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A mark of a good school is that when it is challenged, students and faculty are their best: their most caring, resilient, thoughtful, and brave. I know this because I saw this this year and because it has always been the case, and I have been thinking this ever since several years ago someone mailed me, out of the blue, the Student Handbook from 1918, exactly a century ago. Since then, it has sat in my desk drawer, and I have waited for this day to speak of it.

It is a tiny, leather-bound book—you can cup it in your hand—with sepia aged pages, the corners frayed, the spine dried and cracked. It has the same purpose or function of today’s Handbook: it has a welcome from the headmaster, provides the year calendar, summarizes the school rules, lists the clubs—you get it. To hold it, to think of it tucked into the pocket of a blue blazer, is to be carried back 100 years. You find yourself smiling, perhaps a bit patronizingly, at the admonition that all new boys memorize the school cheers and songs, or the reminder that lower level football is available “for the fellows who are too small.” It’s kind of cute.

But we should catch ourselves from that smugness. What we cannot see from the pages is that these students were caught in a moment of extraordinary complexity and change, which tested everyone, and summoned forth strength and courage and love, and so perhaps there is a lesson for this class, which shares exactly the same qualities. It’s worth imagining their Taft days.

First, those boys had to confront fears we can only guess at, as the 1918 influenza epidemic swept across the globe and onto this campus. It was medical holocaust. In this country alone, some 600,000 died; and estimates of global fatalities all begin with 50 million. As the academic year began, newspapers were carrying stories of doctors falling dead next to patients, bodies being pushed in wheelbarrows to crowded morgues. Connecticut, with its dense urban areas, saw some of the highest mortality rates in the country.

Imagine the fears of every student, every teacher, of Horace Taft. The first case reported by the Connecticut authorities was in New London on September 12, the week students returned to campus. Before we had given midterm grades, nearly 300 had died in Waterbury alone.

Like all schools, Taft suffered. The tiny infirmary overflowed, nurses were rapidly in short supply, and most of the campus fell ill. Horace Taft wrote in his memoir, “It looked like a battlefield.” One boy died, his mother wrote in her letter to the headmaster, “Bravely she here on campus, Taft writing, “Bravely she
faced the inevitable. A teacher died the next week. Statistically, Taft was lucky, but when we think of a mother bearing her son’s body away, or Taft writing the parents of a promising teacher, it is hard to see it that way. I can only imagine the emotional weight shouldered by teacher and student alike: fear, grief, confusion.

But it was not just the epidemic. Those same Taft students, 18-year-olds just like you seniors, fell asleep every night with World War I raging behind them.

By March of 1918, the Germans had pushed the edge of the Western Front to within 75 miles of Paris. Seniors, returning from spring break, must have wondered whether they would be in a muddy trench in a year rather than a college dorm room. American troops were pouring into Europe. The list of operations and battles that took place that spring is numbing. The casualty lists were sobering. I can only imagine the worries of the boy who held that handbook.

Somehow the school endured and thrived: classes were taught, games played, dances held, meetings called, speeches given, jokes told. How did they manage? How did they function—much less thrive—amidst such challenge? The mind retras when we think of the grit, the focus, the caring, the love. One imagines the lessons they carried with them after graduation—the call to service, the resilience in the face of setback, the conviction that life was precious—and how the world was the beneficiary.

There are two reminders for us here. First, we are reminded that this school has never existed in a vacuum, and that the problems of the world have always entered through the gates and become part of our lives and work. We know this: think of the sociocultural and political issues with which these seniors had to wrestle in their years here.

Second, we know that as a school we can and must be our best when we are most challenged, as all schools are today. And I hope that someone reading their yearbook in 100 years will not underestimate what the seniors have experienced, the challenges they have faced, the strength they have exhibited. I hope they will read it in the same spirit as we read that aged Handbook and recognize perhaps these seniors came of age when in an internet era, the world outside was never just outside, when they stood on a shifting and unstable cultural political landscape, and where they had to develop rare and needed vision, strength, and balance. Just as Horace Taft in 1918 saw courage, resilience, and goodness, so, too, did I. I will always remember you as a class of unusual principle, kindness, and resilience. And love.

You will leave far more able to live and lead than when you began.

Willy MacMullen ’78

LETTERS

Salute to Service

We thoroughly enjoyed reading the entire spring issue of the Bulletin. As a retired Naval officer, I was particularly pleased to see an article about military service and the three alums that were featured. As grandparents of a rising 10th-grade Taft student and having four children and four grandchildren who attend (and attended) private schools, this is the very first time we have seen such an article in a school publication. It was a very nice read on the anniversary of D-Day. Well Done!

—Ed and Polly Cole GP’21

Comments? Tell us!

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

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

#mytaft #taftlife #whytaft

This is what Wednesday looks like.

Taft Bulletin / SUMMER 2018
Olympic Mettle
SAFEGUARDING TEAM USA AT PYEONGCHANG

THE ATHLETES WEREN’T THE ONLY ones carrying the weight of a nation on their shoulders at the PyeongChang Winter Olympics. So was Craig Reistad ’80, only there was no medal stand.

The gold standard was the uneventful. Be vigilant but unobtrusive—and do it all just 50 miles from one of the most heavily fortified and most mysterious borders in the world, the 38th Parallel between North and South Korea.

Reistad served as Olympic security coordinator for the U.S. contingent of athletes, staff, media, and dignitaries including Vice President Mike Pence, during a 20-month assignment with the Diplomatic Security Service. The agency is the State Department’s supervisory diplomatic security team comprising of about 100 special agents from the Diplomatic Security Service, planned for every conceivable permutation. Cyberterrorism. A drone attack. Unruly fans. Counterfeit credentials.

There was little time to kick back and watch the competition, but Reistad did manage to watch the Czech Republic play Canada in men’s hockey. His wife, Vladimira, is Czech. While the world watched to see whether the on-again, off-again summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un would come to fruition, the couple was preparing for yet another move. This time, it’s back to the Washington, D.C., area, where Reistad will start a 10-month master’s program at the National Defense University at Fort McNair.

It’s all part of the drill for the Reistad family. One son was born in South Africa, the other in the U.S. in between Reistad’s overseas tours and was delivered by his Taft classmate, Marc Alembik. They lived in Mongolia and took a newborn to Jordan. “So they’re third-culture kids,” says Reistad, who has two sons, ages 15 and 13, and a daughter who is 8.

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THAT family would like to plant roots, however. “Right now, we’re going through the hard part, which is packing up 8,000 pounds of household goods and putting it into containers,” Reistad says from South Korea. “It’s your life. It’ll be nice to stop eventually.”

—Neil Vigdor ’95

Craig Reistad ’80, center, with the State Department’s supervisory diplomatic security team during a visit to the Olympic cluster in Gangneung, South Korea, which hosted the ice sports.
From On the Ice to On Air

TWO YEARS AFTER RETIRING FROM hockey in 2003, AJ Mleczko (Grinswo1d) ’93 could not recall being as nervous and intimidated as when she walked into a tiny studio in Stamford, Connecticut, for an audition with NBC. Seated across from her, behind a microphone, was Mike “Doc” Emrick, the legendary play-by-play man whose distinctive voice and florid language have become a favorite soundtrack for the NHL playoffs.

Then NBC threw Mleczko a curveball: the game she was asked to analyze was the 2002 Olympic gold medal game between Canada and Mleczko’s Team USA—a game the United States lost, the 2002 Olympic gold medal matchup in her audition was none other than “the game that I know so well and trying to look at the game analytically,” she says. “I like the challenge of seeing the game that I know so well and trying to put words to what I’m seeing in a way that other people will understand it.”

This winter, her fifth time covering the Olympics—including the 2016 Summer Games in Rio, where she called field hockey—was a highlight because it marked 20 years since she won a gold medal as a member of the 1998 U.S. women’s hockey team.

“The fact that the women won and redeemed the heartbreak from four years ago in Sochi was much more emotional than I expected it to be for me,” Mleczko says. “My husband brought our kids over, and it was really special for me to have them there witnessing it live, knowing that I had won the same medal 20 years ago. They knew I did it, but seeing it and seeing how special it was, they were really into it. That was especially touching for me.”

While she was in PyeongChang, NBC asked her to call an NHL regular-season game when she returned. That led to another assignment, then several more, until the Stanley Cup playoffs arrived. Her phone kept ringing.

“I was in the airport flying home from Nashville and I got the call saying, ‘We want you to stay on for the rest of the series, can you fly to Winnipeg?’” Mleczko recalls. “I said, ‘I don’t have my passport!’ So I had to fly back through Chicago on my own.”

She hopes to keep calling nationally televised games for NBC during the regular season next year, when the schedule is hopefully a little more predictable.

As for people calling her a “pioneer” in broadcasting, she gives credit to other female broadcasters who are in similar roles for other networks, such as ABC’s Doris Burke and ESPN’s Jessica Mendoza. Mleczko says her job is made easier by the fact that her colleagues at NBC have never treated her any differently.

“There’s no extra attention given to the fact that I’m a woman in the booth,” Mleczko says. “Which is exactly the way I want it. It’s the way it should be.”

“Compared to drawing a floor plan, you draw a design for a website—like which buttons go where and all the associated design elements,” he says. When asked if he sees a parallel between his graduate school training and his work today, Kwei says his time in architecture school helped him to understand design and the way people experience it.

“Compared to drawing a floor plan, you think about similar elements when you draw a design for a website—like which buttons go where and all the associated design elements,” he says. When asked if he sees any parallels between the digital landscape and the physical world, Kwei laughs and says simply, “a lot.”
Big IT, Big Impact

BY THE TIME MARINA MARTIN ’03 was 12 years old, back in the early, early days of the internet, she was creating fan websites for shows like General Hospital and official web pages for stars like Jean Smart and Dixie Carter of Designing Women fame. Her skill was such that those Hollywood luminaries didn’t know she was not yet in high school. By the eighth grade, she was state president of the Technology Student Association. Once she entered Taft, her skills led her to designing and maintaining websites for sports teams.

More important, she began to see how she could use the logic of programming to streamline business practices through technological innovations, and that’s fascinated her ever since.

In 2013, Martin was hired as the chief technology officer for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, where she began working to address huge inefficiencies in the department while President Barack Obama was in office. That led her to found and lead the Digital Service team at the VA, tackling hundreds of different outdated systems that were preventing the agency from efficiently serving the needs of the nation’s veterans.

“I immediately fell in love with the problem,” she says. “It was multifaceted. When I came to the VA, my job description was to discover the art of the possible for how our nation serves our veterans.”

The VA had come under national scrutiny for failing to help veterans in multiple ways. Martin convened a group that planned out the best-case scenarios and then worked out what it would take to accomplish those big ideas.

“We laid it out on Post-It notes first, and came up with 48 different projects,” she says. “I got a lot of buy-in and support, and when I left after five years, we had accomplished all but two of the projects.” For instance, Martin imagined, what if a disability claim was processed immediately? What if VA employees answered the phone? “We didn’t have enough trunk lines [to handle the incoming calls],” she says.

After Obama left office, Martin became a partner with Layer Aleph, a digital services company that restores complex systems to service, or, as she puts it, “fixes big IT disasters.” That “day job” helps fund Martin’s true passion, which is finding ways to make the nation’s complex foster care system function safely and efficiently to minimize the time children spend in foster care.

“It’s your job not to let them fall through the cracks,” she says. “I’m a tiny drop in the bucket, but I feel like it’s what I was put on earth to do.”

“IT provides an additional national platform,” she says of the foundation, which asked her to stay for a second year. “It’s the ability for multiple people to genuinely collaborate” to solve big national problems.

“Systemic change takes a long time,” she says. “It took me years at the VA and that was with full-force gusto. This is a long-term commitment. I want to work in the unsexy spaces where you can help veterans and foster care kids.”
IN Print

INVENTING THE OPERA HOUSE: THEATER ARCHITECTURE IN RENAISSANCE AND BAROQUE ITALY
Cambridge University Press
Eugene J. Johnson ’55
In this book, Eugene J. Johnson traces the invention of the opera house, a building type of worldwide importance. Italy laid the foundation for theater buildings in the West, in spaces invented for the commedia dell’arte in the 16th century and theaters built to present the new art form of opera in the 17th. Rulers revealed enormous funds on these structures, which were part of an upsurge of theatrical invention in the performing arts. At the same time, the productions that took place within the opera house could threaten the social order, to the point where rulers would raise them. Johnson reconstructs the history of the opera house by bringing together evidence from several disciplines, including music, art, theater, and politics. Writing in an engaging manner, he sets the history of the opera house within its broader early modern social context.

Eugene J. Johnson ’55
Cambridge University Press

CONFESSIONS OF A YO-YO DIETER
Girl on Bliss
Katheryn Gronauer ’09
Author Katheryn Gronauer has a major dilemma: should she focus on her diet and forget her social life, or engage in social activities and ruin her diet? With an eagerness to control and indulge in both, she spirals into a world of obsessive dieting. That is, until she takes a trip abroad that forces her to question everything she had learned from diets. Now 40 pounds lighter despite still being an afternoon tea aficionado, Gronauer reveals how to create a life you love in your body and with food and be free from worrying about your diet.

Katheryn Gronauer ’09
Girl on Bliss

The Little White Flower Cottage, a small self-serve store, where Lee sells her flowers and bouquets next to Butternut Gardens.

WHAT USED TO BE A BACKYARD
where Evelyn Barata Lee’s children played is now covered from one side to the other with dozens of flower beds, growing everything from snapdragons and bachelor buttons to lilies and lady’s mantle. In 2011, after her children left for college, Evelyn Barata Lee ’75 transformed her Southport, Connecticut, property into Butternut Gardens, a fresh-cut flower garden that produces about 45,000 beautiful flowers every year. Since then, Lee’s business has grown to include a small retail cottage, wholesale accounts, weddings and events, workshops and presentations, and even a flower delivery subscription service for local customers.

Lee’s Pro Tip
Daffodils have a certain sap in them, so you want to put them right in hot water when you first cut them. Try not to mix them with other flowers because they can cause the other flowers to decay faster.

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Katheryn Gronauer ’09
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PATRICK IS NOT A TYPICAL 7-year-old. Diagnosed at a young age with autism and sensory processing disorder, Patrick finds communication extremely challenging.

“Patrick is a little boy with few words,” says his mom, Jessica, “but he does say, ‘Play hockey’.”

Patrick discovered hockey in the fall of 2017, after bringing a flyer home from school that described a new, no-cost hockey program on the ice at the Taft School. The flyer was from Caeley Smith ’19; the program was specifically designed for children with special needs.

“Hockey has given me so much and Taft has given me so much,” Caeley says. “I am of the age and ability to give something back, and felt it was important to do so.”

Caeley was familiar with USA Hockey’s Disabled Hockey Program. She contacted the New England District representative, Richard Oliver, to talk about raising funds to support it.

“Mr. Oliver said, ‘Why fundraise for a program when you can start one yourself?’” explains Caeley.

Disabled hockey programs are supported by USA Hockey across the nation, and incorporate four disciplines: standing/amputee hockey, deaf/hard of hearing programs, sled hockey, and special hockey. Caeley turned her attention to the latter, special hockey, which creates an adaptive play environment for people with physical and developmental disabilities. According to USA Hockey, “Special hockey emphasizes having fun through teamwork, social interaction, and improving the quality of life through on and off ice activities.” There are currently special hockey programs in more than 30 cities across the nation.

Caeley spent much of the spring and summer of 2017 gathering information about program requirements from Oliver and from USA Hockey. She researched what was involved with starting a nonprofit organization and how to become a certified youth coach. She also began collecting used hockey equipment and cash donations.

“It was very important to me that this be 100 percent free to families who wanted to participate,” Caeley says. “I didn’t want there to be program fees or equipment costs. I wanted people to just be able to come and enjoy learning a new skill in a supportive environment.”

Caeley spent a good deal of time, including nine children, ages 5 to 12, to her inaugural team, including Patrick.

“Playing hockey at Taft lightened up Patrick’s world in more ways than you will ever know,” his mom says. “He has grown so much in these past six months, thanks to Caeley, her wonderful family, and all the volunteers who took time away from their busy lives and schedules to get these kids on the ice.”

Caeley is already thinking about next season. Since participants keep the donated gear, she is always looking to replenish her stock. She is thinking about new ways to spread the word and to grow her team. Caeley also hopes that the program will continue at Taft after she graduates in 2019.

For these families, to have an extracurricular like this is everything,” Caeley says. “For me, it was everything to be able to give it to them.”

Giving is Everything:
Non ut Sibi on Ice

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www.taftschool.org/news
A Passion for Learning

TWENTY-FIVE TAFT STUDENTS presented the outcomes of their year-long Independent Studies Program (ISP) inquiries during the ISP Fair in May. The ISP Fair is the culminating event of the program, which has been a fixture at Taft for more than 50 years. Established in 1964 by then-Headmaster John Esty, Taft’s ISP allows students to pursue their passions through high-level, inquiry-based, self-directed courses of study; it was the first program of its kind in the nation. The program is open to upper mids and seniors, who are invited to submit project proposals to the ISP Committee in the fall. Accepted students work with a project advisor throughout the year; they may also receive support and guidance from faculty volunteers serving on the ISP Committee. Students earn no credit or grades for their work—the goal is intellectual fulfillment through advanced and self-directed learning.

This year’s projects included a wide range of unique and innovative studies, including: A project by senior Samantha Chan integrating neuroscience, art history, and art interpretation to study mental illness and artistic creativity; a study of malignant hyperthermia by senior Sydney Gerbel; and a look at virology and digital molecular modeling by Isabelle Posmantur. Upper mids also brought their best work to the table, with Joel Edholm ’19 taking a unique approach to looking at the next stock market crash, Yaya Lu ’19 studying the very timely history of the relationship between America and North Korea, and Osi Bialunska ’19 looking at human rights laws in the United States, a project she hopes to continue next year.

“Our ISP students completed truly inspired and creative projects this year,” says ISP Director Dr. Amanda Benedict. “The scholarship was impressive. Remember, these students complete these projects independently, through their own curiosity and perseverance. In the words of Taft’s Portrait of a Graduate, these students truly ‘possess intellectual curiosity and resourcefulness, and actively engage in the process of learning.’ I am so proud of them.”

AFTER SIX MONTHS and six contests, Taft mathletes walked away with an impressive second-place finish in the highly competitive New England Mathematics League contest, which sees students from more than 150 secondary schools across New England face off in problem-solving events once each month from October through March. The contests challenge competitors with sets of six problems of increasing complexity. Students work individually to solve each problem, earning one point for each correct answer; each team reports its top five scores from the round to build a cumulative ranking.

Taft’s Zhiyuan (Leo) Li ’19 not only sat for all six tests, but also earned a perfect score on each. Li finished the competition as the top individual competitor and was the only student of the more than 1,000 participating to achieve a perfect score on all 36 problems. “Of course, one perfect contest is a feat in itself,” said math teacher and team coach Joseph Zipoli ’84. “But to be thorough and perfect through all six contests is very, very difficult. Leo has a way of remembering situations in mathematics.”

Benjamin Le ’21 finished the competition in a five-way tie for fourth place, earning 33 points over the course of the competition. Bill Lu ’19, Linh Vu ’21, O Wanichkul ’18, and Peter Yu ’20 each turned in impressive performances, which also included several perfect scores along the way. All five of Taft’s lead mathletes placed in the top-10 cumulative scores.

“We are so proud of them.”
Fond Faculty Farewells

DIRECTOR TOM CESARZ and Assistant Director Lillian Serafine have retired from the Hubert Taft Jr. Library, having contributed nearly 50 years of combined leadership and experience. Scott Serafine, who has led Taft's Video Arts program through five years of growth and innovation, also retired in June. Cesarz graduated in 1972 from Williams College, where he played football for four years and lacrosse for two. After earning a library degree from the Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science, he worked as a librarian and library director in Boston area colleges and universities for more than 20 years before coming to Taft in 2003. Cesarz has lived and coached Taft wrestlers. "When Tom came to Taft, we were very, very lucky," said Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78. "Hundreds of schools find a library director, with college experience, who says that he wants to live in the dorm and coach football? Tom brought a gruff, loving presence on the dorm, and scores of boys were shaped by him. As a coach, he was tough, loud, and demanding—and always kept the game in perspective. And most of all, he led our library services with singular dedication, humility, and professionalism. We were very lucky that Tom's last stop in his fine career was with Taft."

After earning a master's degree in library science in 1986, Lillian Serafine came to Taft as a public services librarian. She previously taught fifth grade, as well as middle school English and science. In her 22 years at Taft, Serafine has effectively shepherded students, staff, and faculty through dramatic changes in the breadth and depth of library services, embracing technological advances in data and resource sharing that have changed the way Taft faculty and students teach and learn. She's also been known to don hockey pads and stake her claim on the ice with other faculty members. "Lillian served with the most remarkable dedication, professionalism, and cheer," Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78 said. "She taught hundreds of students how to research, and that's such an important—and tough to master—skill. And people forget that in addition to serving as the assistant librarian, she was director of media services—IT before we had IT. Always she was upbeat, funny, warm, gracious."

Scott Serafine began teaching at Taft in 2013, though he was already a familiar face on campus, not only as Lillian's husband, but as a 10-year assistant director of the Taft Educational Center (TEC), a summer program for educators. Serafine also taught TEC and Taft Summer School courses in video production. He came to Taft after a 30-year career in public schools, including nine years at the progressive Waterbury Arts Magnet School. Serafine was named both Waterbury's Teacher of the Year and a Connecticut State Teacher of the Year semifinalist in 2006. Serafine and his students have earned high praise and industry awards, including a top honors at the Tribeca Film Festival's "The America I Am" National Youth Film Competition.

MacMullen added, "Scott was always a member of the extended Taft family, but it was truly the public school teacher, Scott came out of his profession. We were very lucky that Tom's last stop in his fine career was with Taft."

Our Newest Trustee: Diana Sands Calvaruso '06

TAFT ALUMNI HAVE ELECTED Diana Sands Calvaruso '06 to serve her alma mater as the newest member of the Board of Trustees. A native of Farmington, Connecticut, Calvaruso came to Taft as a lower mid to follow the family footsteps of grandfather Edward Van Vokenburgh Sands '14, father Edward Van Vokenburgh Sands '65, sister Kate Sands Mascarenhas '88, and a number of cousins. The family’s enduring legacy places a Sands at Taft during the tenure of each of the school’s five headmasters. While at Taft, Calvaruso earned nine varsity letters playing field hockey, squash, and tennis. She also served as a corridor monitor and — inspired by the late Brian Denyer’s love of berets and crepes — spent a few unforgettable weeks with Taft in France. She won the history award both junior and senior years and was inducted into The Cum Laude Society.

Calvaruso attended Northwestern University, where she earned a B.A. in history and philosophy, graduating with departmental honors in Middle Eastern history. She served as vice president of administration for Kappa Alpha Theta, spent a semester in London studying philosophy at University College London, and played club team squash for Northwestern’s (otherwise!) all-male team. She later became the first squash player at Northwestern to be ranked nationally in both men’s and women’s squash. After graduating in 2010, Calvaruso worked in the Chicago office of Goldman, Sachs & Co. in Private Wealth Management. Returning to the East Coast in 2012, she joined Goldman Sachs Asset Management’s Global Fixed Income Team in New York. She was named vice president in 2016 and currently works in Fixed Income as a portfolio manager, responsible for representing taxable fixed income strategies to the private wealth management business nationally.

Calvaruso has volunteered with inner-city squash programs in Chicago and New York. She also works with Northwestern’s Chicago Field Studies program, helping students prepare for job interviews, and serves as a mentor for Girls Who Invest, advising college-age women on careers in asset management. She lives with her husband, John, and their two cats in Fort Lee, New Jersey.
a history teacher and cultural history researcher at St. John’s Preparatory School.
After graduating from Taft, Willson earned a bachelor’s degree from Amherst College. He spent the next nine years teaching at a large magnet school in New York City while earning a master’s in history. Willson joined the Taft School faculty in 1996, where he has taught history, served as history department chair, held various class dean posts, and was dean of academic affairs from 2007 to 2015. Following a sabbatical during the 2015-16 academic year, Willson rejoined the faculty as director of the Moorhead Academic Center, expanding its mission to include more extensive work with faculty on pedagogy and assessment, and with students on working not necessarily harder, but smarter. He is also the head coach of the girls’ varsity basketball team.
Willson received the award during a ceremony in April at the annual Northeast Regional Conference for the Social Studies, where he delivered an address to conference attendees.
“I take the job of finding a way into the heart and mind of each of my students to try to stoke their historical curiosity—I take that very seriously, more seriously than ever given the tenor of our times,” Willson said during his address. “Teaching students history is an act of love camouflaged as scholarly pursuit. How grateful I feel to do it every day.”
Willson’s full address will be published in The New England Journal of History, the semiannual publication of the NEHTA.

Founded in 1897, the New England History Teachers Association (NEHTA) is the nation’s oldest association of teachers of history and social studies in the United States. Through conferences, publications, and awards, the NEHTA provides teachers, students, and academics opportunities to engage in meaningful conversations about the teaching and learning of history and its related disciplines.
Dancing into Spring

Keren Egu ‘21 was one of five Intermediate Dance students to choreograph and perform Broken Silence during the Spring Dance Showcase.

Advanced Dance student Erin Farrell ‘20 choreographed and performed Flexin on u during the Spring Dance Showcase, a piece, she says, that features a character based on Wonder Woman. Using classical movements with a bold, contemporary twist, Farrell matches dance with “super-strength” to “excite and empower” the audience.

High Note

CINDERELLA AND HER WICKED STEPSISTERS, JACK (AND HIS BEANSTALK), LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD AND THE BIG BAD WOLF, AND A CURSED WITCH WITH SECRETS AND SECRET POWERS WERE AMONG THE ENTERTAINING CAST OF CHARACTERS WHOSE STORIES COLLIDED IN A MOST EXTRAORDINARY WAY DURING THE SPRING MUSICAL AT TAFT, STEPHEN SONDHEIM’S INTO THE WOODS.

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Hello, Halo

TAFT STUDENTS WERE AMONG the winners during the 15th annual High School Halo Awards, given out at Waterbury’s Palace Theater in May. Sponsored by Seven Angels Theatre, the Halo Awards celebrate excellence in all aspects of theater production and performance. This year’s nominees represented more than 60 schools from across Connecticut.

Taft mounts three stage productions during the academic year. This year, audiences enjoyed Footloose; Into the Woods. Into the Woods. Into the Woods. Hamlet, Prince of Denmark; and their multiple roles as other characters in the Shakespearean tragedy. The production also earned a Halo for Best Classical Play. Director David Kievit built the concept of six Hamlets on a production he had seen years ago. “Many years ago, I saw a production in which the role of Hamlet was played by four actors,” says Kievit. “They were always on stage together sharing lines, thoughts, and emotions.”

The dynamic, he says, was a “formidable force” and one that added clarity to the storytelling and to the theatrical experience.

For a full list of Taft’s nominees, visit the news section of our website at www.taftschool.org. Congratulations to all of the Halo Award nominees and winners.

About the author:

With Calles, Taft actors Milan Moudry ’18, Tania Tyszniak ’20, Will de Mello ’19, Louise Gagnon ’18, and Mihir Nayar ’19 were named Best Speciality Ensemble in a Play for their shared role as Hamlet, and their multiple roles as other characters in the Shakespearean tragedy. The production also earned a Halo for Best Classical Play. Director David Kievit built the concept of six Hamlets on a production he had seen years ago. “Many years ago, I saw a production in which the role of Hamlet was played by four actors,” says Kievit. “They were always on stage together sharing lines, thoughts, and emotions.”

The dynamic, he says, was a “formidable force” and one that added clarity to the storytelling and to the theatrical experience. For a full list of Taft’s nominees, visit the news section of our website at www.taftschool.org. Congratulations to all of the Halo Award nominees and winners.

Educated

Reading Committee has selected Tara Westover’s memoir Educated as the all-school summer reading book this year. A No. 1 New York Times bestseller, Educated recounts Westover’s journey from social and educational isolation to a Ph.D. from Cambridge University. Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, Westover was 17 the first time she entered a classroom. She battled violence, dysfunction, and mistrust to educate herself, ultimately earning admission to Brigham Young University, Harvard, and finally, Cambridge.

Those with no parenthetical reference will welcome one Taft student this fall.

For a full list of Taft’s nominees, visit the news section of our website at www.taftschool.org. Congratulations to all of the Halo Award nominees and winners.

THE CLASS OF 2018 will scatter far and wide in the fall, having enrolled at exceptional colleges and universities across the country and around the world. More Rhinos have enrolled at Tufts than any other school this year, with Brown, Colgate, Georgetown, and the University of St. Andrews close behind.

The number of students from this year’s graduating class attending a given university is reflected in parentheses following the school name. Those with no parenthetical reference will welcome one Taft student this fall.
Girls’ Track 10–2
FOUNDERS LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

The defending Founders League champions surprised the league again in a nearly identical performance to last year’s unexpected title. With it raining steadily and 50 degrees—just like last year—the Rhinos were undaunted in their full effort, scoring in 15 of 17 events, to edge out a second consecutive league title with 127 points, edging rivals Hotchkiss (124) and Loomis (123). The meet was not decided until the final two events, when Claudia Vira ’18 and tri-captain Hanna Murphy ’18 finished 4th and 5th, respectively, in the 3000m, followed by the 4x400m relay, where tri-captain Mary Alice Ewing ’18, Molly Lohuis ’18, Kaitlyn Macdonald ’19, and tri-captain Taylor Jacobs ’18 earned a 3rd-place finish to secure the team victory. All four athletes scored in other events, with Jacobs earning 14 points in the 800m and the 1500m. Ella Losee ’20 (pole vault) and Liv Santini ’19 (javelin) were Taft’s individual league champions, while Kayla Robinson ’19, the team’s leading scorer on the season, put up 25.5 points for Taft in four events (4x100m relay, long jump, triple jump, shot put), and Liz Barré ’19 earned 14 points in the 100m hurdles and triple jump. Like last year, the Rhinos were a tight team of multisport athletes who achieved at the highest level because they worked together and ran for each other. Next year’s team will be led by captains-elect Eleanor Streit ’19 and Kayla Robinson ’19.

Boys’ Track 9–5

Relying on a mix of seasoned veterans and promising underclassmen, the team finished in the middle of the league, but with some outstanding individual performances that bode well for the future. Justin McLeod ’21, Jordan Miller ’20, Sammed Bawa ’20, and Jayce Fraser ’21 formed the 4x100 relay that ran a speedy 43.5 and placed at the New England Championship meet. McLeod (triple jump), Miller (long jump), and Blessing Agbenlaho ’21 (high jump) also scored in the three jumps at that meet, and post-grad Gabbe Eliasson ’18 placed 2nd in the...
Boys' Lacrosse 12-3
FOUNDER'S LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

Boys’ varsity lacrosse finished their 2018 campaign with a record of 12–3, which included a perfect 7–0 in the Founders League for the first time since 2003. All three of Taft’s losses were to teams that were ranked nationally according to multiple publications. Key wins came over multiple publications. Key wins came over Westminster. Navy Prep (19–11), Choate Rosemary Hall (17–11), Westminster (14–11), Avon Old Farms (15–10), Trinity-Pawling (11–9), and Hotchkiss (18–3). In terms of league honors, Dennis Kennedy ’18, MacGregor Peterson ’19, and Scott Del Zotto ’18 were named Founders League All-Stars. Additionally, Will Beck’18, Jack Sheehan ’18, Peter Davies ’19, and Billy Dobensky ’19 were named to the All-Western New England Team. Sheehan was honored as Western New England’s Lancer Odden Award winner as the league’s most outstanding midfielder, and Beck earned the Jim Wilson Scholar Athlete Award as Western New England’s leading vote-getter for Academic All-American. As a tribute to their great on-field accomplishments and their demonstrated leadership, Billy Dobensky, Peter Davies, and MacGregor Peterson were selected as captains for the 2019 season.

Girls’ Lacrosse 7-7

The Rhinos won close games this season against Westminster (7–4), Berkshire (12–8), and Northfield Mount Hermon (11–9) to reach .500 overall. Taft scored 117 goals, with 13 different players finding the back of the net throughout the season. Lily Cook ’20 had an amazing 115 saves in goal, finishing with a 51 percent save percentage. Four seniors led the way throughout the season: Natalie Wiorkowski ’18 as a midfielder, Katie Fiecknik ’18 and Jamie Howie ’18 as starting defenders, and Courtney Wandelt ’18 on attack. Founders League All-Stars were Howie and Cook. Western New England All-Stars were Wandelt and Fiecknik. Other major scoring contributors this season were Charlotte Powell ’19 and Emilee Adami ’19. Next year’s very solid group of returning players will be led by captains-elect Eva Baumringer ’19 and Charlotte Powell ’19.

Softball 9–4–1
WESTERN NEW ENGLAND CO-CHAMPIONS

After earning the #4 seed in the Western New England tournament, Taft hosted #5 Deerfield in a quarterfinal game. In one of the finest games of the season, Taft scored 10 runs on 12 hits, committed no errors, and shut out the visitors. The weather forced the postponement of the semifinals to Sunday, and according to league rules, the two semifinal contests turn into championship games, with the winners declared co-champions. Taft squared off against #1 Westminster, who had only one loss over the last two seasons. Taft had faced the Westy team earlier in the season and came away with a heartbreaking loss in extra innings. However, Taft arrived with another scoring punch, posting 11 runs, and played solid defense to upset the #1 team and earn its first Western New England Championship since 2012. All four regular season losses came to other playoff teams, with three of the losses by one run. The Rhinos outscored their opponents 122 to 36 during the season. Captain Alli Kalvaitis ’18 led offensively and defensively, striking out 112 batters (only 8 walks total) and leading the team in batting average and RBIs. For her splendid play, she earned the Softball Award as well as recognition as Western New England All-Star. Other leaders included seniors Nathalie Bonilla ’18 and captain Sidney Molnar ’18, who were joined by post-grads Mya Berretta ’18 and McKinley Karpa ’18 (Founders League All-Star). Morgan Trimmer ’19 and Ally Trimmer ’19 contributed much to the offense and defense and will lead the team, along with Natalie Locarno ’19, as captains.

SPRING ATHLETIC AWARD WINNERS

All-Rick H. Man Jr. ’09 Award (Tennis) Dylan Powell ’18
George D. Gould Award (Tennis) Lily Turner ’18
Crow Award Emma Lahmke ’18
Benjamin Roberts ’18
Galeski Golf Award Rex Riefler ’19
Girls’ Golf Award Grace O’Shea ’18
Portia Wang ’18
Odden Lacrosse Award Joseph Hardison ’18
Alexander Salnikoff ’18
Wandelt Lacrosse Award Natalie Whitkowski ’18
Seymour Willis Baseball Award
Mary Alice Ewing ’18
Taylor Jacobs ’18
Calvin Palmer ’18
Softball Award Allison Kalvaitis ’18
Stone Baseball Award Zane Segalas ’18

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Girls’ Crew 53–33

The girls’ crew team exhibited their commitment to preparation and constant improvement with some strong results this spring. The first varsity lineup of Elly MacKay ’20, Hayley Jubitz ’19, co-captain Emma LaRose ’18, co-captain Lily Thobault ’18, and coxswain Maggie Keeler ’18 had an especially strong season, losing only four times in the regular season and beating 25 other crews. They earned a bronze medal at the Founders Day Regatta and finished one place out of the Grand Finals at New Englands. The girls’ second boat also earned a bronze medal at Founders Day and finished third and fourth varsity boats qualified for the New England Championships and narrowly missed qualifying for the Grand Finals. All four varsity boats contributed to the strong 3rd-place team points at the DuPont Cup, 4th place at Founders Day, and swept the Alumnae Cup for the third year in a row. The team graduates eight wonderful seniors who have been instrumental in driving the competitive nature of the team and will surely be missed.

Boys’ Crew 60–23

In their dual-meet races and regattas, Taft’s four varsity boats compiled an overall record of 60 wins versus 23 losses. The first varsity lineup of Ben Roberts ’18, co-captain Thomas Muller ’18, Ali Sinan Kaya ’18, Jack Ewing ’18, and Zoe Eberstadt-Beattie ’18 (cox), earned a bronze medal at the Founders Day Regatta, and the following week won bronze at Founders Day. All four varsity boats qualified for the New England Championship regatta; three of the four qualified for the afternoon finals. The first boat won the Petite Final and the 3V won a bronze medal. At the end of the day, Taft finished fourth in the team points trophy—its best showing in the 25-year history of the program. The third and fourth varsity boats also won the du Pont Cup for the fourth time in seven years. The second varsity boat, with co-captain Nick Mortimer ’18, Hudson Grover ’18, Otto Piascicki ’19, Mac Nolan ’19, and coxswain Daisy Cook ’20, was beaten by only two opponents all season long, posting a record of 18–4. This same boat also won a bronze medal at Founders Day and finished fourth in the New England Championships. The third and fourth varsity boats also won the Rhinos won the Founders League Tournament, this time by five strokes over Loomis. Varsity players who scored in these major competitions and played well throughout the season were co-captains Portia Wang ’18 and Grace Dreher ’18, Olivia Wivestad ’19, Cho Dechen ’19, Kashimura, and Ella Hough ’21. Dreher, Wang, and Kashimura received All-League recognition, while Wivestad was recognized for exemplifying the “spirit of Taft golf.” The Girls’ Golf Award, for the player who through commitment has displayed the highest level of integrity and sportsmanship, went to Wang and Dreher, together, they have been part of a team that has won a New England title, four league championships, and contributed to the 166–17–6, 12-year program record. The captain-elect for 2019 season will be Olivia Wivestad.

Girls’ Golf 12–2–1

Always in the hunt for the title, Taft came in 4th in this year’s Pippy O’Connor New England tournament competing against 25 schools. Julia Kashimura ’20 was the individual champion with a strong round of 73. For the fifth consecutive year, the Rhinos won the Founders League Tournament, this time by five strokes over Loomis. Varsity players who scored in these major competitions and played well throughout the season were co-captains Portia Wang ’18 and Grace Dreher ’18, Olivia Wivestad ’19, Cho Dechen ’19, Kashimura, and Ella Hough ’21. Dreher, Wang, and Kashimura received All-League recognition, while Wivestad was recognized for exemplifying the “spirit of Taft golf.” The Girls’ Golf Award, for the player who through commitment has displayed the highest level of integrity and sportsmanship, went to Wang and Dreher, together, they have been part of a team that has won a New England title, four league championships, and contributed to the 166–17–6, 12-year program record. The captain-elect for 2019 season will be Olivia Wivestad.

Boys’ Golf 12–3

Having graduated three top players from last year’s squad, perhaps the most successful in the program’s history, the 2018 team was made up of talented younger players eager to take advantage of the opportunity to climb the ladder and develop their skills in competitive rounds. The team’s 12–3 record came as a result of steady play at the top of the ladder from returners Jonathan Elkins ’20, captain Rex Riefler ’19, Chris Gaeta ’18, and Henry Horne ’20, and inspired efforts from a mix of players in the five and six spots. Craig Cagner ’18 played remarkably consistent golf in the five spot, and varsity newcomers Gus Harper ’19, AJ Davidson ’20, Tiger Zhang ’19, Oskar Leithner ’20, and Sam Shaker ’21 all contributed well in

Girls’ Crew first boat during a practice at Bantam Lake.

Boys’ crew first boat during a practice at Bantam Lake.
Boys’ Tennis 13–5

With four returners from last spring’s New England Championship team, the foundation for a good season was solid. At the top of the ladder, Gabe Rissman ’19 and co-captains Dylan Powell ’18 and Peter Horne ’18 were experienced, highly skilled, and gritty. A much improved Chris McDermott ’18 rounded out the veterans, joined by three up from last year’s JV: serve and volleyer Isaac Lennon ’18, and grinders Peter Denious ’20. The Rhinos shut out eight opponents 7–0 and had key wins against always strong Choate and Hopkins. The biggest wins came against Deerfield, twice, the second in a thrilling New England quarterfinal match in which Denious came back from a 1–5, 0–40 second-set deficit and won a third set tiebreaker 10–8 to send Taft to the semifinals. Of special note, Powell was selected by the League coaches to receive the Alban Barker League Sportsmanship Award for stellar sportsmanship during his four-year varsity career. Prospects for next year look good with captains-elect Gabe Rissman, Will Wang, and Peter Denious joined by fellow returners Leo Li ’19 and Lucas Escallon ’20.

Girls’ Tennis 8–4

This deep Rhinos team was a talented mix of eight returners and three lower middlers. The team qualified for the New England Class A tournament this year as the #8 seed. Tiebreaker matches determined the Rhinos’ tournament placement, with Taft falling short early in the season against Deerfield 4–5, dropping three tiebreaker matches, but later in the season defeating Greenwich Academy 5–4, winning two tiebreakers and one overtime match. In Founders League play, the Rhinos defeated Loomis (5–4), Miss Porter’s (8–1), and Kent (9–0), but dropped matches against Westminster (3–6) and Hotchkiss (0–9). Leading the singles were #1 Kate Zhang ’20, who achieved an impressive 8–3 record, and #2 Regan Brewer ’19 (7–4), whose overtime battles were instrumental in two tight wins. The singles ladder saw additional strong play from co-captain Lily Turner ’18, Macy Toppan ’18, Kira Siebrecht ’19, Maddie Meister ’21, Leigh Root ’21, Janse Schoonmaker ’21, and Nico Gusas ’19.

The doubles pairings of #1 Turner and Meister, #2 co-captain Fran Hough ’18 and Minna Holleck ’18, and #3 Siebrecht and Root were instrumental in the team’s successes. Next year, the team will return many members and will be captained by Kira Siebrecht and Regan Brewer.

Baseball 7–12

The team posted a 7–2 overall record and 4–11 in the Founders League. Senior co-captain Zane Segalas ’18 led the team in both RBIs (23) and home runs (3) and was second in hitting with a .315 average. Upper middler Nolan Grooms ’19 led the team with a .345 batting average and had the pitching staff’s lowest ERA (3.10). Grooms struck out 34 hitters in the 32 innings he pitched, and will serve as tri-captain next year along with Beau Root ’19 and Dylan Kim ’19. The team split the series with Avon (who finished second in the league), and also beat Hotchkiss, Deerfield, and Salisbury in their only matchups with those teams. Taft lost to Kent 13–4 the first time they played, but their 2–0 win at Kent in their second matchup was perhaps one of the best played and best pitched games ever for Taft. Middler Walker Wonham ’20 gave up a fourth-inning single, but retired the other 21 batters he faced in a masterful performance, and Grooms singled home the eventual winning run with two outs in the sixth inning.

varsity matches. During the tournament portion of the season, the team took home 2nd-place honors at the Founders League Tournament and at the Andover Invitational at Newport Country Club, as well as 4th place at the New England and Western New Englandies.
Thank You!

WE CLOSED A TERRIFIC YEAR FOR THE Annual Fund on June 30, which resulted in $4,893,445 of total giving—more than $375,213 over goal—as well as achieving an impressive 45% alumni participation and 92% current parent participation. Notably, there were some particularly profound displays of generosity and enthusiasm by our young alumni. I know that I speak on behalf of all of Taft in expressing sincere gratitude to our Annual Fund donors for their commitment to sustaining educational excellence, and for the example they set for the rest of our community to follow. We owe much of the success of this Annual Fund campaign to an incredibly devoted team of volunteers, including the Parents’ Committee; Stuart and Jean Sreenibot F’93, ’96, ’99, Chairs of the Former Parents’ Fund; Joanna Dayton GP’14, ’16, ’20, Chair of the Parents’ Committee 2017–18.

P’16, ’18, who, after two years of exemplary service, are handing over the co-chairmanship of the Parents’ Fund to Sara and Bob Savage, P’18, ’20. As always, I also want to offer special thanks to the staff of the Alumni and Development Office for keeping the Taft community connected and strong—they work tirelessly and without much fanfare, but their impact is great and deserving of our genuine appreciation. I am truly grateful and humbled to work with such a wonderful group of talented and dedicated people—they are the pride of Taft.

On behalf of Taft, I thank all of the donors who have made this year’s Annual Fund such a success. We are immensely grateful for the extraordinary efforts of Marietta Lee and Jeff Keeler, extraordinarily of Marietta Lee and Jeff Keeler, particularly want to take this opportunity to recognize the extraordinary efforts of Marietta Lee and Jeff Keeler, especially for raising $419,996 in both annual and capital dollars from 57% of the class, the highest participation in their decades were. 2012, 2009, 1999, 1980, 1978, 1961, 1957, and 1946. The Class of 1999 had the overall highest participation rate of 15% from 41 donors. Congratulations to the hardworking Class Agents and volunteers who helped achieve this so much in one day.

The Class of 1998 celebrated their 20th Reunion and reached record highs in both dollars raised and class participation. The class receives the Chairman of the Board Award for raising $419,996 in both annual and capital dollars from 57% of the class. Rudes to the class for their impressive show of school spirit!
IN THE HEART OF THE
AMAZON
By Debra Meyers

FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, THE MAIJUNA HAVE LIVED IN ONE OF THE MOST BIOLOGICALLY RICH AND ECOLOGICALLY DIVERSE REGIONS OF THE WORLD. Threatened by unregulated and unsustainable logging, the Maijuna are working to protect, conserve, and restore their corner of the Amazon rainforest—with some success. Science teachers Amanda Benedict and Michael McAloon traveled to northeastern Peru to learn from the Maijuna, and to bring those lessons back to Taft.

There are no roads or highways carrying travelers to Iquitos, Peru. It is, in fact, the largest city in the world that can only be reached by boat or air. Long inhabited by the indigenous people of the region and later colonized by early conquistadors, Iquitos is an island city steeped in history, yet central to the future of the Amazon rainforest. It is a gateway to some of the most biologically diverse ecosystems in the world, and it is where science teachers Amanda Benedict and Michael McAloon boarded a boat and began their 10-day journey into a remote region of northeastern Peru.

Low-slung, pontoon-like boats ferry passengers up and down the vast Amazon River and its tributaries. The experience is one that awakens all of the senses: pink dolphins splash in the river alongside the boats; songs of the more than 1,500 species of birds in the Amazon Basin fill the air; monkeys, insects, and a plethora of plant species—some waiting to be discovered—provide visual, olfactory, and auditory wonder. Benedict and McAloon traveled nearly 100 miles by boat, through the rainforest, up the Amazon, north to the Rio Napo, then deeper still into the Peruvian forest along the Sucusari River. Their destination: the ancestral homelands of the region’s indigenous people, the Maijuna, who would teach them about conservation in one of the most biologically diverse ecosystems in the world through a course developed specifically for independent school teachers.

Inquiry, Conservation, and Sustainability in the Amazon Field Course is a pilot course designed by curious teachers and scientists, and administered by professional educators and conservationists from the Amazon Explorers Program.

“In the heart of the Amazon, my heart was filled with a deep spiritual connection to our planet—and the Maijuna—like never before.”

AMANDA BENEDICT

“Loggers came in and took over their area of the forest. The deforestation altered the ecological systems in the area; the loggers killed their fish and hunted their animals. The Maijuna have really done an amazing job pushing back and requiring the government to acknowledge their needs in this area.”

—Amanda Benedict

Views of the Amazon River, approaching the island city of Iquitos, Peru.

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start a new program in March just for independent school teachers."

Dillabaugh worked with Hill and Millbrook School’s Ava Goodale to build a curriculum that would meet the specific needs of independent school teachers working at the secondary level. McAloon and Benedict, along with a dozen fac-

ty members from the Asheville and Millbrook schools, made up the inaugural class. It was, says Hill, "an opportunity to immerse oneself in the areas of emerg-

ing conservation programs, indigenous cultures, and tropical rainforest ecology, all in the most amazing ecosystem on the planet with an incredible group of people." Notes Benedict, "The course in Peru explores rainforest ecology and the inter-

actions of humans with that ecosystem. In signing on, our objective was to learn how the Maijuna are doing sustainable agri-
culture and working with the government to promote conservation of the natural resources they are so dependent on—top-

cics that are immediately relevant in our classrooms, and which also tie in with what kids learn in AP Human Geography and what they learn in AP Environmental Science. It is one of those interdisciplinary moments that brings everything together that we’ve been talking about all year."

"I was wowed by the people and the place," Hill explains. "Before I left, I begged Amazon Rainforest Workshops director Christa Dillabaugh to let us take a new program in March just for independent school teachers."

"I was wowed by the people and the place," Hill explains. "Before I left, I begged Amazon Rainforest Workshops director Christa Dillabaugh to let us take the inaugural Amazon program for independent school educators welcomed teaching faculty from Taft, Millbrook, and the Asheville School.

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"We had a lot of terrifying/awesome interactions with biology while we were there," says Benedict, who unwittingly shared a space with a bullet ant, packing a sting 30 times more painful than a gunshot wound. "I caught and ate a piranha, we held lots of most deadly snakes in the forest."

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actions with biology while we were there," says Benedict, who unwittingly shared a space with a bullet ant, packing a sting 30 times more painful than a gunshot wound. "I caught and ate a piranha, we held lots of most deadly snakes in the forest."
Benedict and McAloon visited agricultural areas within the forest—spots where yucca, bananas, and pineapples are grown and harvested. “We spent time with a woman named Luceli who is actually grafting cacao from native cacao to produce a hybrid species that is more robust,” says Benedict. “They are able to sell that in Iquitos, and also keep some as a kind of candy for themselves. They also use sustainable methods to harvest chambira palm, which they use to craft and sell as art.”

The Maijuna have begun using biosand filters to convert water containing biological contaminants into safe drinking water, are cultivating stingless bees through sustainable apiculture to both revive the bee population and produce medicines and sweeteners from their honey, and have adopted more sustainable fishing practices. “One of the more common fishing methods among indigenous groups used to be the use of rotenone, which is a very toxic compound that occurs naturally in some tropical plants,” Benedict explains. “They would basically just poison all the fish, then collect them. Now they use fishing line and are conscious of where they are fishing and what they catch to avoid overfishing in any one area.” They are also bringing technology into their conservation efforts. “Maijuna hunters are using a GPS tracking feature on their rifles that allows them to monitor where they find and capture different animals,” McAloon says. “It is a tool that helps them avoid overhunting and also track the return of some animals to specific areas. Hunters share that information with one another in an effort to help sustain the resurgence of some animal populations that were driven deeper into the forest by the loggers, and to prevent overhunting in areas commonly hunted by different groups.”

“Here’s so much for discovery,” says McAloon, an entomologist. “And that’s around every single corner in the rainforest. At every turn, you’re going to be stepping on something or touching something that has an incredible story to it.”

AMAZON
Perhaps one of the most meaningful initiatives undertaken by the Maijuna is participatory mapping. The inclusive, collaborative, and ongoing project brings communities together to create hand-drawn maps of their land and resources. Pictorial icons mark bountiful fishing sites, set boundaries, identify hunting areas, and pinpoint culturally significant locations. The project is both important and empowering.

“The Maijuna are still working to gain legitimacy—to prove that they use their ancestral lands for sustenance, and that is also a historic and culturally important area for them,” explains Benedict. “Participatory mapping was one of the tools that gave credence to their ability to ask that their land be designated a protected conservation area.”

Ethnobiologist and George Mason University Professor Dr. Michael Gilmore has worked extensively with the Maijuna and took the mapping project to the next level, visiting the sites on the map and fixing their locations using handheld GPS units.

“Having these types of data to show the government was very important to the Maijuna petition that ultimately established the Maijuna-Kichwa conservation area,” notes McAloon.

IN INTO THE FOREST

In their final days in Peru, Benedict and McAloon journeyed deeper into the forest to continue their scientific inquiry at the Amazon Conservatory for Tropical Studies (ACTS), an open laboratory for scientific research, education initiatives, and sustainability projects. It is also home to one of the largest canopy walkway systems in the world, running more than 500 yards though the treetops and rising to a height of nearly 120 feet at its peak.

“We spent a lot of time up in the canopy—we were up and down maybe four times a day—early in the morning, late at night in the dark, two or three times in the afternoon,” says Benedict. “It offers a completely different view of the forest and is a place where we engaged in more in-depth research and discovery.”

Research and discovery included biological sampling, identifying birds, and trapping insects. They also laid the groundwork for additional scientific study in the region by setting camera traps. More camera than trap, the devices use sensors and cameras to capture images of animals as they move through the forest. Most shoot both still images and video throughout the day and night.

“Mammal observation through camera trapping is something new there,” says McAloon. “The presence of certain animals in an area is an important indicator. We set cameras in the colpa for the first time, in a mineral lick. Animals visit the lick for its nutrients. But no
“Part of the science was practicing techniques for ecological studies so that we can inform our students,” says Benedict. “We talk about surveying plant diversity. We actually did that.” McAloon explains. “We went 75 feet off the trail in a direct line, then collected samples in a one-meter square from that measure. Excluding ferns and palms there were 87 species of plants—and that’s a lot, but it’s also not perfect, because there are so many things that can’t be identified to species unless you look at their DNA. You can also do that with insects, you can do that with birds, then extrapolate populations from there.”

one knows how the animals know it’s there and which animals visit it—is it just tapir, or peccaries, too? Now that the loggers are gone from the conservancy area, what animals are coming back, what populations are recovering? Are poachers entering the area? The data from the camera traps should answer some of those questions and help lead to more sustainable hunting practices.

The data from the traps set by Benedict, McAloon, and their teams will be recovered in July, when the next group of teachers visits the site. “The camera traps are really interesting science and really important science,” says Benedict. “They should provide meaningful data to show that the conservation efforts are working, that the forest and the forest life are coming back in the areas where the Maijuna have done the conservation work.”

“The way that Taft supports teachers in doing these kinds of things is really powerful. This is what keeps teachers passionate about their subject—being able to go and do the things that they teach about. It is something that Mike [McAloon] and I are both very grateful for.”

—Amanda Benedict

The Maijuna find many uses for trapway leaves, among them, weaving packs to carry home the spoils of their hunt.

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Spring showers were no match for the excitement of classmates reuniting for Alumni Weekend over several days of celebrations both on and off campus. Not only was the Class of ’68 back for its 50th Reunion, but members of the Class of ’43, attending their 75th Reunion, joined the many generations of alumni in Watertown. Some excitement was added when an uninvited black bear decided to visit a tree on Centennial Quad, requiring a quick rerouting of the Alumni Parade!

Here are some photos to remember the weekend by.

2. Willy MacMullen ’78 marches with classmates Casey Padgett and Chris Smythe in the Alumni Parade.
3. Nici Fiegen Doremus ’86 and Sarah Elisabeth Curi ’86 at the Breakfast for Class Agents and Secretaries.
4. The Class of ’68 gathers for their 50th Reunion Dinner, joined by Headmaster Emeritus Lance Odden.
5. 1953 classmates at the Alumni Golf Outing: from left, Mike Brenner, Paul Duwell, Jim Goldenwirth (winner of their Class Trophy), Nat Smith, and Phil Reed.
Proudly celebrating their 75th Reunion, Tom Moore ’43, Ted Pratt ’43, and Jim Morrison ’43 are greeted by Headmaster Willy MacMullen ’78 before the Old Guard Dinner.

The annual Service of Remembrance held in Woodward Chapel.

Walter Graham ’58 and Richard Dranitzke ’58 on the way to the Alumni Luncheon.

Chip Gronauer ’68 enjoys a look at the Reunion Book during the 50th Reunion Cocktails in the Woolworth Faculty Room.

The annual ritual of the Alumni Parade.

2008 alum friends reunite before the Alumni Parade.

Tiana Todd ’03 and Massiel Santos ’03

Back to attend the tribute to Coach Larry Stone, ’75 alum, “reenact” a photo of their 1975 varsity football team; from left, Jim Shepard (44 in football photo), John McDonald (44), and Mike Ormiston (43) reunited 43 years after their League Championship and undefeated season. Kenny Bane ’75 (#22 in photo) was sorry he couldn’t make it back.
Monitors Leigh Sharpless ’18 and Jake Wasserstein ’18 lead the way for the Alumni Parade.

The tribute to Coach Larry Stone held in the Woolworth Faculty Room was attended by many Stone family members and loyal former players.

An unplanned-for visitor came to a tree on Centennial Quad before the Alumni Parade began.

A visit with the Rhino before the Alumni Parade.

Sherrard Upham Cote ’73 with Reese Owens ’73 and his wife, V., at the 45th Reunion Party.

At the Old Guard Cocktail reception from left, Rick Muhlhauser ’63, Shelly Bell (wife of Drum), Joanna Wandelt (wife of Ferdie ’66), Roy O’Neil ’63, and Drum Bell ’63.

Wendy Treynor ’93, AJ Mleczko Griswold ’93, Brian McCormick ’93, Ana and Mike Humphreys ’93 and their son under the tent at the Headmaster’s Dinner.

Members of the Class of ’13 celebrate their 5th Reunion at the Headmaster’s Dinner.

The tribute to Clayton “Chip” Spencer ’56, dedicating the Spencer Room, in the Alumni & Development Office, attended by alumni, guests, and the Spencer family. Pictured, from left, Jonathan ’88, Jane ’03, Susan, and Oliver ’85; Headmaster Willy MacMullen ’78; and Chip’s classmate Charlie van Over ’56, who shared remarks.

Checking out the 2003 photos during the Reunion Party.

Alumni Parade marchers Amanda Costanzo McGovern ’93, with her twin sons, and Margaret Fitzgerald Wagner ’93 pass through Main Hall on their way to lunch.

1993 classmates at the Headmaster’s Dinner: from left, Christine Toma Munn, Lynda Floyd, Carter Turrell Calenta, and Nina Varamaki Kimmer.

Mshangwe Crawford ’00, faculty member Steve McCabe, Onaje Crawford ’98, and Ernest Kwarteng ’98.

Class of ’58 members gather before the Old Guard Dinner.

The children of Larry Stone at the tribute to their father, next to a photo of the baseball pavilion named in his honor in 2009: Jim ’83, Kelly ’76, Katey ’84, and Mike ’74.

A young Taft Rhino fan couldn’t be happier to have his caricature drawn before the Alumni Parade.
Current and former Taft parent A.J. Wasserstein was invited to give the school’s Commencement address. Here, we share excerpts from his talk about what he wished he had known when he was about to enter college.
When I was your age I thought I had it all figured out. After all, I was graduating from high school—clearly, I had mastered everything. But there was a vital concept I wish I understood was that life is all about optimizing around long-term happiness. This might seem obvious, but so many young adults rush ahead into life without making happiness their primary goal. Sometimes the excitement and noise of our lives on a day-to-day basis pulls us away from long-term happiness. Aristotle defined the very purpose of life as developing happiness, from my perspective. Happiness is not fleeting or a temporary rush—like devouring a hot fudge sundae or bungee jumping. Happiness is enduring fulfillment, satisfaction, and joy, moving from novice to proficiency. Happiness is being in harmony in your personal relationships, your college activities, your spirituality, and your health. Happiness is knowing and living your values—having a strong and intentional sense of who you are. Happiness feels like being in a state of flow. But happiness is hard, just like mastering a foreign language. It takes time, energy, and diligent work to get there—but it is certainly worth it and best of all, you can absolutely do this.

Your next step on your destination to happiness is college! College is an amazing opportunity and experience. It is a magical four-year period in your life that should be filled with experience, some times painful, but other times a privilege. As upperclassmen, it came that the most beautiful moments were those outside of our structured schedule, such as picnics on the fields as the sun set atop the flag of the athletic building, or perhaps going sledding. All those new awakenings, opening our eyes to more than just responsibility, but also the somber realization of injustice and inequality. To that end, this was the class that came together beautifully in the face of adversity, hosting an inspiring yet productive meeting one night in the winter, and so at last we recognized our place on this campus, holding on in solidarity. So here you all sit before me, the eldest students of Taft—an admirable group of unique individuals (who worked) together to guide this campus as best we could.

Assistant Headmaster Jeremy LaCase presents Raymond Bai '18 with the Aurelian Award, awarded to a senior who is “outstanding in sterling character, high scholarship, and forceful leadership.” Bai was also a recipient of the Heminway Merriman Award.

Leigh Sharpless ’18
Head Monitor

With age came experience, sometimes painful, but other times a privilege. As upperclassmen, it came that the most beautiful moments were those outside of our structured schedule, such as picnics on the fields as the sun set atop the flag of the athletic building, or perhaps going sledding. All those new awakenings, opening our eyes to more than just responsibility, but also the somber realization of injustice and inequality. To that end, this was the class that came together beautifully in the face of adversity, hosting an inspiring yet productive meeting one night in the winter, and so at last we recognized our place on this campus, holding on in solidarity. So here you all sit before me, the eldest students of Taft—an admirable group of unique individuals (who worked) together to guide this campus as best we could.

Thank you, Taft faculty, for guiding us... Whether it was in the form of advising, teaching, coaching, or just chatting, the help you all have given us over these years has propelled our transition from timid freshmen and sophomores to confident young men and women. While we’ll miss your exemplary teaching inside the classroom, we will miss the impromptu and informal moments the most, where you have helped us grow as people. The late-night dorm discussions [and] the last-minute lunches... were just a few moments that helped shape the community into our family. We admire your contagious energy... We cannot imagine living in an upper school boys’ dorm with young children and constant fire alarms as requirements for the job, yet you always maintained your friendly attitudes. No one can thank you enough for what you do!
embraced, relished, and most of all, not wasted. Although it might seem like being admitted to college is an ending point—particularly after all the hard work you did during the daunting college admission process—it’s a new beginning. Whether you are off to study physics, philosophy, or finance, one of the main goals of college is to learn how to learn—to embrace, relish and most of all, not waste. Although it might seem like being admitted to college is an ending point—particularly after all the hard work you did during the daunting college admission process—it’s a new beginning.

There are certain qualities that are, because their their inability to be assessed numerically or comparatively, taken as secondary to extracurricular endeavors, like the way we treat or engage with one another. I like the multiple abilities you possess, the affection and sense of care we develop for our peers is learned behavior that is strengthened over time. At Taft, I have come to acknowledge that I am the person I am now because of who you are, and the same applies to us all: students, parents, staff, and faculty alike.

As said by my first English teacher at Taft, "One must love kindliness of heart, the fixed value of the most important ingredient in human character." Love is what I have come to acknowledge that I am the person I am now because of who you are, and the same applies to us all: students, parents, staff, and faculty alike.

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Earlier this year I visited the Library of Congress to do research while I was at home in Virginia. I noticed a stone plaque with gold lettering that puzzled me: “We taste the spices of Arabia, yet never feel the scorching sun that brings them forth.” I began searching for some extraneous idea that could be reflected in these words.

Throughout our careers here we have been offered the spices of Arabia in many different ways. The attention we receive at Taft has cultivated, enhanced, and “spiced” our individual talents and interests.

We have opened art galleries to showcase our paintings and photographs. We have hosted open dialogues to lead conversations on social issues. We have worked for a spot on varsity baseball team, and been given a lead role in the fall musical. We have learned to no longer consider ourselves just math students or English students, but all-around students. Tasting these various spices at Taft has enhanced our very being.

Our future service to the school should reciprocate all that it has offered to us. To pepper young people with is, “Who are you going to be when you grow up?” “Who are you?” gets to the essence of how you see yourself—your core and character, what type of person you aspire to be. With no simple or reflexive answer, it’s much deeper and more challenging to answer than “What do you want to be?” To find happiness, and to answer what do you want to be, you must first understand who you are going to be—and college is a fantastic venue to discover and answer the “who are you going to be?” question.

As part of defining who you are, I hope you consider and embrace Taft’s school motto: Non ut sibi ministretur sed ut ministret. You are incredibly fortunate to have received a Taft education. Think about how you will use this gift and how you will serve.

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Tasting these various spices at Taft has enhanced our very being. Our future service to the school should reciprocate all that it has offered to us.

If you embrace Aristotle’s view that our purpose is to find happiness—part of that answer is through service.

When you finish college, it would be wonderful if you have a fully formed sense of your values, goals, and identity—who you are going to be. Nobody can tell you specifically what these are—there are no right or wrong answers, you simply need to find what works for you. Think about this in great detail while in college.

To all of the graduates, I wish you good luck and success in your next chapter. I wish you fun and enjoyment. I wish you new experiences and new friends. But more than anything else, I wish you happiness.
I

t is with great sadness that we share that Barclay Johnson ’53, longtime Taft English teacher, died on July 3 in Maryland, at the age of 83. His family said, “He lived as a literary artist and a teacher.”

He grew up in Plainfield, New Jersey, with two younger sisters. He proudly loved his father, Barclay ’27, a Navy veteran of WWII, and his mother, Susie. Like his father, Barclay attended Taft. He graduated with the Class of ’53 after putting on a theatrical roast of the faculty.

He studied literature at Middlebury College and graduated in 1957 after writing and producing two musical comedies. As a 1st lieutenant of the U.S. Army Armored Corps in 1958, he led a squadron of tanks.

Johnson started teaching English and coaching football and track at Taft in 1961. He led the school’s Independent Learning Programs and served as dean of faculty. Headmaster Emeritus Lance Odden recalled, “For nearly 40 years Barclay Johnson was Taft’s beloved teacher, coach, and school master. Great characters make great schools, and Barclay Johnson stood at the forefront of that group of inspirational leaders touching the lives of thousands of Taft students.”

As Headmaster Willy MacMullen ’78 wrote to the Taft community, Barclay Johnson was a legend at Taft. “Barclay possessed an incredible energy and intellect. When he walked in the room—the classroom, the faculty room, the department room—you knew he had arrived,” MacMullen said. “He was physically big, he had a booming voice, and he had an unquenchable enthusiasm for life. Barclay made friends everywhere, and once you met him, you never forgot him. In the English Department, he was beloved and respected. His colleagues knew that there was perhaps no one who read literature, drama, and poetry with more passion and insight. He was perpetually learning, reading, growing. Great writing never failed to excite him, no matter how many AP essays he read or how many times he had taught A Streetcar Named Desire. When he entered a class, it was like a weather event: everything changed.”

He was fortunate to have his son, Matthew, daughter-in-law Sarah, and two grandchildren living nearby in Maryland. He also had visits from son Paul ’83, daughter-in-law Susan, and a granddaughter.

His former wives are former Taft faculty member Sabra Field (formerly Johnson), and second wife Patricia. His stepchildren from Patricia’s first marriage are Chris, Tim, Marion, and Ruth.

He had recently expressed gratitude for the good fortune in his life and said that his sons were “at the center” of his mind. With the expectation of dying, he offered, “The world has been good to me.”

A celebration of Barclay Johnson’s life will be held at Taft in the fall.
You LOOKING BACK

LOOKING BACK

This Dance Card from the 1934 Commencement Dance was a cherished memento that belonged to a young woman who lived in Middlebury. Her daughter came across it in the original mailing envelope with other memorabilia and donated it to Taft’s Archives.

From the Senior Dinner Cruise to the Senior Class Dinner at the headmaster’s home to the Graduation Processional, it’s a special time that we look forward to and one to look back on for years to come. This little booklet brings us back to a different era.

—Beth Nolan Lovallo ’93
The Leslie D. Manning Archives

The Leslie D. Manning Archives contains materials reflecting the history of the Taft School from its founding in 1890 to the present. The purpose of the Archives is to conserve and catalog items and to make them available to the wider school community.

The T aft Charitable Gift Annuity—
RATES INCREASED!

“The Taft School has certainly been an essential part of my education. I would very much like to support the school in a significant way, but can’t part with income-generating, non-retirement funds at the moment.”

—Comment shared at one of the school’s planned-giving seminars

We hear this on a regular basis. Enter the charitable gift annuity (CGA), an arrangement with The Taft School in which you give an irrevocable donation, usually with cash or marketable securities. In return, we make fixed payments to you for life. What’s left of your gift after your lifetime helps to bolster our endowment.

An Example of How It Works:
• A Taftie, age 75, transfers $10,000 to The Taft School in July 2018.
• A simple two-page contract is signed to establish the gift annuity.
• The annuity distribution begins on October 1, 2018.
• The immediate tax deduction is $4,575.*
• The annuity rate is 6.2 percent, which is based on age; the older you are, the higher the rate.
• The gift annuity per year for life is $620 and won’t change.
• Eliminate “up-front” capital gains tax.
• There are no management or custodial fees, a real plus.
• The Taftie helped the school—we can now thank the donor as a Horace Dutton Taft Legacy Society member!

The annuity is fully backed and guaranteed by The Taft School—the school’s rating by Moody’s is AA.

* Rates at time of publication. Rates are based on annual payments and a 3.4 percent charitable redememt federal rate. Deductions vary based on income earned. Above for illustration purposes only. Please consult your financial planner.

Find Your CGA Rate Below

For One Life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>65</td>
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<td>70</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
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<td>80</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>90+</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
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For Two Lives

<table>
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<th>Younger Age</th>
<th>Rate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Remainder to the school after your life.

You Create a gift annuity using cash or marketable securities.

• Receive an income tax deduction.
• Receive fixed payments for life.

Find Your CGA Rate Below

TAFT