

“I’m too jazzy for hip-hop, too hip-hop for jazz.”

—Freddy Gonzalez '05

York City and leading his own band.

“I didn’t want to limit myself,” he says. “I wanted to meet as many people and learn as many skills as I could.”

“I always had these songs in the oven,” he adds. “Other bands asked me for songs. People were always picking my brains for ideas.” Gonzalez started writing more songs, but was somewhat limited in his ability to get gigs.

“If I was a drummer or bass player, bands always need them. Trombone is the third horn to get called to perform. First is sax, then trumpet. Then if there’s a budget, I get called. Trombone is always an afterthought.”

Gonzalez’s creativity led him to put together his own group, the Freddy Fuego X-Tet (because the number of band members is always changing). “I had to give myself a creative outlet, writing the tunes I liked. I never felt like I fit in—I’m too jazzy for hip-hop, too hip-hop for jazz.”

He went back to Berklee, this time as

tours throughout Latin America, came to Berklee Valencia in 2015 looking for a trombonist. Gonzalez has been on the road ever since.

“They said, Hey, do you want to go on tour with this Spanish artist?” Gonzalez recalls with a laugh. “He’s like the largest-selling artist in Latin America. I really lucked out.” Sanz has 18 Latin Grammys, the latest for a DVD that Gonzalez and band members recorded with him in Madrid.

“Touring’s been really cool,” he says. “The pros are getting to travel the world, which is something I never thought I’d do. But my sister and my girlfriend wish they saw me more!”

In his downtime, Gonzalez is working on a book of music theory. Eventually he’d like to teach and spread his love of all different genres to young musicians.

“I really love music I can feel, music that’s telling a story, that has some meaning behind it,” he says.



▶ Trombonist Freddy “Fuego” Gonzalez '05, who also plays flute and piano.

JEN DEV / WWW.JENDEV.US

▶ (inset) Gonzalez, at left, singing background vocals, along with playing trombone, while on tour with Grammy-winning Latin pop superstar Alejandro Sanz. JEN DEV



▲ Trombonist, composer, and studio arranger Sara Jacovino '01 in the recording studio.

Sara Jacovino is a “Jac” of all musical trades. She’s one of the lucky people born with perfect pitch, and she’s an old hand at any number of different instruments. Her father, the pianist Joseph Jacovino, was an early influence, as her bedroom was located right above the family’s piano.

“Performing is about being in the moment. It’s not about planning ahead of time.”

—Sara Jacovino '01

Jacovino started her musical career—as so many young musicians do—learning the piano, then began playing cello and saxophone. She also picked up the trombone, playing it and the saxophone in the Taft Jazz Band.

“I passed out of the piano requirement, so I took up trumpet to learn that,” she says. “I have a few trombones, a bunch of key-boards, and a few saxophones in the closet.”

After getting noticed for her playing ability, Jacovino began composing, influenced by many different genres. “In general, I love taking inspiration from classical” works, she says, “taking one kernel of an idea and developing that. Taking something that’s really simple and short and concise and transforming it.” Like a child’s nursery rhyme.

The simple composition of “Three

Sara Jacovino '01

Blind Mice” has a great jazz version by legendary Jazz Messenger trombonist Curtis Fuller. “I actually got to work with Fuller one on one,” Jacovino says. “He had heard my voice and asked me to write an arrangement for that for big band. It’s definitely slanted to my aesthetic.”

Now living in New York City, Jacovino goes back and forth between composing and performing. “It’s hard to make a living composing,” she says. “There’s not much of a market for it, and I’m a perfectionist, which can be overwhelming and stressful. Performing is about being in the moment. It’s not about planning ahead of time. Now I’m mostly perform-

performs music she’s written at the renowned venue. She plays occasionally with the Diva Jazz Orchestra, an all-female band that performs big band-style music with a jazz touch, a group that former Taft faculty member Rusty Davis introduced her to with a bootleg tape.

“I like to write for big band,” Jacovino says. “You have more control because there’s less improvising. With big band, I treat it like an orchestra. I believe in composition.”

Jacovino knows that improvising is a fundamental element of jazz, and she does improvise when needed. “I approach improvising and playing from a composer’s standpoint,” she admits.

ing, but I still maintain my own personal writing because I need that outlet.”

Being a female trombonist is unusual, Jacovino says. “There are more women who are amazing players coming up, but not the number you find with men,” she says. “When I moved to the city, there weren’t as many female players as there are now. It’s challenging—you are in a mostly guys’ world. But I get hired because the world is mostly based on merit and I get along like ‘one of the guys.’”

“The Broadway scene is difficult to crack regardless of gender,” she adds, “because the work is not as common as it used to be, and you have to be nearly perfect at what you do in order to get and stay hired.”

Jacovino says she enjoys performing in the big band style. She play weekly with the Birdland Big Band, which also

These days, Jacovino is, she says, always looking for work. “It’s a very untraditional field,” she says. “A lot of people sit around waiting to be called. I’ve been lucky. I keep on making work for myself. I’ve figured out a way not to be complacent and find work.”

She owns an entertainment office that has generated plenty of work over the past six years, including playing in wedding bands. “I have been fortunate enough to create work for not only myself but dozens of other area musicians,” Jacovino adds.

Jacovino says making a living as a musician wasn’t always in her plans. “I never thought I’d be in music. I was a math geek, a statistics person. I thought I’d be an actuary!” ■

Bonnie Blackburn-Penhollow '84 is a writer living in Fort Wayne, Indiana.



A promo for the Birdland Big Band, which Sara Jacovino '01 plays in at the legendary NYC jazz club.



New York City-based trombonist, composer, and studio arranger Sara Jacovino '01. ANGEL ROSAD



Jacovino conducting the U.S. Air Force's jazz band, Airmen of Note, when she won the band's Sammy Nestico Award for jazz composition.

See more online about what these four musicians are up to:

Mia Borders '05 www.miaborders.com | Graham Dickson '03 www.facebook.com/crystalfighters
 Freddy Gonzalez '05 www.facebook.com/freddyfuego or www.fuegoxtet.com | Sara Jacovino '01 www.sarajacovino.com

■ Marc Leuthold '80
prepares the Potter
Gallery floor with
a calligraphy-style
painting before
displaying his
sculpture in the spring
2008 exhibit, *Fault*.
YEE-FUN YIN



making ART REAL

For nearly 20 years, the Rockwell Visiting Artists Program
has helped bring the arts to life at Taft.

by Julie Reiff

The flame is mesmerizing. It is so bright that Claudia Black's art students wear protective goggles. They gather around the table in the large, light-filled studio on the top floor of the Arts and Humanities Wing watching visiting glass artist Sally Prasch. Two industrial tanks stand at the corner, connected to the torch. Many of the students have worked

with glass already, but only through fusing in the kiln. This is their first exposure to torch work.

Prasch holds a glass tube at the point of the flame, demonstrating where the flame is hotter or cooler. The glass turns red hot. She takes a rod of colored glass in her other hand and shows the students how color is applied, the greens and blues turning

Hand-blown glass objects created during a visiting artist's class on glassblowing. ROBERT FALCETTI



"From the artists and their work,
I was inspired to try new
techniques in both my
artwork and in my daily life."

Nicole Jarck '15

◀ Glassblower Sally Prasch demonstrates glassblowing technique as a Rockwell Visiting Artist in Claudia Black's class in November. ROBERT FALCETTI



▼ Visiting artist Mark Lewis in the Tremaine Art Studio with an Advanced Placement class in 2014. ANNE KOWALSKI



red in turn. With the color applied, she lifts the still cool end of the tube to her mouth and they watch it expand. The trick, she tells them, is to keep it rotating so it inflates evenly.

She describes relieving strain in glass by firing it in a kiln. She talks about temperature, about the annealing point of the glass, and molecules needing to relax. At one point she asks for two volunteers. She heats a rod of glass and asks the two of them to hold it and walk away from each other quickly. As the rod becomes a thin strand in the middle, she explains how it can carry light, creating fiber-optic cables. The students make it wobble.

Prasch is unique in that her work is both artistic and technical. Trained as a scientific glassblower as well as an artist, she combines both in her work at Syracuse University, where she alters and repairs scientific glass equipment of all kinds according to a project's unique demands, returning to her Massachusetts studio each weekend to work on her own creations.

"I don't know when science and art became separate, because you really need to have both," Prasch says. "They are very similar in mind-set."

A knowledge of chemistry and physics is essential when creating and sculpting glasswork, Prasch says.

When creating glass from scratch, she adds a variety of minerals to alter the composition and color.

In her Morning Meeting presentation she gives students a virtual walk-through of the Corning Museum of Glass, covering its 3,500-year history of utilitarian and artistic uses before showing some of her own work.

"What I hope they take away from this," says Black, who had previously studied with Prasch at Snow Farm (a residential program for art instruction), "is the merging of disciplines, that there is science in art. She makes it real."

"It was amazing," says Clyde

Ramos '18. "The whole idea of an artist working with some of the students is really nice, and actually having that first experience of glassblowing was super cool. It gave me more ideas of what to do with glass as a medium, and then learning the logistics of it."

Dean Pope '17 agrees. "It was pretty awesome. She's probably the most competent artist I've seen in a while. She was really good at helping us all with technique. Her open flame work was incredible. I loved the fact that it was so hands-on and that you could just totally change the shape by blowing in it. I was pretty nervous, but she was just totally in control the whole time."

How does this unique experience, with artists like Prasch, work at Taft? The Rockwell Visiting Artists Program was created in 1997 and often brings two or three artists to campus each year. Visiting artists frequently work directly with students, give a talk at Morning Meeting, or have an exhibit in the gallery.

As of late fall, in addition to Prasch, the school welcomed landscape and wildlife photographer Andy Giordano as a visiting artist. His show, *Going Home*, was exhibited in the Mark W. Potter Gallery, and he discussed his work with photography students, in addition

to giving a Morning Meeting talk.

"The students always come up to the artist after the Morning Meeting talk and want to express their excitement about the work," says art teacher and Potter Gallery Director Loueta Chickadaunce. "They're enthusiastic about the places these artists have been around the world, where they've studied. When they talk in the gallery, the artists have been very generous about how and why they make certain decisions when working on a piece, and that's exactly what I'm looking for when I invite an artist—those who can make great art, but also those who can talk about the process."

"The Visiting Artists Program helped me further develop the skills of artistic observation and critique outside of the art studio."

Witt Fetter '13



Dawn Clements created her mural, *The Living Space of a Taft Girl*, in 2009 while living in a dorm at Taft during the students' vacation. YEE-FUN YIN

► *Handmade Brushes*, Vivian Lu '18



Visiting artist Andy Giordano speaks with a student from a Photography I class in the Potter Gallery during his fall exhibit, *Going Home*. ROBERT FALCETTI

From the artists and their work, I was inspired to try new techniques in both my artwork and in my daily life. In the serene setting of the Potter Gallery, I was afforded space and time to think more deeply, pause, and reflect on and organize my thoughts."

Artist Dawn Clements spent part of her residency sketching an enormous mural of a girls' dorm room while living there temporarily, and exhibited the drawings in the Potter Gallery.

"It was interesting to see how someone from outside of the school interprets the unique Taft life in a creative way," says Jasmine Oh '11, who was studying with Chickadaunce at the time. "I was also inspired by the pure technique of the artist. For Ms. Chic's class, I often drew my own room or objects in the art studio to practice capturing the form, light, and perspective. It was nice to see how other people render the same kinds of objects in a different way."

Some visiting artists are invited because someone in the Taft arts faculty has worked with them before, others by reputation, and a few are alumni artists—like Marc Leuthold '80. In 2008, Leuthold closed the gallery for four days in preparation for his display, covering the floor in thick

watercolor paper and drawing on it in black and brown ink. He then filled the gallery with his wheel sculptures, made of a variety of materials, including bronze, porcelain, and glass.

"The Rockwell visit was great," says Leuthold. "Papering the whole gallery floor was a lot of work. Dawn Clements, who later came as a visiting artist herself, helped, and it took us three long days. Then I turned the lights off and closed my eyes and painted on that beautiful, expensive, flawless paper. After the show, Dawn and I and many students and faculty carefully folded the painting up into a beautiful sculpture. It was the size of a single twin mattress. I still have it

and have never had a chance to display it as a folded paper sculpture. It would be amazing."

During that week, he also ran workshops in sculpture, ceramics, and studio art classes. "Some of the younger students were really shy and self-conscious," says Leuthold, "and that brought me right back to my days as a student. Others were very confident and really enjoyed interacting with me. I was struck by how friendly and charming they were."

"It was also cathartic to come and give back in a positive and well-received way. As a professor, I was somewhat embarrassed because a group of my SUNY students visited

She likes to tell artists who are coming to visit, "Don't worry about being too adult about it. These kids are smart. They get it, and they don't like being talked down to!"

When artist Mark Lewis was in residence for a week in 2014, he gave Chickadaunce's advanced and A.P. art students a critique on their work as well. "He's a teacher, and

he responded so well to them. In a discussion where the ideas were just whirling around the room, he would take this idea and that one and tie them up in a neat bow, and you'd ask yourself, 'How'd he do that?'"

For Nicole Jarck '15, the visiting artists allowed her to experience a variety of artwork without leaving campus. "I really loved Mark Lewis's

work. I remember his Morning Meeting presentation and how much I admired his attention to detail, which led to the unique nature of each of his pieces," she says. Each gallery show offered a new perspective and enriched my education in the visual arts. I was able to broaden my understanding of much more than the aesthetic qualities of artwork.



Rockwell artist Mary Frey works with photography students in Yee-Fun Yin's classroom. ROBERT FALCETTI

▼ Susie Tarnowicz '03, a previous Rockwell artist, teaches an outdoor art class in cyanotype drawing and personal journal-making in May 2015. ROBERT FALCETTI



► Soya Seo '09 works with master printmaker and Rockwell Visiting Artist Sarah Amos in 2007. LOUETA CHICKADAUNCE



◀ A mixed media installation by Rockwell Visiting Artist Bruce Stiglich from his 2011 Potter Gallery show *Accumulation/Hallucination*.

the exhibition. Seeing Taft through their eyes made me all the more grateful for the privileges that my family and Taft gave me.”

“Rockwell artists are an amazing thing at this school,” says Arts Department Head Bruce Fifer. “They give students the opportunity to see what professionals are doing in so many various forms, from glass to photography to painting, and more than just hearing them and seeing them in assembly, they get to do workshops with them and see how it’s done. The program is a wonderful addition to our life here at Taft.”

The Rockwell Visiting Artists Program was an important component of my education at Taft,” writes Witt Fetter '13. “It helped me further develop the skills of artistic observation and critique outside of the art studio. The opportunity to hear from the artists and to see their work allowed students to connect meaningfully with the artwork. The gallery visits and artist talks prepared me for future encounters with art in academic settings beyond Taft. I appreciate the way Taft’s art curriculum encourages students to explore



art from a multitude of angles, as critics, observers and creators.”

“The students hear exactly what they’ve been hearing in class all along,” says Chickadaunce, “but from a new mouth—a sort of confirmation. The most important thing is that they get to know that there really are people who make art and don’t have to starve in a garret somewhere to do it, and that it’s OK to let art be a guide.

You can’t have a good life without art. They get to see people who live with art every day. They can think about a life where they could walk into a studio and ask themselves, ‘What am I going to do today?’ instead of someone else telling them. ■

Julie Reiff is the former editor of this magazine. She is currently working on a piece of fiction.

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—art teacher Loueta Chickadaunce

The Rockwell family who created the fund are great art appreciators.

“My parents purchased some fine art back in the day when it didn’t cost so much,” says Taylor Rockwell '72. “Small works by big names.” His parents were both artists in a way. His mother writes poetry. His father, H.P. Davis “Deever” Rockwell '44, who died in 2014, was an architect who trained with Mies van der Rohe. Taylor says his father, who graduated from MIT, was—for an architect—a pretty good engineer as well. He never designed with anything but pencil and paper.

Deever Rockwell started the Rockwell Visiting Artists Program in 1997 with his brother, Sherburne “Bud” '41, who died in 2003. (Taft’s baseball field, Rockwell Field, was given in their honor by their mother in celebration of her sons’ safe return from World War II.) Emboldened by Deever’s wife, Priscilla, who endowed a poetry series at Vassar, the brothers decided they could do something similar for the fine arts at Taft.



▲ Priscilla Rockwell, whose late husband, Deever, cofounded the Rockwell Visiting Artists Program, and their son Taylor Rockwell '72, right, on campus with art teacher Loueta Chickadaunce. ANNE KOWALSKI

Clayton Blanchard **SPENCER** '56

Clayton Blanchard Spencer '56, faculty emeritus, died on December 9 at his Litchfield, Connecticut, home with family beside him following a long battle with cancer. He leaves his wife of 36 years, Susan; his daughter, Jane '03; sons Jonathan '88 and Oliver '85; daughter Jennie; sisters Carolyn Means, Ginny Giddens, and Franny Means; five grandchildren; and many close friends. Born in Hartford and raised in West Hartford, the son of Clayton Burr Spencer and Francis Means, he was a lifelong resident of Litchfield as well as Watertown, and the Fenwick community in Old Saybrook.

He attended the Kingswood Oxford School prior to Taft. He graduated from Yale University in 1960 with a BA in history, and years later he completed a master's in history from Trinity College, Hartford. Following Yale, he was commissioned an ensign in the U.S. Navy, where he served as a surface warfare officer in the Pacific. Following his naval service, he briefly worked at Hartford Bank & Trust until he went to work at Taft teaching history and serving in the Admissions Office. Known by all as Chip, he was then selected at a very young age to be the headmaster of the all-boys' McTernan School in Waterbury, where he oversaw the merger with the all-girls school, St. Margaret's, now known as the Chase Collegiate School.

After seven years as headmaster, he left to work for Billings & Co., a subsidiary of Advest, for many years. In 1994, he returned to Taft as the director of planned giving, where he remained for over 10 years, leaving a lasting legacy to the school. He loved and cherished his work at Taft, having developed long and lasting friendships with the faculty and staff, as well as countless numbers of donors and contributors. He never considered fundraising to be a job as much as a call to service for the school he loved, attended, and his children attended.

Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78 said, "It is hard—no, it's impossible—to capture what Chip was to Taft in his years of service here. His love for the school was profound, his service inspiring, and his loyalty unwavering. As director of development and director of planned giving, Chip was instrumental in two capital campaigns. He traveled thousands of miles and spoke to hundreds of alumni, all in service of Taft. So much of Taft's strength and growth is linked to this remarkable man, who devoted much of his life to Taft. He was a great colleague, a wonderful friend, and an inspiring leader—and there was no one more fun to work with. There are hundreds of alumni, from Florida to California, and throughout the years, who supported the school because of the efforts of this great man."

"He never considered fundraising to be a job as much as a call to service for the school he loved, attended, and his children attended."

Obituary composed by the Spencer family and adapted by the *Taft Bulletin*.

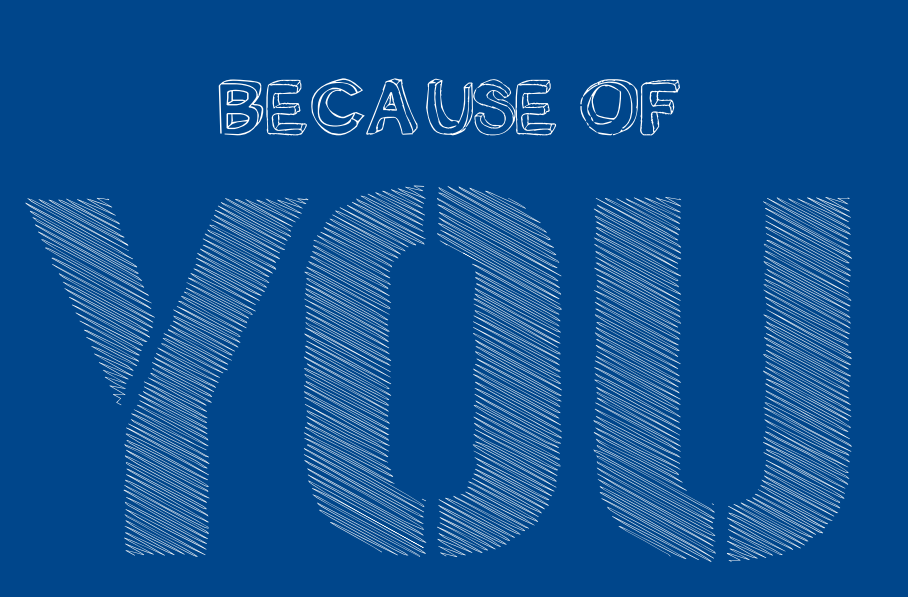


Headmaster Emeritus Lance Odden said, "Chip Spencer was a Taftie through and through. At Taft he really made his mark as director of development and then director of planned giving. In the latter role he was personally responsible for raising over \$30 million of our \$130 campaign of the 1990s, and helped pave the way for Taft's most recent campaign. A friend to all, his boundless enthusiasm for his school inspired remarkable generosity. Beloved by his colleagues in the Alumni & Development Office and throughout the alumni body, he had a profound impact on those who knew him and on his school."

He met his first wife, Letitia Butler, while at Yale and was married for 14 years until her early death. He later married Susan Fischer and enjoyed a long life at their home in Litchfield and summer residence in Fenwick. They spent many hours passionately toiling in the gardens and working the land he loved.

Over the years, his fundraising expertise and reputation led him to be called upon as an advisor and consultant by many organizations. He served on the boards of St. Michael's Parish, the Litchfield Historical Society, the Litchfield Montessori School, Litchfield Preservation Trust, and the Lynde Point Land Trust. An avid sailor, skier, golfer, tennis and paddle tennis player, he was a longtime member of the Litchfield Country Club, the Dauntless Club of Essex, and the Sanctum Club of Litchfield.

A memorial service was held on December 17 at St. Michael's in Litchfield. A separate gravesite service will be held in the spring in Old Saybrook.



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