

# Taft

B U L L E T I N

MOORHEAD  
WING  
*opens*

Summer 2010



## Moorhead Wing Opens

A new space emerges at the heart of the school.



□ The Class of 2010 at Commencement in May. The new Moorhead Wing (see page 24) is just visible between Congdon and Mac House.

HIGHPOINT PICTURES







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### Alumni Weekend

*Photographs by Robert Falcetti, Phil Dutton,  
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### Where the Learning Happens

*Taft Competes at Boston University's  
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*By Ethan Gilsdorf*



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### Commencement 2010

*Remarks by Jennifer Zaccara, Willy MacMullen '78,  
Leigh Anne O'Mealia '10 and Mark Simone '10*



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## The Headmaster's Cards

In the decades before computers, the headmaster's office kept basic information on all students, on 3 x 5 index cards. We don't know when Horace Taft started the practice, but eventually his secretary created them for the earlier graduates as well, going all the way back to 1891, in order to keep tabs on alumni.

A card was a life in brief; it would usually have the student's name, parents' names and address, when the student entered, a religious affiliation, in some years even their intramural club affiliation (Alpha, Beta, Gamma). As students moved on, there might be a notation on the card of where they went to college, a new mailing address, when and who they married or when they died. Sometimes the word "returned" would be penciled in next to the address when mail came back unopened.

As we began the task of exporting names of graduates from the school's database to be engraved on the panels of the east dining hall (see page 30), it became clear that some names (those who were long deceased or were already lost) had never been entered into the computer. So we began the task of systematically combing through the thousands and thousands of headmaster's cards and, like Santa's elves, checking them against our lists. Probably 30 to 40,000 cards in all... some on students who stayed only a few days.

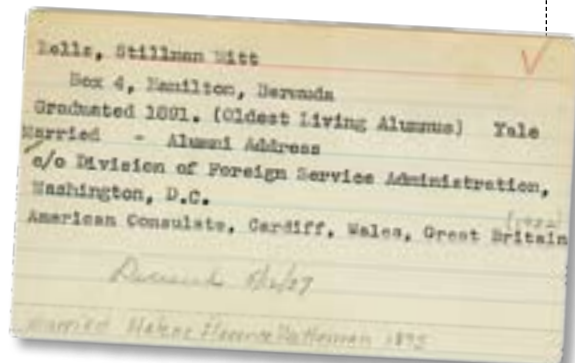
Cryptic notations on the cards often slowed the process down, occasionally frustrated us and even amused us. Sometimes you just had to pause to take it in.

*Edwards, George Lane Jr., Kirkwood, MO. Graduated June 1914. Killed in an engagement near Rheims on October 25, 1918.*

*Richard S. Sneath, Class of 1919, died 1918. Although the card does not say so, we know from Horace Taft's memoirs that he was the only student to die (along with faculty member Patrick Cawley) during the worldwide influenza pandemic that year, and that his mother*

came to school and stayed on to nurse the other boys after his death.

*Tatlock, William. Football Captain and Manager of '91. And then a handwritten note below: Mr. Taft states on 1/29/40 that he was a member of the faculty. He is deceased.*



*Ran Away.* Handwritten notations like this on many cards made us laugh, not for the unhappiness those boys must have felt to take such action but for the unadorned choice of words. The lack of explanation left me wanting to know more.

Although we believe that we finally have most of the information from these cards in our database, we still can't be sure we haven't missed some graduate who died before Mr. Taft started his cards. There are no yearbooks before 1894 to help us out, and a number of early student files were accidentally destroyed when the Warren House was torn down in 1929.

So, some mysteries will remain. Were Stillman Eells and Daniel O'Neil really the only members of the inaugural Class of 1891? We may never know.

—Julie Reiff



# Taft

BULLETIN

Summer 2010

Volume 80, Number 4

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**DEADLINES FOR ALUMNI NOTES:**  
Fall–August 30  
Winter–November 15  
Spring–February 15  
Summer–May 15

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The Taft Bulletin (ISSN 0148-0855) is published quarterly, in February, May, August and November, by The Taft School, 110 Woodbury Road, Watertown, CT 06795-2100, and is distributed free of charge to alumni, parents, grandparents and friends of the school. All rights reserved.

## Family Tree

It happens that Samuel Torrey Orton, 1897, is my ancestor. My grandfather has a whole family genealogy that explains how I am related to him. I believe we are separated by five generations! It was a great surprise, though, to open up the spring *Bulletin* and see that my ancestor was a Taftie! And more than that, to discover that I am also related to Horace Taft!

—Neve Schadler '11

## Overstated?

My wife, Leelee, and I much enjoyed your note about Samuel Torrey Orton, and wish to offer thanks to Henry Reiff '71 for suggesting the topic. Leelee, who is a school psychological examiner, has some doubts as to whether the Orton-Gillingham Method is the most prevalent form of remediation in use today (how does one arrive at that conclusion?), but clearly it is one of the more successful means of tackling the problem of dyslexia.

—John Shewmaker '56

## Pure Praise

I am struck by the extraordinary example of literary excellence embodied in the *Taft Bulletin*. It has ever been a fine publication, but recent editions have been nothing less than spectacular. My congratulations to all who have contributed to its creation, editing and publication!

—P. Hurley Bogardus '49

Other alumni wrote in to share their blog addresses. You can check them out, or check up on those we featured last issue, at [www.TaftSchool.org/alumni/bulletin/spr10/blogs.aspx](http://www.TaftSchool.org/alumni/bulletin/spr10/blogs.aspx).

## Love it? Hate it? Read it? 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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## Taft Trivia



In what year did graduating seniors first wear the iconic red and blue gowns? A Taft blanket goes to the winner, whose name will be drawn from all correct entries received. (Send your answer to [ReiffJ@TaftSchool.org](mailto:ReiffJ@TaftSchool.org).)

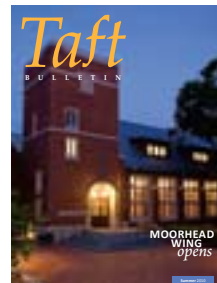
The correct answer to last issue's question is that the 1959 dining hall addition and renovation was made possible by a bequest from Captain John B. Armstrong '34. His portrait currently hangs in the Choral Room.



## We're Honored

The Council for the Advancement of Support of Education recognized the *Taft Bulletin* with a bronze medal for excellence among Independent School Magazines.

## On the Covers



◀ **Front:** The new Moorhead Wing of Horace Dutton Taft Hall at dusk, showing the new west entrance to Main Hall and the beautiful windows of the Laube Dining Hall. (see page 24.)

**Back:** Rob Quigley '85, back for his 25th Reunion, clearly enjoys the Alumni Parade, as does classmate Courtney Craft. ROBERT FALCETTI

## WWW

### Taft on the Web

Find a friend's address or look up back issues of the *Bulletin* at [www.TaftAlumni.com](http://www.TaftAlumni.com)

For more campus news and events, including admissions information, visit [www.TaftSchool.org](http://www.TaftSchool.org)

What happened at this afternoon's game? Visit [www.TaftSports.com](http://www.TaftSports.com)

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## alumni SPOTLIGHT

BY JULIE REIFF



### Your Own Personal Sleep Coach?

The original idea was to help people wake up feeling more refreshed.

“Being a typical sleep-deprived college student at Brown, that idea really resonated with me,” says Jason Donahue ’00, cofounder of Zeo Personal Sleep Coach. “Research out of the Air Force and NASA already found that waking from deep sleep results in longer-lasting and more-intense grogginess. All we needed to do was to find a way to track

sleep phases so we could wake someone up from the right moment.”

But Zeo quickly turned into a something that tracks your sleep and helps you improve it. Using a wireless headband to collect information on one’s sleep phases, Zeo then sends that data to a web- and email-based system to coach you in ways to sleep better.

“After we developed the technology to track sleep in a comfortable manner, we

started testing it with different types of users. No surprise, the under-30 crowd loved the wake-up element, but the over-30 users gave us a different response: they reviewed their daily sleep data report and were worried about the *quality* of their sleep.”

Users wanted to know if they were waking up too frequently, or not getting enough REM sleep, or if there was a way to help them fall asleep faster.

“We realized that giving someone

## Jazzed Up

Sara Jacovino '01 is an ambitious young composer, arranger and trombonist who cut her teeth in the renowned One O'Clock Lab Band at the University of North Texas.

She moved to New York about a year and a half ago and plays regularly with a number of different musicians and groups, including DIVA, who have performed at Taft and with whom Sara recently performed a European tour, the national anthem at a Yankees game and, more recently, an album at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola under the direction of Johnny Mandel. She's also played with the Artie Shaw Band and the Howard Williams Band (at the Garage every Monday night).

Already she has played with countless other amazing musicians "who have wonderful artistic visions," says Sara.

But the thing she's really jazzed about is her writing. Sara took up writing jazz for large ensembles while finishing graduate school. She has already won several awards for jazz writing and arranging from *Downbeat* magazine, including Best Original Song and Best Extended Composition.

Last fall she received the Sammy Nestico Award from the U.S. Air Force Airmen of Note, who performed a

piece of hers and also commissioned a second piece.

When Sara moved to NYC, she joined the BMI jazz composer's workshop led by Jim McNeely and was awarded the BMI Foundation's Charlie Parker Composition Award/Manny Album Commission after only her first season in the workshop.

The BMI Foundation also commissioned her to write a new piece—"Middleground"—which had its premier with the BMI New York Jazz Orchestra in July.

Sara has also formed a writing collective/jazz philharmonic with two friends called the Wanton Fawns and the Wireless Orchestra. "We were commissioned by the International Women In Brass Conference," says Sara, "to write a piece to be premiered by the Viceroy Ensemble at the June conference in Toronto, Canada." There they also presented a sold-out workshop called the Jingle Experience.

"I am accustomed to being the only woman in many of my playing situations," adds Sara, "even in college. At the University of North Texas, I was the first and only female trombonist to play tenor trombone and be a featured soloist with the One O'Clock Lab Band throughout

its entire history—and the University of North Texas is the oldest jazz program in the country."

She was also the only female instrumentalist in the band throughout her three-year tenure. "People aren't opposed to the idea of having a female trombonist," she adds "but they are usually very surprised when I show up and can play as well as I do. I have found that in the very competitive world of the NYC jazz scene ability speaks for itself. We all have a common goal of making great music."

For more information, visit [www.SaraJacovino.com](http://www.SaraJacovino.com) or [www.wantonfawns.com](http://www.wantonfawns.com).

▽ Sara Jacovino '01 conducting her composition "Ordinary Deviation" with the U.S.A.F. Airmen of Note during the Jazz Heritage Series in D.C.



access to their sleep information was not enough—we needed a program to help them improve it. So we went back into development mode and created a sleep-coaching service."

Four years after graduating from Brown, and with more than \$17 million raised in venture capital, the team finally launched Zeo in June 2009.

"It has been a surreal year," says Jason. "I did not envision all this happening

when we first started the company. I end up wearing a lot of hats, which is typical for a start-up. Recently, I've been working on the next wave of products and services from Zeo. We just launched an iPhone app to take your sleep data on the go."

Zeo has received media attention from the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times* and *USA Today*, which led to a whirlwind of PR activity: the *Today Show*, *Wired*, *Business Week*, *Vogue*,

*Huffington Post*, *Self*. There was even a photo of Regis Philbin in checkered blue pajamas and a Zeo Headband.

"People tell us all the time that Zeo has helped them sleep better," he adds, "which also resulted in losing weight, getting promoted, having more energy, being a better mother.... These kinds of stories are easily the best part about my job."

For more information, visit [www.myzeo.com](http://www.myzeo.com).

## Location, Location, Location



Todd O'Hara '02 was walking down the street in New York when the idea came to him for a new social networking application.

"I was traveling to New York quite a bit," he said, "and it was difficult to catch up with old friends. I knew at any moment I was probably only a block away from an old friend. One weekend after I returned to Chicago from a trip to New York I found out my sister had also been in New York only a block away from where I was staying. That was more or less the last straw."

He experimented with existing geolocation social networking apps—essentially a GPS-based program on your smartphone or PDA that tells you where your friends are at any given time—and quickly found that they were not quite user-friendly enough and lacked some elements that he thought were essential. So he left his job as a partner at Marquette Partners Trading and began building Toodalu full time.

"I wanted to stay away from the digital prizes and badges some apps offer," says Todd. "Although they can be fun for some users they can be seen as a nuisance to others. I also wanted to make sure any user could download and understand the app in under a minute. Four of five free downloaded apps will only be opened once. With that in mind we try to focus on that."

Toodalu has thousands of users to date and allows them to upload photos from their location. They have more updates to be released soon. For more information, visit [www.Toodalu.com](http://www.Toodalu.com).

## In the Gallery

Two alumni shows in the Mark W. Potter '48 Gallery this spring.

### Recent Work Celia Gerard '91

March 26 to April 24

In her work, Celia Gerard investigates how traces of memory form new images and representations of the present. She probes questions of form and structure while embracing accident and chance.

Celia studied with Mark Potter while at Taft. She received an MFA from the New York Studio School, an Ed.M. from Harvard University, and a BA from Colgate University. Celia is represented by Sears-Peyton Gallery in New York, NY.

### Islands Within Islands Eladio Fernandez '85

April 29 to June 29

Born on November 27, 1966, in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, Eladio Fernandez is a conservation photographer and a naturalist. He studied business at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York, and worked as a business manager for over 13 years until his love for nature and photography became a full-time job.

Eladio has one of the largest image banks on the last natural landscapes, as well as the fauna and flora of the Greater Antilles. His book *Hispaniola: A Photographic Journey through Island Biodiversity* was published by Harvard University Press in 2007.







□ Vanya Bostroem '60 gets inspiration for his work at Mono Lake, California, with his wife, Miranda. INSET: Vanya's Nautilus necklace in sterling silver, gold, dendritic agate and aquamarine

## One of a Kind

A jeweler and sculptor for more than 30 years, Vanya Bostroem '60 specializes in personal, meaningful pieces in gold, silver, brass or copper. His work is influenced by art nouveau (Lalique), Egyptian jewelry (Tutankhamen), Charles Lolama, a Hopi Indian jeweler, as well as Tolkien's concept of magic jewelry in the Fellowship of the Ring.

"I have observed the healing power of jewelry," says Vanya, "especially in custom work, where I enable clients to materialize and honor their vision of what is significant for them. My talent lies in the process of transforming a vision or idea into an evocative, wearable piece of jewelry. What is essential is that they draw from their own image bank, because it's those personal images that give meaning to the outcome."

His parents fled Russia during the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and settled in Paris, France, where he was born during World War II. At age six, he moved to Connecticut with his family. When his mother, a lawyer and teacher, saw the quality of the local high school she immediately enrolled him at Taft. After pursuing a degree in math at Boston University, Vanya supplemented his studies with courses in oceanography, welding, sculpture, lapidary and rendering. In 1970, with the encouragement of friends, and the help of books, he found his vocation, working with the noble metals and gemstones. Following an urge to work in larger format, he also studied and created bronze sculpture for 11 years while maintaining his jewelry practice.

His work has been exhibited across North America in museums, galleries and juried art fairs from San Francisco to New York to Mexico City. Living in Novato, California, with his wife of thirteen years, he is an active member of the Five Rhythms dance community and also enjoys every chance he gets to play his guitar, fiddle and mandolin. He loves hiking in the hills that surround his home and visiting the ocean as often as possible. Following 14 years of self-exploration Vanya was ordained as a Shamanic minister in 2007.

"Everyone has an artist in them," he adds. "It just takes a little coaxing on my part and temporary suspension in the belief that you are not artistic on your part." For more information, visit [www.vanyametalarts.com](http://www.vanyametalarts.com).

## Alumni Trustee

THIS SPRING ALUMNI ELECTED LEXI BROWNELL REESE '92  
AS THE NEWEST MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Lexi arrived at Taft as a lowermid and never found an extracurricular she did not like. From serving as a school monitor and leading the Taft Environmental Awareness Movement to co-editing the *Papyrus* and trying out, unsuccessfully, for Hydrox four times, Lexi was a sponge for everything Taft had to offer.

After Taft, Lexi graduated from the University of Virginia with a degree in Latin American history and spent time in Nicaragua producing a documentary film about adolescent prostitutes before joining Acción International as a public policy advocate for microfinance. She



went on to Harvard Business School, where she met her husband, Corby, in the hockey locker room (an unexpected benefit of picking up hockey at Taft).

She joined American Express in 2002 and rose quickly from a rotational program to become a director of marketing and operations in the small business division. While there, she co-founded the Make Mine a Million Program, a coaching, mentoring and financing program for women business owners. In 2007, she moved to Google to start their AdWords division on the East Coast. She has earned a reputation

as a business builder in the online media world who works fluidly across many groups to successfully grow Google's social media practice and ad network business. Most recently, Lexi became the director of sales for Google's Ad Exchange in the U.S. She is working with ad networks, major agencies and publishers to build a stock market for buying and selling ads, often cited by the Google leadership team as the company's next billion-dollar business. Outside of work, Lexi sits on the board of Citizen Schools, an extended learning program for middle schoolers in low-income districts of New York City. She lives in New York with her husband and daughter and is proud that her best friends from Taft are among the closest people in her life today.

## Musical Mentor

Glenton Davis '03 resigned from JPMorgan in 2009 to pursue his lifelong passion, music, full time. He currently has a song called "Go Get on the Floor" on the charts in Canada, which recently broke through the Top 400 songs in the country. His latest record *Are You Ready*, an EP of original and cover tunes, was released in April.

But for Glenton, this career shift has been more than just about his music. He recently established a non-profit called Soul Pop University, to connect emerging artists in the entertainment business with middle and high school students.

"In the last four months," said Glenton, "it has been an exhausting and humbling process to watch the organization grow from an operation of one to an actual enterprise with a team of seven, backed by a global corporate law firm, Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP."

Soul Pop University's first sponsored artist, Michal Towber, is an Emmy award-winning composer and songwriter for *One Life to Live* and a graduate of Columbia Law.

"What I find so exciting about the organization is that we maintain mission-based relationships with artists. It is their backstories that we find interesting, and the fresh musical perspectives they bring are the hook for both educators and students."

One of the students they have worked with is a young girl named Love at August Martin High School in Queens, NY.

"We have worked with her for over two months since first presenting at August Martin. To hear her goals, her interests and the desire to work to make them all her reality, is honestly incredible."

August Martin students also founded and run BoahVille Productions, a

production company Soul Pop sponsored and collaborated with to film a music video.

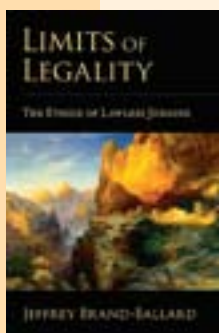
"We provided them with the equipment and transportation to help make the video," Glenton says, "and a few boxes of pizza."

"It is really great that you are following your dreams," Love wrote to Glenton. "You make me want to make my dreams come true. I still want to be a pediatrician. Thank you so much!" For more information, visit [www.soulpopuniversity.com](http://www.soulpopuniversity.com).





## IN PRINT



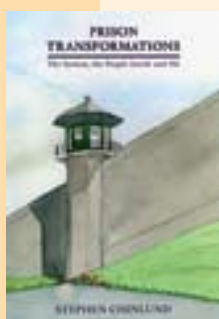
### *Limits of Legality: The Ethics of Lawless Judging*

**Jeffrey Brand-Ballard '87**

Jeffrey Brand-Ballard explores the conditions under which individual judges are morally responsible for participating in destructive patterns of lawless judging. These arguments build upon recent theories of collective intentionality and presuppose an agent-neutral framework, rather than the agent-relative framework favored by many moral philosophers.

Defying the conventional wisdom, Brand-Ballard argues that judges are not always morally obligated to apply the law correctly. Although they have an obligation not to participate in patterns of excessive judicial lawlessness, an individual departure from the law so as to avoid an unjust result is rarely a moral mistake if the rule of law is otherwise healthy.

Brand-Ballard is associate professor of philosophy and public policy at George Washington University. Read more at <http://home.gwu.edu/~jbb/>



### *Prison Transformations: The System, the People Inside and Me*

**Stephen Chinlund '51**

*Prison Transformations* follows an inspiring and encouraging story of the people who made prison a better place for themselves and for others. For almost five decades, Chinlund

worked with men and women locked up inside to help them find freedom within themselves even while they were in prison. He also helped them after their release back into the community.

Chinlund also served as a prison warden and a former chairman of the New York State Commission of Correction.

After growing up in New York City, going to good schools and being ordained as an Episcopal priest, Chinlund started working inside as a volunteer. He knew that they could help each other more effectively than he could help them by preaching or even counseling them himself. He also recognized the need to help the men and women after they were released and developed counseling and job training on the outside. Parole, at the time, provided none of that.

### *Why We Cooperate*

**Michael Tomasello '68**

WITH CAROL DWECK, JOAN SILK, BRIAN SKYRMS AND ELIZABETH SPELKE

Drop something in front of a two-year-old, and she's likely to pick it up for you. This is not a learned behavior, psychologist Michael Tomasello argues. Through observations of young children in experiments he himself has designed, Tomasello shows that children are naturally—and uniquely—cooperative. Put through similar experiments, for example, apes demonstrate the

ability to work together and share, but choose not to.

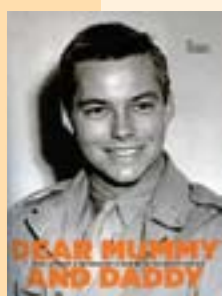
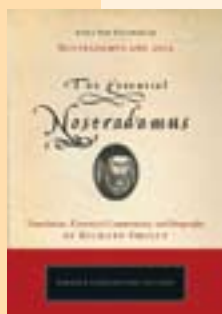
As children grow, their almost reflexive desire to help—without expectation of reward—becomes shaped by culture. They become more aware of being a member of a group. Groups convey mutual expectations, and thus may either encourage or discourage altruism and collaboration. Either way, cooperation emerges as a distinctly human combination of innate and learned behavior.

In *Why We Cooperate*, Tomasello's studies of young children and great apes help identify the underlying psychological processes that very likely supported humans' earliest forms of complex collaboration and, ultimately, our unique forms of cultural organization, from the evolution of tolerance and trust to the creation of such group-level structures as cultural norms and institutions.

"The fascinating approach to the question of what makes us human renders this a singularly worthwhile read," writes *Publishers Weekly*.

Tomasello is co-director of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig. He is the author of *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition* and *Constructing a Language: A Usage-Based Theory of Language Acquisition*.

## IN PRINT



### *The Essential Nostradamus*

**Richard Smoley '74**

The prophecies of Nostradamus have ignited intense fascination throughout the West since they were first published in the 16th century. These enigmatic quatrains have gained special meaning for many during our current countdown to the year 2012.

The relationship between Nostradamus's prophecies and the Mayan prophecy of 2012 is hotly debated over the internet and is the focus of today's most popular television documentaries. Now *The Essential Nostradamus*—the definitive literal translation of his key verses—is redesigned, reset and repackaged in an affordable and beautifully produced volume with a new afterword by Smoley that fully assesses the question of Nostradamus's prophecies in relation to 2012, engaging readers who are hungry to learn more and want help sorting fact from fiction.

Smoley is a graduate of Harvard College and Oxford University. He was a long-time editor of the respected spiritual journal *Gnosis* and is the author of many books, including *The Dice Game of Shiva* and *Inner Christianity*, and is the coauthor of *Hidden Wisdom*. He is widely considered one of today's finest writers on esoteric spiritual topics. Smoley lives in Wheaton, Illinois, where he is the editor of *Quest: Journal of the Theosophical Society in America* and of *Quest Books*.

### *Dear Mummy and Daddy: WWII Letters & Memoirs of a Marine in the South Pacific*

**Corydon Wagner III '43**

When Judy Wagner found a box of her husband Cordy's old letters, written with deep caring against the backdrop of World War II, she had the idea for a book of his stories, with the old mailed letters included. "Here," Cordy writes, "is a fabric of history in turbulent times."

The book is meticulously documented with maps, a timeline and background details, but the star attraction is the letters, faithfully duplicated along with their envelopes, with the handwriting thoughtfully transcribed on the following pages.

Some of Cordy's subsequent articles about his experiences in Peleliu and his meeting with General Tojo's daughter in 1999 are also included.

This book is perfect for anyone interested in World War II's Pacific theater and especially for those who appreciate the wealth of primary source material found here.

### *Campsteading: Family, Place, and Experience at Squam Lake, New Hampshire*

**Derek Brereton '64**

The campstead is an American institution. After the Civil War, with neocolonialism, environmentalism, and arts-and-crafts on the rise, some families sought rural locations for rustic camps. There they raised their children in the summer. Around Squam Lake, after some eight generations, 21 such camps remain in these families.

The Squam area thus becomes a natural place to study relationships of persons and places, families and landscape, and humans and the world. Today's concern for environmental stewardship, open space protection and core values instead of consumerism, makes this a good time to revisit the simple American Campstead.

Derek Brereton's book is the first detailed account of campsteading, the first application of critical realism in anthropology, and the first anthropological use of John Dewey's evolutionary model of experience. Building on Dewey, the author further analyses experience into its levels, orders, and features.

Brereton teaches anthropology, sociology and evolutionary psychology at Adrian College, Michigan. He is on the editorial board of the *Journal of Critical Realism* and has published numerous journal articles on the subject of anthropology and critical realism.



For the latest news  
on campus events,  
please visit  
TaftSchool.org.

▽ The Varsity A team of Toan Duc Phan, Brian Jang, Adrian Fu, Haroon Khera, Alyssa Chen, Ron Park, Chantal Yuen, and Julie Nam (not pictured), coached by Jim Mooney, was named the Best Overall National First Place Team in the Junior Engineering Technical Society's (JETS) annual TEAMS competition. YEE-FUN YIN

## *around the* **POND**

BY SAM ROUTHIER



### JETS Team Takes home **National Championship**

The varsity team of seniors Brian Jang, Toan Duc Phan, Haroon Khera, Adrian Fu, Ron Park, and uppermids Alyssa Chen, Julie Nam and Chantal Yuen, coached by Jim Mooney and Jim Lehner, was named the Grade 11/12 Level A Best Overall National First Place Team in the Junior Engineering Technical Society's

(JETS) annual TEAMS competition.

"Put simply, this means our team was the best in the country," said Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78, "among public and private schools—and it means that Taft has some of the sharpest math and physics minds in the country, and some of the best teachers as well."

The contest featured more than 900 teams and 10,000 students from 42 states. As a result of their victory, the Taft team earned \$2,500, a trophy and a trip to Walt Disney World to see engineering in action.

*—continued on next page*

## An Honor to Host on Campus

Poet Honor Moore visited Taft to engage students in her craft. During her day at Taft, Moore taught the senior Experiments in Writing class, and then followed up with a community-wide poetry reading at Walker Hall. During the reading, she spiced up the entertainment by providing anecdotes about the origins of each poem, and taught the audience that “poetry can be both personal and playful.”

English department head Jen Zaccara met Moore at the Wesleyan Writer’s Conference, where she was Zaccara’s teacher.

“With Honor Moore on campus,” Zaccara said, “students learned that poets possess a love for language, and that language is the medium with which they work. The act of composing poetry bears striking similarities to the creation of art in other media—clay, paint, photography.”



△ Renowned poet Honor Moore gave a reading this spring in Walker Hall. MARION ETTLINGER

—continued from previous page

The contest featured two sections. In part one, the questions are very specific and require detailed calculations to arrive at an answer. Part two consists of open-ended responses that are extensions of the test’s earlier portion. In this competition, the questions revolved around a theme of “Water, Water Everywhere,” inspired by the global problems of finding clean water for underserved populations.

“We were excited to represent Taft in a positive way,” said Haroon. “The teachers were really supportive in getting us ready, and it’s great that we were able to make the school proud.”

Taft also fielded three other teams: a second 11/12 grade team and two 9/10 grade teams, with the varsity B team coming in 4th in Connecticut, and the younger teams coming in 2nd and 3rd in their Connecticut division.

In addition to the JETS competition, Taft students have participated in robotics competitions this spring. In April, Mooney led 17 students to the Trinity College Fire Fighting Competition, where teams collaborated to construct a robot that would successfully navigate a maze, find a fire and extinguish it. In May, four other teams competed at Boston University. (See page 38.)

For a look at the complete results or some of the questions, visit [www.jets.org/teams/](http://www.jets.org/teams/)



△ Celebrity Octomom (Julie Ecker '11) tests the patience of the staff (Sachika Balvani '12) at Hotel Elizabeth. PETER FREW '75

## No Vacancy

Acting teacher Helena Fifer created a new assignment for her advanced acting classes this spring: Each student would write a play, and then the group would vote on which to perform.

The assignment inspired Matt Padilla '12, who came up with the idea and script for *Hotel Elizabeth*. This serial play involved different celebrities signing into a hotel and having a range of interactions with what Padilla calls the “eccentric employees.” The play went up in the

Woodward Black Box Theater to a packed house in late May.

“This play reaffirmed my belief that hard work and dedication can be a beautiful thing,” says Matt, “and truly does pay off in the end. This assignment also strengthened my play-writing skills. I had a great time, and everyone in the class did an amazing job and truly deserves to be recognized for their hard work. Mrs. Fifer is an amazing teacher. She loves and is very enthusiastic about what she does.”



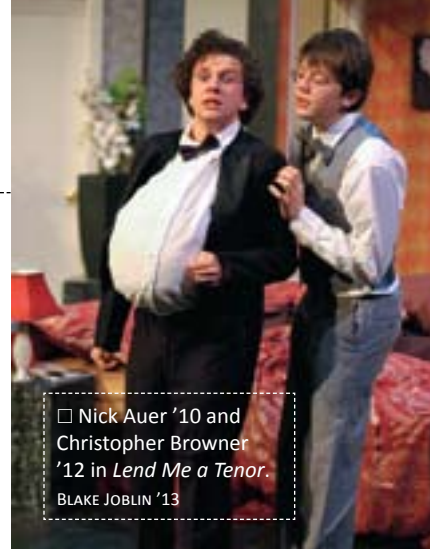
## A Romp of a Spring Play

*Lend Me a Tenor*, an adaptation of the 1986 hit farce by Ken Ludwig and directed by Rick Doyle and lowermid Kash Griffith, was a huge hit in April.

"The play was hilarious," said Carmen Pullella '12. "The students were awesome actors, and it was clear they had worked really hard at it. It's

cool how we do a serious play like *Ragtime* in the fall and then a lighter one in the winter and spring."

The cast included rising Taft theater stars Nick Auer '10, Ernest Lam '11 and Jillian Wipfler '13, as well as senior drama-award winner Lara Watling '10.



□ Nick Auer '10 and Christopher Browner '12 in *Lend Me a Tenor*.  
BLAKE JOBLIN '13

## Lincoln Center

It was no ordinary Tuesday afternoon when the Taft Chamber Orchestra and Jazz Band boarded the bus on Headmaster's Circle for a trip to Lincoln Center, not to listen—but to play!

As part of the America's Youth in Concert show, the Chamber Orchestra opened its segment with Rossini's *Barber of Seville* overture, followed by Arcangelo Corelli's *Pastorale* from the

Christmas Concerto, featuring middlers Michelle Chang and Tae Young Woo on violin and uppermidders Sophia Garrow and Oliver Kwon on cello.

The Jazz Band wowed the crowd with B.B. King and Bobby Bland's "Let the Good Times Roll," featuring David Florence '10 on tenor saxophone, Sam Jack '10 on baritone saxophone and Daniel Sheehan '13 on piano.

The finale, with all of the Taft

musicians, was "Cissy Strut" by George Porter Jr.

"It was so much fun," said Sophia, "It was crazy to step out onto the same stage and sit in the same seat as all of the greats who have performed at Lincoln Center. It was a surreal moment just to sit down and look out into the audience knowing that the famous musicians of our time experienced the same sight. I hope we can do it again next year!"



□ The combined Taft Chamber Orchestra and Jazz Band perform at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall in April. BRIAN DAIGLE

## Showcasing Student Passions

Despite the stress of the college process and challenging course loads, senior year at Taft also presents opportunities for students to exercise their own creativity and interest in academic settings. The senior research thesis encourages students



△ Seniors Wai Srifa and Thu Pham explore Thai and Vietnamese cooking for their Senior Project. PETER FREW '75

to investigate a topic of their own choosing in crafting a forceful argument, while senior projects allow students to create a product that corresponds with a legacy they'd like to leave for the school.

This year's projects were no exception.

Senior Biz Brauer is nothing if not a raving Big Red fanatic, and her project of creating a Self-Guided Walking Tour of Taft put her ardor for the school on full display. Biz worked with the Admissions Office here, and after experiencing a self-guided tour at the University of Richmond, found a way that she could contribute.

"The book is multipurposed, and it can even act as a training guide for Taft tour guides," Biz said. "It was great for me to learn about Taft's vibrant history, to work outside the confines of the typical academic realm, and to create something that the school can really use."

Some other projects:

Isaac Dost, Aislinn McLaughlin and Anna Stransky used the opportunity to record and produce an album of choral music.

Naeem Ahmad and Jan Stransky teamed up on behalf of the Goodrich Foundation, a nonprofit group that sponsors Afghan students at New England independent schools. Their series of events, called "Pull for Peace" (both are rowers), included a day of reduced food in the dining hall and T-shirt sales for spring concert.

The seniors all reflect positively on their experience with their projects. "In the end all our hard work paid off," said Aislinn. "I enjoyed working on something that wasn't restricted by the boundaries of an academic course. I'd really recommend it to any student."

## Work Hard. Be Nice.

A highlight of life at Taft is the guest speaker series that graces the campus each year. With brilliant authors, global humanitarians, documentary filmmakers and artists, students are exposed to new cultures and ideas. This April, David Levin, co-founder of KIPP, spent a day at Taft.

Levin began KIPP, which stands

▽ KIPP founder Dave Levin answers questions for students and faculty after his Morning Meeting talk in April. His visit was sponsored by the Paley Family Endowment. PETER FREW '75



for Knowledge is Power Program, in 1994 in Houston with co-founder Mike Feinberg. The two had a vision for education, and the program now involves over 82 charter schools and 20,000 students in 19 different states. He co-founded the program during his term as a Teach for America corps member—TFA founder Wendy Kopp was last year's Paley speaker.

The Taft community sought to learn as much as possible from Levin during his day on campus. He started by giving a Morning Meeting speech that encouraged students to have vision to change their worlds to match what they know is right. During the rest of the day, he met with dorm faculty, the deans group, and department heads to share his insights on curriculum design, character education, and the national educational achievement gap.

"Having David Levin with us for

a day—and having read the book about him, *Work Hard. Be Nice.*—was special," said Dean of Faculty Chris Torino. "In the midst of an ever-busy semester, his sense of humor, keen understanding of how learning happens and balanced humility inspired us to reflect on what we do in teaching at Taft."

Levin's visit was sponsored by the Paley Family Endowment, established in 2006 by Valerie and Jeffrey Paley '56 to support the Paley Lectures, an annual program of visiting speakers. Invited speakers address the school community on current issues of major significance, such as government, journalism, foreign affairs, environment and civil liberties, in order to provide Taft students with the opportunity to be inspired by the value and dignity of lives filled with purpose and commitment.



## Green Fair II

For the second straight year, Taft hosted a Watertown area Green Fair to supplement the school's observation of Earth Day. Though the event faced an initial cancellation due to weather, the second go-around proved successful and exciting for the school's green movement.

"We try to bring vendors together to expose students to what options for consuming are out there besides big box stores," says TEAM advisor Carly Borken, "and to have them get used to supporting

their local producers as a habit for the future. Buying local and green pays off, and the Green Fair provides a great forum to get that message across."

Borken also says the event was well-received within the community, and praised the students for how polite and inquisitive they were around the outside vendors. The fair lasted four hours and featured 20 different local businesses, a clothing and sneaker drive, and a book and media swap.

▽ Brightly colored fish made by a local crafter from recycled picket fences become the hot new dorm décor at the Green Fair. TAFT ANNUAL



△ Bingham Auditorium is transformed for the band Hi-Fi to shoot its latest music video. BLAKE JOBLIN '13

## Students star in Music Video

On Saturday night, April 17, Bingham Auditorium morphed into a rock concert hall straight out of "Livin' on a Prayer," as the 10-piece band HiFi shot a music video for their hit single, "She's My Girl." The band played a 90-minute concert featuring hits from what they called "The Golden Era of Rock," and interspersing takes of their video. The band was connected to Taft through Brad Joblin '73, who works in the music industry. In addition, Gibson Guitars was one of the group's sponsors, and donated a guitar to Taft to be raffled off with proceeds going to the Red Cross.



## Blue Planet

When Steph Manley '11 returned from the Bahamas' Island School this past January, she brought with her a new passion for sustainability and for community building around environmental issues. With that desire came initiative toward Taft's first Blue Planet Run. The Blue Planet Run Foundation is a

nonprofit organization that seeks to bring healthy drinking water to developing nations. With help from faculty adviser Carly Borken, Manley was able to rally 20 students and raise \$200 for the organization.

Other outreach efforts this spring included walks for AIDS and MS and the semiannual blood drive.

◁ Steph Manley '11 and her mom, Maria, run for a Blue Planet. CARLY BORKEN

## General Abizaid

Focusing on the all-important geography of the Middle East, General John Abizaid—this year's DuBois Fellowship speaker—explained the primary reasons for United States involvement in the region.

"What makes this region so important for us is that the economic engine of the world is fueled by the oil that flows from this area," he said. "And it has fallen to the U.S. to protect those lifelines to the global economy."

He also made clear that oil is only one reason—along with the rise of Sunni and Shiite extremism and the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict—for the U.S. and the U.N. to care about what happens in the Middle East.

"Our whole hope," he said, "is that extremists do not get the upper hand in the region.... Contrary to popular opinion, we are not trying to take over this part of the world."

John Abizaid is a retired general in the United States Army and former commander of the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), overseeing American military operations in a 27-country region, from the Horn of Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, to South and Central Asia, covering much of the Middle East. CENTCOM oversees 250,000 U.S. troops. Abizaid succeeded



△ Headmaster Willy MacMullen '78 and Chaplain Bob Ganung welcome General Abizaid as this year's DuBois Fellowship speaker. PETER FREW '75

General Tommy Franks as Commander, USCENTCOM, in 2003, and was also elevated to the rank of 4-star general the same week. General Abizaid retired from the military on May 1, 2007, after 34 years of service.

"I was extremely impressed with Abizaid's talk," said Mark Simone '10. "Although his views were a bit controversial in the eyes of the student body, I thought he presented them with a really balanced, intelligent perspective."

Abizaid assumed the Distinguished Chair of the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point in December 2007. In 2008 he was also selected as a Montgomery Fellow at Dartmouth College.

Abizaid was born in Coleville, California, to a Lebanese-American father and a Palestinian-American mother. He is fluent in Arabic and was

the most senior U.S. military officer of direct Arab descent. He studied Arabic in Jordan, where he received special forces training. His military education includes Infantry Officer Basic and Advanced courses, Armed Forces Staff College, and a U.S. Army War College Senior Fellowship at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. In his civilian studies, he earned a Master of Arts degree in Area Studies at Harvard University, and was an Olmsted Scholar at the University of Jordan in Amman, Jordan.

Abizaid's talk was sponsored by the Rear Admiral Raymond F. DuBois Fellowship in International Affairs, which offers Taft students the opportunity to learn more about international affairs through annual presentations by guest lecturers.

## Hiroshima Survivors

Seiko Michaels' Japanese language students spent time with survivors from the atomic blasts in Hiroshima during WWII who were visiting the U.S. for the Peace Conference at the U.N. The delegation also addressed the school at Morning Meeting.

The visit was sponsored by the Hiroshima Alliance for Nuclear Weapons Abolition [HANWA], an

umbrella organization whose goal is to eliminate all nuclear weapons.

Survivors reflected on Japan's modern history, and implored students to consider a reduction of nuclear arms as a solution to 21st-century global problems.

You can listen to their Morning Meeting talk at [www.TaftSchool.org/students/meetings.aspx](http://www.TaftSchool.org/students/meetings.aspx).



▷ A Hiroshima survivor talks with students after Morning Meeting. YEE-FUN YIN



## All-School Summer Read

While the world focuses on the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico this summer, students and faculty will focus on another disaster in that area as the school reads Dave Eggers' 2009 non-fiction story, *Zeitoun*.

Set in New Orleans immediately after Hurricane Katrina, *Zeitoun* chronicles the journey of Syrian-American Abdulrahman Zeitoun, his wife Kathy, and their four children as they face the storm's terrifying aftermath.

"It's the stuff of great narrative non-fiction," *New York Times* critic Timothy

Egan wrote in a review last August. "Eggers, the boy wonder of good intentions, has given us 21st-century Dickensian storytelling—which is to say, a character-driven potboiler with a point... There are no rants against President Bush, no cheap shots at the authorities who let this city drown. He does it the old-fashioned way: with show-not-tell prose, in the most restrained of voices."

The book implicitly asks questions about the function of government, about our relationships with our

neighbors and fellow citizens, and about the nature of compassion.

Previous selections for the all-school summer read include *Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri, *Nickel and Dimed* by Barbara Ehrenreich, Tracy Kidder's *Mountains Beyond Mountains*, *Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini, *Never Cry Wolf* by Farley Mowat, *Ship Fever* by Andrea Barrett, *House of Sand and Fog* by Andre Dubus, *Color of Water* by James McBride and *Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn.



## United Cultures at Taft

According to Andrew Yoo '11, bringing together people of diverse backgrounds to talk about culture and race is a "challenging task." However, he and his peers in the United Cultures at Taft club know that taking advantage of Taft's multiculturalism is a worthwhile and important goal.

The club meets once a month to explore topics relating to students' backgrounds. ChiChi Madu '09, for instance, gave a presentation on Nigerian culture, while Ally Hamilton '11 highlighted her love for Jamaican dance.

The group also frequently hosts feeds centered around international cuisine.

"UCT is an important piece of the Taft club scene," Yoo said. "The major challenge has been getting people to realize that this isn't a 'black students club' or an 'Asian students club,' but a Taft club. We're making progress though."

As UCT looks to next year, they are excited about integrating their work into all-school assemblies and weekend activities in order to enhance the campus's awareness and interest.

## Doing a Little Jig

A highlight of the spring has been the end of the two-year construction project on Taft's dining halls. One element of this is the revival of the Jigger Shop and student union—the area that Headmaster Willy MacMullen frequently calls "the students' own space." The newly constructed rooms now feature a grill and counter for food orders, a pingpong table, two foosball tables, and a custom red-felt pool table. "There is nothing better than having a space we can call our own," remarked senior Caroline Castellano. "With the new additions to the Jig the enthusiasm and excitement have only made it better."

▽ John Barr '10 aims for the side pocket on the Jigger Shop's custom red-felt pool table. Seniors were very happy to have the space back for the spring term.



## Promoted/Departed/Hired/Honored

### PROMOTED

- Tom Antonucci, *Taft Summer School Director*
- Jim Lehner, *Science Department Chair*
- Will Orben '92, *Uppermid Class Dean*

### DEPARTED

- Mike Aroesty, *Admissions*
- Kevin Conroy, *Spanish*
- Emy Fontaine, *History*
- Ashley Goodrich-Mahoney, *History*
- Jason Honsel, *College Counseling*
- Kristin Honsel, *Dorm Head*
- Alexandra Kelly '05, *Science*
- Seiko Michaels, *Japanese*
- Sharon Phelan, *English*
- Sam Routhier, *Math, History*
- Nick Smith, *Science*
- Johnny Webster, *Spanish*
- Tony Wion, *Math*

### HIRED

- Winnie Adrian, *Science Fellow*
- Jonathan Bender, *Spanish*
- Megan Boulger, *History*
- Chris Chung, *Math Fellow*
- Nikki Glazer '05, *Spanish Fellow*
- Jessica Hayward, *Math*
- Gary Kan '03, *Chinese, Physics*
- Jennifer Bogue Kenerson, *Math*
- David Kievet, *Arts, Technical Theater*

- Jamella Lee, *Global Service and Scholarship Department Chair*
- Simón Ponce, *Spanish Fellow*
- Jessie Ramos-Wiley, *College Counseling*
- Sarah Sanborn, *Admissions, English*
- Claire Sheldon, *Math Fellow*

### HONORED

- Danny Murphy, *Porteous Faculty Speaker*
- Ginger O'Shea, *The Anna Howe Faculty Award, Master's School*

### SABBATICAL LEAVES

- Stephen and Susan McCabe

### GOOD-BYES

When Gail Ayers arrived at Taft in 1984 that big building by the pond was still a gymnasium. There have been other changes, too. After her many years with the Summer School, Gail became assistant to the dean of faculty. She retires this summer after 24 years of service to the school.

Graceann Hess began her career in the Development Office under Jerry Romano but Headmaster Lance Odden recognized her talent and brought her over to the Main Hall, where she's continued to keep the current headmaster in line. She also retires this summer, after 17 years of service to the school.



△ Graceann Hess and Gail Ayers retire.



## Top Colleges

Here are the schools where the top 20 percent of the senior class is planning to enroll this fall:

Boston U.  
Bowdoin  
Colgate  
Columbia  
Concordia (Canada)  
Cornell  
Dartmouth  
Drexel  
Emory  
Harvard  
Northeastern  
Northwestern (2)  
NYU (2)  
Oberlin  
Penn  
Scripps  
Stanford  
Tufts (3)  
UC Berkeley  
Virginia  
Wesleyan  
Yale



▷ Head mon  
Jake Cohen '11.  
ANDRE LI '11

## Student Government Election Results

Jake Cohen was elected head monitor for the Class of 2011. He is joined by school monitors Jake Albert, Nick Auer, Lauren Bly, Ann Cantwell, John Canver, Ebony Easley, Sara Guernsey, Edmund Gyasi, Bess Lovern, Kate Moreau and J.C. Sites



## spring **SPORT** wrap-up

BY STEVE PALMER

### Girls Crew 4–2

This year's team was young, with only three returning seniors. Nonetheless, the team saw some notable successes, including a bronze medal from the fourth boat at the Founders Day Regatta. In addition, all four boats earned bids to the New England Championship Regatta, where the team finished 12th, but the last race of the regular season was the highlight. Taft won the Alumnae Cup, sweeping the Gunnery, Canterbury and Berkshire in all five events. With eight returning uppermids on the first and second boats, the team is looking forward to a strong showing next year, behind Emily Ewing '11 and Hannah Dethlefs '12 who led the first boat as the stern pair. Additionally, Liz Sangree '11 beat the Taft record for a 2k erg test, pulling a time of 7:27.9.

### Boys Crew 3–2

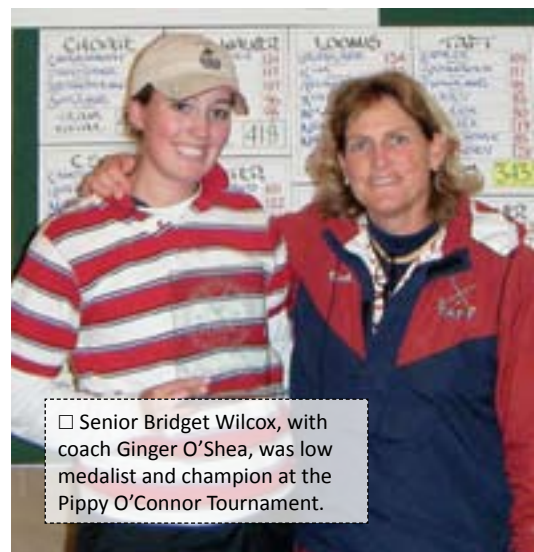
The team had early season wins over Berkshire and Canterbury before the loss of several key rowers made for adjustments across the four boats. The Rhinos found their rhythm for the Smith Cup, where they battled Gunnery for the title and defeated South Kent, Berkshire and Canterbury. At the end of season New England Championship Regatta, the #1 and #3 boats had great runs to make the Petite and Grand Finals respectively. Fil Stransky '11,

Tommy Mulroy '11, Kris Bae '11, Keefe Rafferty '10, and Sam Willson '11 powered the first boat, while co-captains Jan Stransky '10 and Max Mortimer '10 anchored the second boat.

### Girls Golf 15–1

**FOUNDERS LEAGUE CHAMPIONS;  
PIPPY O'CONNOR TOURNAMENT  
CHAMPIONS**

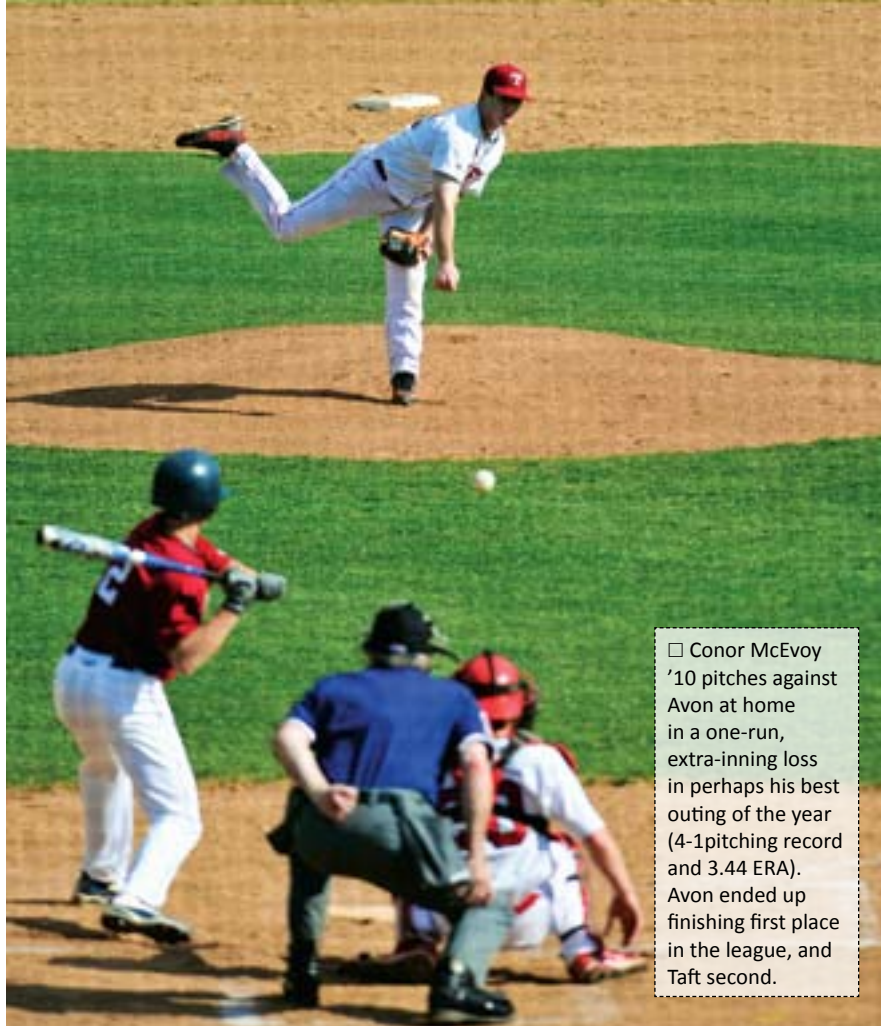
Taft proved that they were the strongest golf team in New England by walking away with the titles at the Founders League tournament and the Pippy O'Connor Independent School Girls Golf Classic, which serves as the New England invitational. In both tournaments, the Rhinos won by a huge margin due to very strong, tight team play—16 strokes over Choate and 33 strokes over Greenwich Academy respectively. Also in both tournaments, Taft had the individual medalist: Bridget Wilcox '10 led the way at the Classic with a low score of 80, while Ali Eeley '12 tied for the low score (38) at the League tournament. Wilcox and Eeley gave Taft an incredible 1–2 punch, but the team dominated by having a very strong top four. Nikki Yatsenick '12 (8th at the League tournament) and captain Alex Dowling '10 (3rd at the League tournament) gave Taft that unbeatable top four all season. Finally, in regular season matches, Taft won several exciting contests by a 3–2 score over Choate, GA and Ethel Walkers.



□ Senior Bridget Wilcox, with coach Ginger O'Shea, was low medalist and champion at the Pippy O'Connor Tournament.

### Boys Golf 6–7

This was a young varsity team that made nice strides in competing against some fine golfers. Improving course management and “staying in the present” were constant themes that made for solid wins over Kingswood (422–424), Kent (424–427) and Hotchkiss (216–230). Captain Hunter Yale '10 was co-medalist in the Founders League Championship at Hotchkiss, where he posted a fine 74 in windy conditions to lead Taft to a close 3rd place, just four shots off of leader Choate. At the 36th Kingswood Invitational, Henry Wesson '13 shot a 76, which was just three strokes off the winning score. Henry's score was one of the lowest a Taft lower-middler has posted in the 36 years Taft has competed in the KIT.



□ Conor McEvoy '10 pitches against Avon at home in a one-run, extra-inning loss in perhaps his best outing of the year (4-1 pitching record and 3.44 ERA). Avon ended up finishing first place in the league, and Taft second.

## Softball 10-3

### NEW ENGLAND SEMIFINALISTS

Taft made the postseason for the second time in three years behind great pitching and very balanced hitting. Their bid for a New England title came to an abrupt end against the eventual champions, Westminster, in a 1-0 thriller. The team was marked by great senior leadership from Katie Carden '10 and Clement Perkins '10, as well as great talent at all positions in the field. Jess Desorcie '11 and Kate Moreau '11 were both named Founders League All-Stars as they led the team in hitting, and served as the middle of the infield defensively. Taylor McGee '12 was amongst the league's top backstops, as she was a major piece of the team's success and played in the All-Star Game in early May. And lastly, Rhyddian Glass '12 won the Softball Award for her stellar work in the pitching circle. Glass accumulated a 0.50 ERA, with 171 strikeouts and only 11 walks in 70 innings pitched.

## Baseball 15-4

The Rhinos completed with their best record in several years with second-place finishes in both the Founders and Colonial leagues. Highlights included seven- and five-game win streaks and a record of 4-0 against non-league teams, including big wins against Deerfield (16-3) and previously unbeaten Salisbury (1-0). For the season, Taft's batting average was .331, with a .418 on-base percentage. The team's offensive philosophy and goal was to score one run an inning; and, in 145 innings, they finished the season averaging 1.03 runs per inning, while their opponents averaged 0.59 runs per inning. On the mound, the team ERA was 3.44, with Mike Moran '11 dominating and finishing with a record of 7-1 with 4 saves and a 1.99 ERA (at the plate Moran hit 6 home runs). Co-captain Conor McEvoy '10 went 4-1 on the mound with a 3.44 ERA and put up great offensive numbers, batting .408 with 8

doubles, 2 home runs, 10 stolen bases, and a team-leading 25 runs scored. Jake Cantoni '10 also provided critical offense, leading the team with a .443 batting average with 8 doubles, 3 home runs, 10 stolen bases, and 27 RBI. Moran, Cantoni, and McEvoy were named Colonial League All-Stars, and Co-Captain Greg Bayliss '10 received honorable mention.

## Girls Tennis 11-2

This year's squad succeeded with teamwork and steady play from the #1 singles spot to the #3 doubles. Taft beat Deerfield (5-2) early in the season for the first time in ten years, an indication of what was to come. The Rhinos followed this up with a huge win over an undefeated GA team (5-2), and then the highlight of the season, a stunning 4-3 victory over undefeated New England powerhouse Kingswood-Oxford. That unlikely win set up the home match-up with Hotchkiss for the league title, a tough 3-4 loss that was an exciting, intense match at every position. Captains Ali Connolly '10 and Sarah Maxwell '10 led the team at #1 doubles, while Julia Hodges '10 completed an undefeated season at #2 doubles. She and Lydie Abood '11 were selected for all League honors. Newcomers, Katie Knowlton '12, Maddie Rollings '12, and Courtney Jones '13 were also central to the spirit and success of this great season.

## Boys Tennis 9-5

With the ladder in full health, Taft was a very strong team, as evidenced by their 6-1 defeat of perennial rival Choate, but the Rhinos seldom had all eight able to play. They did finish the season with their best effort, an unexpected 5-2 win over New England Champion Hopkins, followed by a solid 5-2 win over Kent. At the League tournament, the SNETL, captain Cam Mullen '10



won at #5 singles, and co-captain elect Philippe Simard '11 and Jagger Riefler '13 won at #1 doubles to place Taft 2nd overall as a team. Simard and Riefler formed Taft's strongest point all spring, and Simard had a great season as the top singles player also. Ryan Collier '10 was steady at singles and teamed up with Mullen to form a strong #2 doubles team. Co-captain elect Herbie Klotz '11 played well at #2 singles and combined with Austin Dixon '11 for many wins at #3 doubles.

## Girls Lacrosse 10–5

The Rhino's solid 10–5 record included great victories against Berkshire (23–14) and Convent of the Sacred Heart (12–8), but the highlight of the season was the exciting overtime win against rival Hotchkiss. Taft would score the final three goals of the game to tie the score 14–14, then co-captain Erin Flanagan '10 scored her 6th goal of the game in OT to seal the win. Flanagan was the team's leading scorer for the second consecutive season. Laurel Pascal '12 was also a significant contributor to the team's offensive efforts, and both were named NEPSWLA All Stars. Pell Birmingham '11 anchored the defense for which she was named a Founders League All Star along with Julia Van Sant '11.

## Boys Lacrosse 10–6

This strong team started the season 3–4 but finished on a 7–2 run. Clearly, the highlight of the season was the thrilling 7–6 OT win over Hotchkiss on Alumni day. Matt Hauck '11, an All-League selection, scored that game-winning goal and finished with a team high 36 goals. Captain Bo Redpath '10—who set up the goal against Hotchkiss—finished a tremendous career with 114 total points (54g, 60a). He was a two-time All-Founders League Player, a two-time

All-Western New England selection, and a participant in the National North/South game. Goalie Thomas Freyre '10 was tremendous in net all year, stopping 62% of the shots (he also scored one goal) and was also named All-Western New England. Senior Andrew Vivian was an All-New England selection and the team leader in points (35g, 24a).

## Girls Track 7–4

The Rhinos were a balanced team with strength in the hurdles, sprints and weight events. In perhaps their best meet of the year, Taft easily outdistanced rival Hotchkiss (93–56) and Suffield (93–23). They also battled League champion Loomis to the final event, the 4x400 meter relay, before the Pelicans won it (76–69). Captain Kristen Proe '10 set a new school record in winning the 100 meter hurdles at the Founders League Championships (15.89), and came close to the school record in winning the triple jump by over a foot at the New England Championships (35'9"). At that meet she scored 22 of Taft's 32 points. Idara Foster '11 was a force in the sprints all

season, placing 2nd in both the 100 meters and 200 meters at the League meet and finishing with season bests of 12.4 (100m) and 26.6 (200m). Lucy Aziz '11 was the Founders League champion in the pole vault, tying the school record at 8'6".

## Boys Track 6–5

Taft earned a winning record by defeating rival Hotchkiss in the final regular season meet for the first time in many years. The Rhinos would also edge out Choate by two points, and scored solid wins over strong teams from Berkshire (79–66) and Kingswood (85–51). The 400 was clearly the team's strength, with Louie Reed '11 and tri-captain Mike Petchonka '10 placing 2nd and 4th at the New England Championships. Both would team up with John Barr '10 and Connor Partridge '10 to place 2nd in the 4x400m relay in 3:28 for the second year in a row. Tri-captain Abe Gatling '10 and Quincy Bagsby '10 also scored big points in the long and triple jumps all season, while Eric Bodnar '10 (javelin) and Alan Chen '10 (discus) led the team in the weight events.



□ Senior co-captain Kahini Dalal at number 1, prepares to whip another forehand as she helped the team to an 11–2 record.



## ANNUAL FUND *report 2009–10*



△ Dylan T. Simonds '89 and brother Jack '13

Even if the 2009–10 Annual Fund effort had not been set against the backdrop of a challenging economic environment, this would still have been a remarkable year. Taft alumni/ae, parents, grandparents and friends raised \$3,593,796 for our school—equal to more than \$6,000 per student—eclipsing last year's fundraising record. I offer my most sincere thanks and congratulations to the entire Taft community for its perseverance, generosity and loyalty in this great achievement.

Of that record-breaking total, 38% of our alumni raised \$1,505,064, a wonderful accomplishment in these difficult times. This result stands as testament to the outstanding effort of our class agents and volunteers, who work very hard to build and sustain vibrant connections between Taft and our alumni body. Few of us enjoy being solicited for donations, and fewer still prize the responsibility to conduct that work. It requires discipline, time, enthusiasm and fortitude to make “the ask,” and hundreds of Taft alumni and student volunteers have taken on this role in the true spirit of service to Taft. This year's performance, and the consistent contributions of our corps of volunteers, bodes very well for next year's campaign, and for Taft's future.

Not to be outdone by our alumni contingent, current Taft parents had an extraordinary showing by contributing \$1,561,630 to the Parents' Fund, with 93% participation. As impressive as that result is in the context of our own program, our Parents' Fund has once again set the standard among all such funds at the nation's best independent schools. Such phenomenal success would not be possible without the continued largesse of our current parents, the exemplary leadership of the Parents' Fund chairs, Tim and Nan O'Neill, and the determination and toil of the Parents' Committee. If history is any guide, this team is poised to produce amazing results again, next year.

As chair of the Annual Fund, I am fortunate and honored to work with many talented and dedicated volunteers and staff, and to serve on behalf of our great school. The Taft Annual Fund continues to generate financial resources that are critical to providing the best possible learning environment for our students, and the engagement of the larger Taft community is fundamental to that undertaking. Thank you for your partnership and generosity in support of Taft.

Warmest regards,

Dylan T. Simonds '89  
*Annual Fund Chair*



## 2010 Class Agent Awards

### SNYDER AWARD

*Largest amount contributed by a reunion class*

Class of 1990: \$85,519

Class Agent: Will Porteous

### CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD AWARD

*Highest percent participation from a class 50 years out or less*

Class of 1960: 79%

(includes capital gifts)

Gift Committee Chair:

Peter Buttenheim

Class Agent: John Tietjen

### MCCABE AWARD

*Largest amount contributed by a non-reunion class*

Class of 1962: \$97,500

Class Agent: Fred Nagle

### YOUNG ALUMNI DOLLARS AWARD

*Largest amount contributed from a class 10 years out or less*

Class of 2000: \$27,150

Class Agents:

Andrew Ford Goodwin

John McCardell

\*Awards determined by gifts and pledges to the Annual Fund as of June 30, 2010.



◁ Parents' Fund Chairs Tim and Nan O'Neill with daughters Caroline '11, Ellie '11, Jarvy and Maggie '14

## 2009–10 Parents' Committee

Nan and Tim O'Neill, chairs • Marion Markham and Randy Abood '68 • Rachel Cohan Albert and Jonathan Albert '79 • Colette and Dick Atkins • Liisa and Kenneth Bacco • Suzanne and Jeffrey Barrow '82 • Ann and Douglass Bermingham • Jody and Brian Boland • Elizabeth and Bob Bostrom • Callie and Hank Brauer '74 • Paul Calello and Jane DeBevoise • Vivian and Richard Castellano • Sheilah and Tom Chatjaval • Irene and Albert Cheng • Jane and Jack Cooney • Alanna and Tim Cronin • Mary and David Dangremond • Linn '82 and Rob Feidelson '82 • Kristine and Peter Glazer • Nicky and Jamie Grant • Nana-Yaa and Ebenezer B. Gyasi • James R. Hedges IV • Ingrid Henrichsen • Jane and Bob Hottensen • Ken Hubbard and Tori Dauphinot • Karen and Paul Isaac • Meg and Stuart Kirkpatrick • Radford Klotz and Shahnaz Batmanghelidj • Val and John Kratky • Karin and John Kukral • Lorrie Landis • Eve and John Li • Suzy and Joe Loughlin • Lisa and Joe Lovering • Christiana and

Ferdy Masucci • Lisa and Jay McDermott • Mindy and Dennis McGuire • Barbara and Rai Mehta • Caroline and Guy Merison • Laura and Frank Michnoff • Kate and Hans Morris • Gigi and Averell Mortimer • Jill and Tom Mullen • Eilish and Stewart Neff '76 • Kippy and Peter North '62 • Regina and Dennis Olmstead • Brian O'Neill • Ellen and Bill Oppenheim • Melody and Marvin Palmore • Maris and Don Pascal • Margi and Mike Picotte • Lee and Michael Profenius • Carrie and Ted Pryor • Elizabeth and Frank Queally • Rosemarie and Scott Reardon • Sera and Tom Reycraft • Staley and Carter Sednaoui • Cindy and John Sites • Randi and Mitchell Solomon • Joyce and Wing Suen • Mimi and Marc Tabah • Kristin and Don Taylor '76 • Nancy and Robert Turner • Sarah and Robert Underhill • Cissy and Curt Viebranz • Elise and Hugh Wallace • Beverly and Mark Wawer • Lori Welch-Rubin '77 • Susan and John Wilson • Alice and Peter Wyman • Peter and Jo Ziesing '78

## Taft Wins Award for Excellence

The Council for the Advancement and Support of Education recently honored the school with its 2010 CASE-Circle of Excellence Award for Educational Fundraising, which honors superior fundraising programs across the country.

Taft received an Overall Performance award based on the judges' analysis of three years of fundraising data.

"Your institution has not only demonstrated the highest levels of professionalism and best practice in its

# CASE<sup>®</sup>

fundraising efforts," said CASE President John Lippincott, "it has also contributed to the betterment of educational advancement worldwide."



# Moorhead

"None of this could have happened without the leadership, energy, vision and generosity of our board Chair Rod Moorhead, Class of 1962."

—William R. MacMullen '78







△ Willy MacMullen '78 raises a toast to board chairman Rod Moorhead '62 at the formal dedication dinner in April.

## Moorhead Wing Dedicated



“There are board of trustee minutes dating back four decades alluding to the need to renovate the dining halls,” said

Headmaster Willy MacMullen at the formal ribbon-cutting for the Moorhead Wing on Alumni Day. “And here we are, finally. This is a proud day for anyone associated with Taft.”

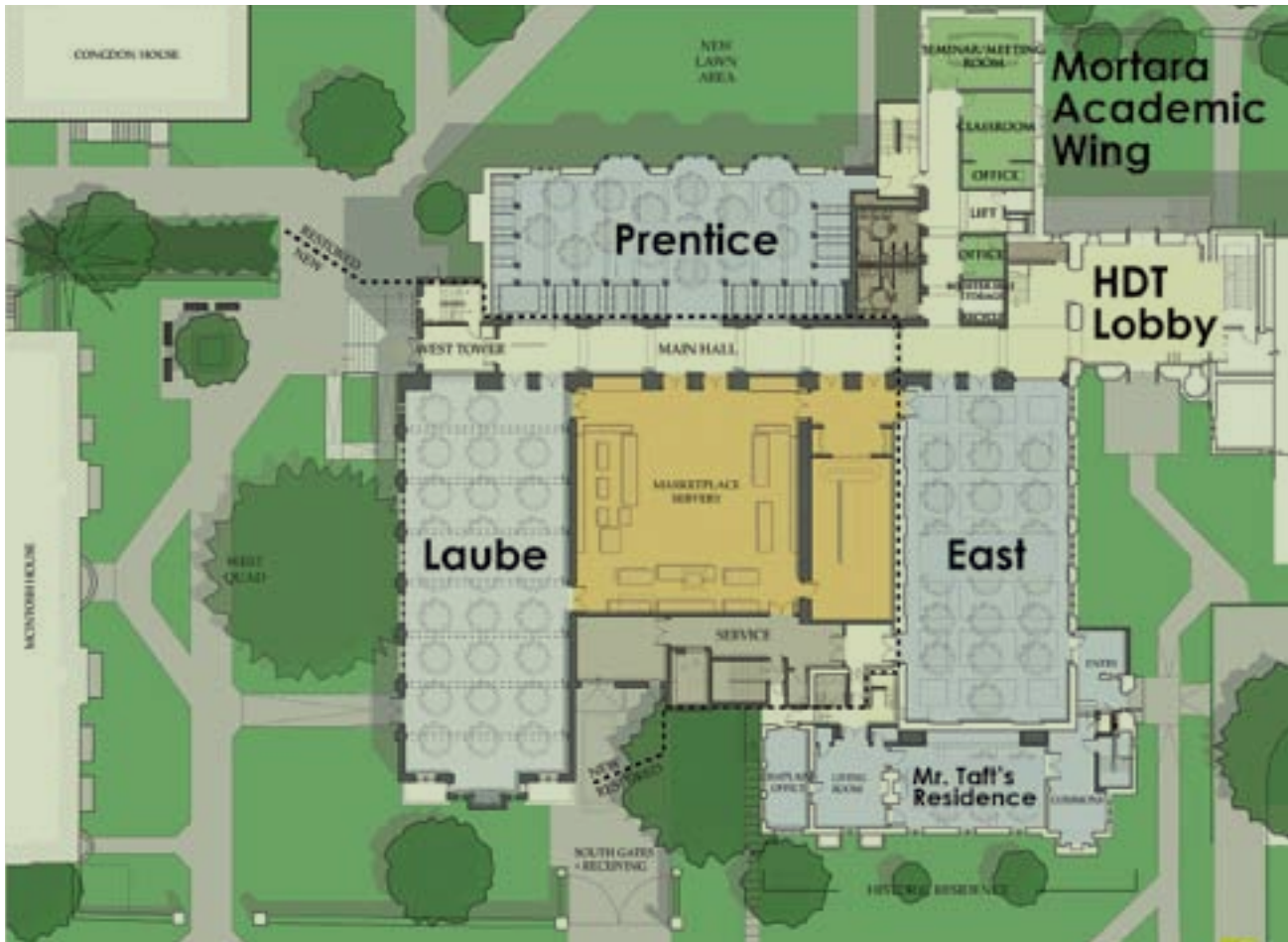
Nearly 22 months after the Armstrong Dining Hall came down, the school unveiled the new Moorhead Wing, encompassing not only two new dining halls but also a renovated east dining hall, the new Mortara Academic Wing reaching out toward the pond, as well as the fabulous extension of Main Hall to the west.

“This was a moment in our history when we could address a score

of pressing school needs and build for the next century,” he added. “We sought to do this in a way that honors the historic architecture of our campus—just look how this building seems to be speaking to McIntosh House and Congdon—while also propelling us forward into the future. Exactly 100 years ago, Horace Taft commissioned Bertram Goodhue to build the HDT building; today a new building has emerged from that original vision, and it is for us as seminal and transformative a moment.

“None of this could have happened without the leadership, energy, vision and generosity of our board Chair Rod Moorhead, Class of 1962,” said MacMullen. “What he has done for Taft is almost without parallel in the landscape of private boarding schools. His name is etched in stone in the west tower, as it should be, as he joins the other





△ The architect's plan for the transformation that is now the Moorhead Wing.



△ Mimi Prentice, Jim Wilkin and Alice Moorhead

◁ The new west quadrangle between Moorhead and Mac House becomes a tranquil outdoor living room.





## Laube

The spectacular new west dining hall, where the dedication dinner was held, honors Bradford C. Laube '51, whose recent and unexpectedly large bequest made the room possible.

## Mr. Taft's Residence

Horace Taft's, and later Paul and Edith Cruikshank's, living room has been lovingly restored as a private dining or conference room.



names that have made this school what it is.

This project was always about more than just a dining hall, and that's why it was an almost insanely complex task, MacMullen told the trustees, faculty and numerous donors and friends and officials from town who attended the dedication dinner in April. It was about a single moment where in one bold sweep, in a combination of new and old construction, the school could address countless campus needs: expanded dining, a new academic wing, elimination of a dangerous loading dock, a new quad, updated life-safety measures, new office space, ADA



△ Board members Jo Klingenstein Ziesing '78 and Leslie Herrlinger Lanahan '73



△ Board Members Dylan Simonds '89 and Dave Kirkpatrick '89



△ Irene and Alex Chu '66, P'99, who have both served as trustees of the school.



## Prentice

The cozy new north dining hall, complete with booths and bay windows, was made possible through the remarkable generosity of trustee Abra Prentice Wilkin along with Mrs. Spelman Prentice. It was given in memory of J. Rockefeller Prentice '19 and his brother Spelman Prentice '29 and in honor of their grandchildren Michael Prentice '83, Marco Palmer '83, Joshua Prentice '90, Abra Anderson Williams '92 and Irina Prentice Redwine '94.

"This is also an opportunity to create something profound: a space that would affirm the school's historic mission and its most sacred values—the education of the whole student; a commitment to service, honor, hard work and scholarship; and the belief in the power of unexpected moments of learning."

—William R. MacMullen '78



△ Eve and Tony Guernsey '66 with daughter Sara '11

△ Above right: Drum Bell '63 and lead architect John Prokos

▷ Planning committee chair Hank Brauer '74, lead architect John Prokos, and Greg Oneglia '65, whose firm O&G constructed the project.





## Mortara Academic Wing

Given by the Mortara family, this academic wing, carved out of the former kitchens, will be the new home of the Global Service and Scholarship Department.



◁ Mimi Prentice, widow of Spelman Prentice '29, thanks Chef Reveron.



△ The headmaster greets Rose and Paul McGowan P'08



△ Not only were the stained glass windows designed by Mark Potter '48 in the 1950s saved and reinstalled in the new dining halls, but new ones were added as well.



△ Alice and Rod Moorhead '62 at the dedication dinner in April

compliance, bathrooms, renovation of a historic headmaster's house, a new hallway, lower energy costs and better nutrition through a new kitchen and serving area.

"This is also an opportunity to create something profound: a space that would affirm the school's historic mission and its most sacred values—the education of the whole student; a commitment to service, honor, hard work and scholarship; and the belief in the power of unexpected moments of learning," he added. "We needed a building Horace Taft would recognize. To do this, we needed a space on the great rushing stream of the Main Hall, where

## East Dining Room and Graduate Panels

This is the dining room most alumni will remember. Known for years as the "upper dining room," it was part of the original 1914 Goodhue project, although the windows were expanded on the east wall. The Guernsey family sponsored the creation of the Graduate Panels that now grace the room, honoring the school's first century of graduates.



"With this addition, Taft's position as a school of unparalleled beauty and architectural significance has been secured."

—William R. MacMullen '78



△ Annie and Mike Mortara '05, Gina Mortara P'00/'05 and Willy MacMullen

◁ John Memmolo, one of the trustees of Brad Laube's estate, surveys the room Brad's bequest made possible.





## Moorhead Wing

This wing of the school's historic Horace Dutton Taft Hall has reinvigorated the heart of the campus, encompassing the new and renovated dining rooms, extended Main Hall and new academic wing.



we would gather every day, resting as it were in the eddies and shallows. The project continues an architectural dialogue every Taft student and parent has heard since 1914, a conversation in collegiate Gothic, the shared vernacular of brick, glass, wood, iron and stone, the language of arches and paneling and hallways. When you walk this campus, you hear it: the buildings speak to each other, in the same language, if with subtle and pleasing differences in accent. It is a lovely conversation. With this addition, Taft's position as a school of unparalleled beauty and architectural significance has been secured." ■

▷ Architect Graham Gund, right, with lead architect John Prokos and Headmaster Willy MacMullen



△ Grant Porter '69 and Hord Armstrong '59 admire the new extension of Main Hall.



△ Board members Jim Jacobson '62 and Hank Torbert '90



△ John Dayton '64, center, greets Ward and Susan Belcher P'97/'02.

1 Head monitor Bo Redpath '10 holds one end of the ribbon and Sheila Hampton, widow of George Hampton, the head monitor of the Class of 1960 holds the other, bringing the past and present together—as Board Chairman Rod Moorhead '62 officially opens the new Moorhead Wing of Horace Dutton Taft Hall.

2 John Tietjen '60 and Dan Baird '60 proudly carry the banner as their class is cheered at the luncheon.

3 Mia Borders '05 at the Headmaster's Supper on Saturday evening.

4 Marshall Clark '40 enjoys a laugh at the Old Guard Dinner with Calvert Ambrecht and Libbie Cook. Music provided by the Taft Jazz Band.

5 Face painting was a popular activity at the children's program.

6 The head mon did his part on Saturday to make sure alumni enjoyed the weekend, helping his team beat Hotchkiss 7-6 in overtime.





# 2010 alumni Weekend

The official ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Moorhead Wing may have been the highlight of the weekend, but it was hard to outshine the beautiful weather. An unusually warm spring—and a diligent crew—had the campus looking finer than ever. Everywhere one looked students were clearly happy and enjoying the chance to be outside.

But there were other memorable parts to the weekend, too: talking with friends not seen in five or fifty years, remembering those no longer with us, seeing that teacher or adviser again who meant so much, or just checking out the new pool table and flat-screen TV in the spiffed up Jigger Shop.

Members of Collegium reunited for a morning of singing while other alumni listened in with a panel of students about what life at Taft is like today. Banners replaced balloons along the shortened parade route to the field house for lunch, the Old Guard Dinner moved indoors to the new dining halls, and Taft surpassed that school from Lakeville in lacrosse, in overtime, to mark a perfect afternoon.

Does a reunion get much better than that?

*-julie reiff*





1



2



3

1 Willy MacMullen '78 introduces the student panel on Saturday morning: Kate Moreau '10, Sara Guernsey '11, Megi Zdravkova '11, head monitor Bo Redpath '10, Ed Gyasi '11 and Toan Duc Phan '10.

2 1985 classmates Bill Martin, John Haymaker and Greg Hawes at their 25th reunion

3 Class of 1960 gathers again 50 years later in Lincoln Lobby, on the occasion of its 50th Reunion.

4 Class secretaries and agents gather for breakfast on Saturday morning.

5 Marjorie and Dave Root '55 greet the headmaster after the memorial service on Friday.





4 Alumni couple Peter and Liz Murphy Hallock '95 with daughters Anne and Katherine.



5 Faculty emeriti Jol and Sue Everett, with granddaughter Olive and Headmaster MacMullen, return in part to help daughter Christy '90 celebrate her 20th Reunion.

6 Jim Rule '60 gives a reading at the Service of Remembrance.



citation of merit:  
*john orb '37*



As a student, father, grandfather, volunteer and trustee you have served the Taft School community spanning eight decades. In each of these roles you have helped to shape and improve the school. While at Taft, you embraced leadership by serving on your class committee every year and on the board of the *Papyrus* as well as competing on the football and cross-country teams. Such determination and your academic success made certain your admission to Yale University. Later, during World War II, your commitment to service earned you the wings of lieutenant colonel in the United States Air Force. Your heroism as a combat pilot merited the Distinguished Flying Cross medal for courage and valor. After the war, you excelled as an investment banker at Merrill Lynch, becoming vice president. In 1975, as head of Smith Barney, you successfully orchestrated its merger with Harris, Upham and Company. The newly organized firm experienced remarkable growth and success through the 1980s. Your visionary stewardship, balancing fiscal strength and employee opportunities, brought you the respect and trust of colleagues. Over the years, you have generously supported many organizations

providing services to young adults. You have made a Taft School education possible for many deserving students through the scholarship you created. From 1984 through 1991, you served on the Taft Board of Trustees and were a member of the Investment and Financial Committee, which guided the board in making critical decisions and propelled Taft School into a new era of prosperity. You helped Taft broaden its base and assured its promise for future generations. Improving the campus and increasing enrollment, you helped Taft reinforce its sense of community, playing a pivotal role in its efforts to educate young people. Compassionate and determined in your approach, creative and realistic in your delivery, and uncompromising in your high standards, you embody all that is cherished in our school motto: *Non ut sibi ministretur sed ut ministret*. It is with a great sense of pride that we honor you today with the school's highest award, the Citation of Merit. ■

*Editor's note: It is with great sadness that we learned of John Orb's passing on June 26. Our condolences to his wife, family and friends*





1 Charlie Richards '55 enjoys the Collegium concert along with his grandson, Grant Evans '11.



2 Kristen Wadhwa '00 and Joanna Wolffer '00 return to celebrate their 10th Reunion.



3 Ferdie Wandelt '66 visits with Doudou Wang '00 at the headmaster's dinner on Saturday.

5 Collegium alumni gather at Walker Hall.

6 Board Chairman Rod Moorhead with Pam and Willy MacMullen

4 Eladio Fernandez '85 welcomes classmates and friends to a special reception for his exhibit in the Mark W. Potter '48 Gallery. (See also page 6.)



But  
trouble-  
shooting is  
the point.  
That's  
where the  
learning  
happens.  
So the  
students  
keep  
tinkering.



## Where the Learning Happens

**A**t 7 p.m. in the basement of Charles Phelps Taft Hall, students are busy at work. But this is no normal study hall. In fact, there are no textbooks in sight.

Rather, here in the robotics workshop, drills whine, hammers bang, and electric servos whir. Tables are strewn with screws, gears, motors, circuit boards, and scraps of metal. While Cathy Chen '12 and Chantal Yuen '11 drill through a sheet of aluminum, uppermid Jessica Jiang and middler Mai Nguyen discuss a design issue.

"We should take one inch off," Mai suggests.

"Yes," says Jessica. "This is covering the other piece."


Over at another worktable, uppermids Filip Stransky and Tommy Mulroy eyeball a measurement before adjusting their mousetraps—yes, mousetraps—which have been modified to fire projectiles like catapults.

Four teams of Taft students are building robotic vehicles for the Boston University College of Engineering 20th annual Design Competition. Guided by

programmable brains and gyro sensors, these cars are supposed to autonomously descend and climb a ramp, shoot two Hacky Sacks through two target holes, knock over flags and, if necessary, bump or bowl over an enemy robot. Think Transformers meets King of the Hill.

But on this evening, Taft is in trouble. With just two weeks before showtime, victory looks impossible. The problem? The batteries are too heavy. The vehicles can't climb Taft's replica of BU's carpet-covered, wooden ramps that will be the battlegrounds for dozens of high school



A student with brown hair, wearing a grey hoodie with 'TAFT' in red and blue letters, is focused on operating a lathe machine. The machine is a Millerlathe, with a black and silver body. The student's hands are positioned on the machine's controls. The background shows a workshop environment with various tools and equipment. The entire image is overlaid with a blue grid pattern.

## Taft competes at Boston University Design Competition

By Ethan Gilsdorf

teams. To change the gear ratio to provide more power, the robots need new gearboxes. But these don't arrive in the mail until later in the week.

"I wake up sometimes in the middle of the night thinking about what might go wrong," says 25-year veteran physics teacher Jim Mooney, who has coached and brought teams to the BU contest for the past dozen years. He mentors the robotics club along with physics colleague Chris Ritacco. "This is what it's like. We're always troubleshooting."

But troubleshooting is the point.





**(previous page)**

Mai Nguyen '12, Jessica Jiang '11, Cathy Chen '12 and Filip Stransky '11 build their robots for the Boston University competition.

1. Vanessa Wood '01 checks on the progress of her alma mater's team with adviser Jim Mooney.

2. Adviser Chris Ritacco works with Filip before the competition begins.

3. Cathy Chen, Chantal Yuen and Jessica Jiang try their robots on the competition ramps at B.U. ETHAN GILSDORF

That's where the learning happens. So the students keep tinkering.

"It takes time but it's fun to see it come together," Stransky says. "A lot of teams [from other schools] take the cheap way with kits. We pride ourselves by doing it from the ground up."

At Taft, teachers like Mooney and Ritacco have quietly been leading the charge to direct physics and engineering instruction away from traditional classroom lectures and textbook homework, and more towards creative, hands-on educational opportunities like building robots for the BU competition. Students rise to the challenge,

and find it inspiring to solve practical science problems with physical, not theoretical, tools and techniques.

"While some principles of science and mathematics can certainly be applied to the competition, building the robot is unlike almost anything I have done before," says Chantal, an uppermid from Hong Kong. Whereas during science and math lessons, "You simply sit and listen," she says, "it takes a hands-on approach to build a robot."

The soft-spoken, gray-bearded Mooney makes the casual workshop available a few evenings a week for students to drop in to work on their

vehicles. The workshop is open only 6 to 8 p.m., and because sports are required in the afternoons, to build their robots, students have to give up precious time they'd otherwise use to socialize. They're dedicated.

"Once they get proficient with the power tools, they're off doing it," Mooney says. "They're pretty bright. They're pretty handy. They learn."

Fiddling with gears, axles, and duct tape certainly sounds more fun than chemistry labs. But the shop class vibe also provides students a launch pad for trial-and-error learning. Unlike other stations of an adolescent's life, the robot



workshop is a safe place to fail. “The most important part is seeing,” says Mooney. “Every time you fail, you learn. You see something you didn’t see before.”

**Y**ou might say teachers like Mooney and Ritacco have made science and math education almost as cool as a team sport like lacrosse or crew. Certainly the robotics challenge is just as competitive. “It’s gotten harder and harder each year,” says Mooney. “They [BU] add[s] something every year.”

While the fate of each year’s effort is ultimately out of the teachers’ hands, any lost sleep seems to be worth it. In past years, Taft has taken home top prizes not only at BU but also from other events. At this year’s Trinity College Fire Fighting Home Robot Contest, which attracted more than 120 teams from as far away as China and Israel, students raced computer-controlled robots through a maze to locate a burning candle and blow out the flame. Taft won “Outstanding Robot from Connecticut.”

For more conventional math and science “meets,” the educational philosophy is the same: students are schooled how to work together to solve problems on the fly. At the Junior Engineering Technical Society’s annual competition, an eight-student varsity team led by Mooney and environmental science teacher Jim Lehner solved engineering questions related to the theme “Water, Water, Everywhere” and walked away with first place in the nation (see page 11). And Toan Duc Phan ’10 received the second highest score in the country in the nine-hour USA Math Olympiad. (He also headed a Taft student team that got second place in the Purple Comet! Math Meet, and he was one of just six U.S. students who competed in the Romanian Master in Mathematics competition in February.)

None of this suggests that classroom learning has been thrown out with the

bathwater. Mooney’s lively physics lectures still drill home the basics. In one recent class, 10 students calculated wavelengths of the visible spectrum. “Can that electron absorb a photon?” Mooney asked. Physics labs continue to make the vague, invisible and theoretical all less so. But Mooney admits the results of experiments are fairly predictable. With robots, it’s a different ballgame.

“It’s open-ended. And real problems arise,” Mooney says with obvious glee. Often kids who can master book knowledge don’t know how to puzzle out a practical engineering problem that vehicle design requires. “But the norm is, the better the student, the better they handle the open-ended skills. They know what it is not to know.”

**T**wo weeks later, about 30 schools assemble in Boston University’s Case Gym, each huddled at a worktable. For Taft, the vehicles’ gearbox issue has been solved. Still, there’s plenty of frantic, last-minute tweaking to be done. For example, the height of the target holes on the ramp back at Taft doesn’t quite match the ramp at the competition.

“The height is taller than we expected,” says a worried Filip. “It’s not good.”

So the four teams—Cathy Chen and Chantal Yuen; Jessica Jiang and Mai Nguyen; Brian Chung and Michelle Chang; and a solo Filip Stransky (Tommy had family commitments over the weekend)—need to find a way to raise their mousetraps (plus, Chen and Yuen’s axle is malfunctioning). Madly sawing blocks of wood, applying Vaseline and drilling new holes, the teams run back and forth between test ramps and home base until they find a stopgap—on their own. Once the competition begins,

teachers are forbidden from interfering.

“I can’t help you,” Ritacco says, grinning to Jessica and Mai. “I should just walk away.”

The last team finishes with about three minutes to spare.

As the rounds progress, each Taft car has good runs. All the teams are eventually eliminated, except Filip, whose robot is the most consistent. He survives to the runoff round to determine third place: “an epic battle that included crashes, brute strength head to head butts, and robots rolling head over wheels,” as Mooney later describes it. Filip is the eventual winner, earning third place overall. An unexpected finish.

Also unexpected: One of Mooney’s former students, Vanessa Wood ’01, shows up to cheer on her alma mater. Now a postdoctoral research assistant at MIT’s Organic and Nanostructured Electronics Laboratory, she received teaching offers from Princeton and Cornell but just accepted a professorship at ETH Zürich. Wood traces her career path back to her robot-designing days at Taft. “It’s really important to have hands-on experience as early as possible,” she says. “It really inspires the kids to see the science.”

And it’s equally key to see that on the robot battlefield, physics and engineering can be as random and capricious as the New England weather. “You can never know what to expect,” Chantal says. “The number one thing that I learnt from the robot competition at BU is just to hope for the best.”

As for Mai, she says that while she’s absorbed theory in the classroom, she also appreciates being able to put it into practice. “I’ll do it again next year,” she says. “I’ve learned to problem solve for myself.” ■

*Ethan Gilsdorf is the author of Fantasy Freaks and Gaming Geeks.*

**“It’s really important to have hands-on experience as early as possible. It really inspires the kids to see the science.”**







# 120<sup>th</sup>

# COMMENCEMENT

# Exercises



Keynote  
speaker

**JENNIFER  
ZACCARA P'07,10**

You are poised in the middle of things. You have a direction forward, and you know the past, but the present is a kind of limbo space. You need to learn very soon how to navigate through innocence into experience. It's the most common theme in all of the novels you have read at Taft—the journey from youth to adulthood. That's why we were doing all of those passage analyses—to help you to read the text of your own life. You will use your critical reading skills often for they play an important role in the art of navigation you must master as you depart from Taft.

When Samuel Clemens, the youth who would become the writer, Mark Twain, was a young cub pilot on the muddy Mississippi, he pondered the problem of navigation on a shape-shifting river—one that made sure that if you stood in place and a storm hit, you could be in Kentucky

one moment and Tennessee, the next. He complained to his mentor, head pilot Horace Bixby, that “of all of the eluding and ungraspable objects” that ever he tried to get his mind or hands on, “learning the shape of the river” posed the chief difficulty.

Bixby responded: “That’s the main virtue of the thing. If the shapes didn’t change every three seconds, they wouldn’t be of any use.” Well that was an enigma. How could the shape changes help one to navigate?

For you, I would venture the thought that this anecdote might serve as a prefiguring of reading the waters, navigating your course, and *paying attention* as you leave the safe harbor of our campus. Twain writes in *Old Times on the Mississippi*, “It was plain that I had got to learn the shape of the river in all the different ways that could be thought of—upside down, wrong end first, inside out, fore and aft . . . and then know what to do on gray nights when it hadn’t any shape at all.”

But how did your navigational knowledge begin? You might have arrived at Taft on a sunny morning,

and gathered in Centennial Courtyard where we are right now. Your parents may have moved through the crowd, shaking hands with your teachers, and shedding a few tears on the long walk back to the car. For parents, the walk back to the car meant that things would be different at home, that you would be beginning your journey to independence, that letting go and allowing for failures was imperative for your success. I would argue that in those handshakes on that opening morning of your arrival, there was an electric transference of energy from parents to teachers, an energy based on trust—for we were, as teachers, now in charge of taking you further on your journey down the river.

But before we consider that journey at Taft, we need to dwell a bit longer on what you brought with you, because your ability to invest in the life of our school is what made the Admissions staff offer you an enrollment contract in the first place. Sure, you brought your intelligence, athleticism, artistic talents, and interests, but you also brought something

1. Students and parents hold up parasols to signify the family wisdom they brought with them to Taft. ANDRE LI '11

2. Head monitor Bo Redpath and his family. PETER FREW '75

3. Spanish teacher Baba Frew congratulates Hailey Karcher, who received the The John T. Reardon Prize, The Bourne Medal In History and the The Sherman Cawley Award. PETER FREW '75

4. Walter Yoo '12 cheers on the Class of 2010. ANDRE LI '11

5. Headmaster Willy MacMullen welcomes his colleague, English Department Chair Jennifer Zaccara as the Commencement speaker. HIGHPOINT PICTURES

perhaps more precious: the wisdom of your parents and grandparents. What were those pieces of wisdom? Who was your Horace Bixby, your mentor in your early years? Here I share a sampling of what the seniors have revealed about their parents' teachings. Remember that these students and parents (given parasols and asked to stand) represent all of you, that the lessons you will hear comprise a mere sampling. In literary terms, this is a synecdoche—the part representing the whole. [My thanks to the Furman family for the props.]

"My Dad taught me to learn from my mistakes and to work to never make them again."

"My Dad always said, 'Early morning is a private club.' I really believe it, and knowing this made me appreciate the quiet and solitude that the morning brings. I wake up early to eat breakfast by myself every morning, and it helps me jump-start my day."

"My Dad taught me that no matter what I undertake, be it getting wood for the fire or writing a paper or practicing for lacrosse, that I have to always try my best and my hardest."

"My parents have told me to relax and step back. I have come to appreciate the people around me more as I spend more time with them, and I learned to care about things besides academics. In fact, when I truly relaxed and started to care about other things, my GPA surprisingly went up!"

"My uncle told me that even though I might not like every minute of my education, I am doing something that many people in my family did not even have access to, and for reminding me of that, I am thankful to him."

"From my mother I learned that you can never give too much of yourself to others, and if you don't, you lead a life extremely unfulfilled."

"My mom told me to spend time continuing to cultivate the deepest of relationships with the people around me, because the girls who live down the hall will likely be the women who are there for the most important parts of my life, both happy and sad."

"My Mom taught me to take advantage of all of the opportunities that are given to me. Whether it is a small opportunity or a large one, I try to take advantage of it."

"My Dad is a historian, and we once got into a deep conversation about how quickly people can be misled when overcome by the group mentality. I try not to be a plebeian; I try not to give in to the feelings of the masses and this mentality has served me well."

"My connection with God and my belief that everything has a purpose enables me to perceive my world in a glass half-full context. My positive attitude helps me to keep an even keel, and I owe this to my Mom."

And other pearls of parental wisdom include:

"Put your napkin in your lap and your feet in front of you!"

"My mother taught me to get to airports early!"

"We create our own destiny."

"Those who mind don't matter, and those who matter don't mind."

"My Mom taught me that nothing worthwhile comes easily, and if I dedicate myself to working hard, the rest will follow."

And now, look around you. Imagine that we are on a steamboat, hurtling down the mighty Mississippi, and there you all are with your parasols glinting in the sun. A young Samuel Clemens steers the boat, and it wheels tranquilly along as we stroll the decks. All of those parasols signify the wisdom that you brought with you to Taft and that played a role in your willingness to take on further training in navigation.

After that first day at Taft, you encountered a significant bend in the river since you met your teachers—your new mentors—and you began to get glimpses of the founding elements of a Taft education. One of the things that I love about Taft is that it is an institution of its word. We do not pay mere lip service to community, honor, serving others, character development, grace, dignity and self-respect, because so many of the old values still matter.

## commencement Awards

### **William and Lee Abramowitz Award for Teaching Excellence**

Mark K. Traina

### **Aurelian Award**

Caroline Aryn Castellano

### **1908 Medal**

Edward Bowditch Redpath

### **Joseph I. Cunningham Award**

Leigh Anne O'Mealia

Mark Francis Simone

Elizabeth King Thompson

### **Berkley F. Matthews '96 Award**

Katherine Ann Carden

Carolyn Frances McCabe

### **Harry W. Walker**

"Non Ut Sibi" Award

Aislinn Ives McLaughlin

### **Heminway Merriman Award**

Thomas Leighton Freyre

Thomas Gerard O'Mealia

### **Class of 1981 Award**

Garnett Maximillian Frew, Jared

Denzel Jackson, Thu Anh Pham

### **Maurice Pollak Award**

Matthew Penn McLaughlin

### **Roberts Scholarship**

Jahdai Moriah Dorothy Kilkenny

### **Valedictorian**

Toan Duc Phan

### **Salutatorian**

Chi Kong (Adrian) Fu

### **Bourne Medal in History**

Hailey Phipps Karcher

### **Sherman Cawley Award**

Hailey Phipps Karcher



Whether or not you came here as a lowermid, mid, uppermid, or a PG, there was a shape to your experience, and a plan for teaching you to read that experience—to read the river, and see the shape of it intuitively. The fact is that if we really were on a Mississippi steamboat in 1860, sailing south, we would have been in the middle of the slave trade. The problem with learning to navigate is that you can be so focused on your own acquisition of skills that you do not see what is right in front of your face.

Dealing with illusions is one thing, but being blind to what stands before your face is another problem altogether. In 1865, Twain had a commission from the Confederate army to be the pilot of a gunrunner steamboat. Not wanting to be shot in the glass

others, trying to tell the story of his own blindness and to accept the fact that he had, continually as he called it, to “train his ideas ever upward” to release himself from a legacy of prejudice. One of the primary dangers in this journey toward independent navigation is the danger of becoming so mechanical about the process that you lose your humanity.

Here at Taft, with our school mission and motto, we hope that you have learned how to start serving others right in your own communities. Some day you will have an even longer reach than you do now, but for now, small acts of kindness, service and time can make a big difference in someone else’s life. So steer your boat but be aware of the fact that you are a part not only of your future school, town and state, but

**“A Taft education is an ever-evolving, unfolding entity, always present, by your side, traveling with you through life, serving as the rudder by which you will steer through the clear and shadowed waters. And now we are sailing down the river at lightning speed.”**

house of the pilot’s cabin, and not feeling particularly moved to participate on the Confederate side of things, he headed out to the Territory and a life of frontier journalism. When he returned to the river in 1874, his whole life had changed. He had married into a prominent New York abolitionist family, and taken the issue of race in the United States as his primary subject.

Falling in love essentially woke him up, and he spent the rest of his life trying to make a difference, trying to enlighten

also a part of the vast community of humanity. Do not accept prejudice, injustice and corruption. Stand for freedom and cultivate courage whenever you can. Ultimately, Twain sought to make himself a Citizen of the World, and I invite you to do the same.

The young Samuel Clemens once tried to get away from what he called a “bluff reef,” looming in the darkness, directly in his path, but it turned out only to be a wind reef. Nothing real. Bixby said, “The wind does that,” and Twain asked,

Class Speaker Leigh Anne O’Mealia learns to embrace her imminent status as a Taft alum.  
HIGHPOINT PICTURES

“How can I tell them apart?”  
“I can’t tell you,” Bixby replied.  
“It’s an instinct. By and by you will just naturally know one from the other, the wind reef from the bluff one, the illusion from the reality, but you will never be able to explain why or how you know them apart.”

In every class that you had at Taft, the underlying agenda was to teach you to know a bluff reef from a wind reef. A Taft education is an ever-evolving, unfolding entity, always present, by your side, traveling with you through life, serving as the rudder by which you will steer through the clear and shadowed waters. And now we are sailing down the river at lightning speed.

You are free now, sailing

on your own, O captains, my captains! Free to create your destinies.

To conclude, Bruce Fifer, head of the Arts Department and director of Collegium, will sing a signature piece from his own repertoire—something that I hope will be a theme song for the Class of 2010, and for your awareness of that great, vast, unfolding river—your Taft education.

*Bruce Fifer sang “Old Man River” and Jen saluted the seniors Navy-style to say farewell.*



**Class  
speaker**

**LEIGH ANNE  
O’MEALIA ’10**

I have been voted Class Cheerleader, Last to Leave, and Most Likely to Return as Faculty. Over the last four years, I have fallen in love with Taft. Since spring break, that love has made it hard for me to think about leaving, moving on and even growing up. That is, until two weeks ago, when the Class of 1960 returned to campus for its 50th reunion. I was lucky enough to be invited to their party, where they reminisced about their years here. Their stories, their lives and their presence surprisingly made it easier for me to think about graduation and what happens in life after Taft.

I realized that when you leave, you don’t forfeit your identity here. We leave the school with a legacy, both as individuals and as a class. More importantly, however, I realized that although we are leaving, we will always be Tafties. Every moment here, the good and the bad, has taught us something about ourselves. The pure strength of the Taft community is evident in all of us graduating—but it is also clear when you look

into the eyes of the parents of the Class of 2010. They have witnessed the essence of Taft. Like us, when graduation is over, they will take part of Taft with them...

But when we leave here today, we become Taft alums. As scary as this may seem, it's just a new type of recognition in the community. I learned this from a particular story Peter Buttenheim '60 told me. ... He was on vacation with his family and saw a young man, about 20 years old, in a Taft hat. In typical Taft fashion, Mr. Buttenheim introduced himself, and they proceeded to talk about their school for almost 30 minutes before heading their separate ways. Almost a month later,



Class Speaker Mark Simone, who received the Joseph I. Cunningham Award, reminds his classmates to embrace near-life experiences. ANDRE LI '11

Mr. Buttenheim received an email from the young man asking how things were going. According to Mr. Buttenheim, over the years, he has gotten so close to this man that "they can almost be considered family." I think of this story and can't help but believe the Taft spirit continues outside these walls.

We should look at today not as our last day at Taft, but rather as the day we become some of the lucky few who can call

themselves Taft Alums—and the day we vow to never forget the people, the knowledge and the moments that have defined our Taft careers. As a community, we learned to rejoice in the accomplishments of others, and that will continue for the rest of our lives.

I'm not going to say goodbye, but instead, in classic New Jersey fashion, leave you with some wisdom from Bruce Springsteen: "Let's take the good times as they go/ And I'll meet you further on up the road."



## MARK SIMONE '10

Almost everyone has had a near-death experience in his or her life. Perhaps you fell out of a tree as a little kid, or maybe you just got a ride into town from our beloved classmate, Galen "Jeff Gordon" Sanderson. Regardless, near-death experiences are ordinary; I am here today to speak to you about something far more important and rare: near-life experiences.

Experts define near-life experiences as pivotal moments in a person's life: making a life-changing decision, taking the road less traveled, leaving your comfort zone. The beginning of my first near-life experience came when I made the decision to apply to Taft as a repeat junior.

Somehow I was accepted to Taft. Maybe it was the bad economy, maybe the Admissions Office thought

they needed just *one more* kid from New Canaan, and that lucky number 27 would make for a perfectly balanced student body.

I remember my first day here quite clearly. It was September 9, 2008. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were both taken over by the government, the housing bubble collapsed, which sparked the greatest financial downturn in U.S. history since the Great Depression.

Thankfully, my Taft career has not been reflective of the economic disaster that took place that day. In what seems like the blink of an eye, two amazing years have gone by. As we walk across the stage today and accept our diplomas, our living Taft experience comes to a close, and we are presented with a wonderful, beautifully intoxicating clean slate, chock-full of near-life experiences just waiting to be undertaken. Still, it is our task, as graduates, to make the first move. We must stare near-life experiences in the face and then take them on willingly, no matter how challenging or difficult they appear to be.

Halfway through the movie, *Fight Club*, Ed Norton's character realizes that his materialistic desires and complacency with being average will ultimately consume him. In a moment of self-reflection, Norton uses the metaphor of decorating the interior of his apartment to explain the perils of materialism and constantly remaining in your comfort zone. He says: "You buy furniture. You tell yourself, this is the last sofa I will ever

**Chemistry Prize**  
Toan Duc Phan

**Chinese Prize**  
Serena Lauren Ahmed  
Ki Suk (Brian) Jang

**Daniel Higgins Fenton Classics Award**  
Molly Newhouse Kirkpatrick

**Global Service and Scholarship Prize**  
Anna Blazena Stransky

**Japanese Prize**  
Yuji Tsuchikawa, Rei Yazaki

**John S. Noyes French Prize**  
Christian Corey Martin

**Physics Prize**  
Toan Duc Phan

**John T. Reardon Prize**  
Hailey Phipps Karcher  
Toan Duc Phan

**Alvin I. Reiff Biology Prize**  
Gregory Ryan Bayliss

**Spanish Prize**  
Matthew Emmanuel Alvarez

**David Kenyon Webster Prize for Excellence in Writing**  
Zoe Katharine Hetzner

**Wilson-Douglas Mathematics Prize**  
Ki Suk (Brian) Jang  
Toan Duc Phan

**Senior Research Thesis**  
Devin Hunter Leary, Carolyn Frances McCabe, Aislinn Ives McLaughlin, Kristen Elizabeth Proe, Elizabeth King Thompson

**Cum Laude Induction**  
Gregory Ryan Bayliss, Elizabeth Madeira Brauer, Caroline Aryn Castellano, Derek Alexander Collins, Neil Benjamin Foxman, Chi Kong (Adrian) Fu, Claire Elizabeth Grieve, Samuel Mark Magida, Matthew Penn McLaughlin, Elizabeth King Thompson, Yuji Tsuchikawa, John Ludlow Wyman



“As we walk across  
the stage today  
and accept our  
diplomas, our living  
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beautifully  
intoxicating clean  
slate, chock-full of  
near-life experiences  
just waiting to be  
undertaken.”

need in my life. Buy the sofa, then for a couple years you're satisfied that no matter what goes wrong, at least you've got your sofa issue handled. Then the right set of dishes. Then the perfect bed. The drapes. The rug. Then you're trapped in your lovely nest, and the things you used to own, now they own you.”

The sofas and furniture in our lives right now are the things that make us feel comfortable: Longtime friends, familiar courses and, of course, the wonderful home that we call Taft. Am I asking you to forget about all of these things? Of course not. Taft will always be a special place, and all of you will be my friends forever. What I ask is that we find a new part of ourselves in college. I ask that we leave our comfort zones, and when the opportunity for that near-life experience comes along, we seize it.

## Headmaster

### WILLY MACMULLEN '78

I want to carry you back in time, to a century ago, to the 1910 senior class with which you share, perhaps without knowing, a mysterious kinship

Headmaster Willy MacMullen reminds us that, even a century later, the core of the Taft experience has changed little.

ANDRE LI '11

wrought from a brick and stone building. Since you have heard me speak of the Taft family you are about to join, I want to make an introduction—you to them, they to you, across the many years.

But why them, you might ask? It takes little poetic license to pair you. If you started talking with them, despite the chasm of time, you would find you shared a unique education, and more: a common bond about which you could tell stories. I went to the archives and found the *1910 Annual*, and with it, I introduce you.

You would smile if you saw this book. It is small, about 7 by 9 inches, with a somber black cover. There are advertisements that strike us as quaint, perhaps: “Rightly Made” shirts from Waterbury, a music store specializing in banjos and mandolins, an Italian fruit and ice cream vendor near the trolley stop in Watertown, and also, of course, Brooks Brothers clothing, on Broadway and 22nd. The faculty peer out at you in a single black and white photograph: eleven men, two whose names you know, Harley Roberts and Andrew McIntosh. There is an all-school photo, and there are just over one hundred students, most with familiar addresses in New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts. One address stands out and is my favorite, that of middler Charles Phelps Taft, whose father was



the nation's president: it reads simply, “The White House.”

They are all boys, of course, looking across the century with starched collars, baggy wool uniforms, and Glee Club bow ties. Few are smiling, and the combination of the formal photography and the Sunday school dress makes them look older.

Theirs was a typical year: busy, plenty of challenges, a good share of triumphs, more than a little humor and fun. The calendar has a mix you would recognize, of season records, club activities and dances. And there was a flu outbreak—their H1N1—and “standing room only in the Infirmary.” But there were differences as well. The campus was small—one large wooden building and some muddy playing fields—and Watertown was quiet and quaint, horses still clopping down Main Street. Tuition was \$800 for boarders and \$200 for day pupils, perhaps the only thing your parents would happily swap with today.

But the big news was the building. The Annual editors wrote, “Mr. Taft has changed his plans as regard the site for the new school and intends to build on the site of the present buildings instead of on the hill. The ground [has been] broken ... and work will go steadily on until the buildings are finished.” It was



a noisy, dusty campus and one that was never to be the same again.

So this was a school at once utterly unlike yours today, and yet intimately familiar as well. It was then, as today, a school of smart students, dedicated faculty, a beautiful campus and a close community built on values of trust, respect and service. But it's this building that really joins the classes: the two moments in history blur and blend, so everything is pulling these two classes together, straining to link them. It is, to me, a symbol at once of all that changes and all that is fixed, all that is new and all that is old. It's an easy symbol.

And you will even see on the wall outside the dining room quotations from the school's four headmasters—one a line from Horace Taft. It is our way of ensuring that the historic values of the school surround us always, especially as we are changing, and it is Taft's sentence that is particularly suited for this class, which has seen a lot of challenges and learned much about perseverance, resilience and fortitude:

"The one great principle of education," Taft wrote, "is doing hard things and doing them well and bravely."

It is one of my favorites of the hundreds I have read from Taft. It is something the faculty believes very, very strongly; and as you leave, we hope it has proven true. We have designed our curriculum, offered courses, made demands of your conduct and confronted you with ethical challenges so that *you would do hard things well and bravely.*

We have tried to make

you do *hard things*, in the classroom—where if we did our job, you were pushed more than ever, asked to scale risky intellectual and artistic heights, left alone to cling there, where you might have even slipped from time to time before you were sent back up. We tried to make you do hard things on teams, in plays, with clubs. We tried to make you do hard things in personal conduct: we required your honor when it was difficult, we asked for personal responsibility where the world may not, we demanded daily accountability in ways that at times no doubt felt oppressive and we challenged you to embody our motto, "Not to Be Served But to Serve."

And we have, in the classrooms and dorms and hallways and stage and playing fields and dining hall and offices, tried to instill in you the conviction that life is not easy and often requires *bravery*. We were never thinking about battlefield or someone-just-fell-onto-the-subway bravery. We were thinking about being brave in doing what is right, in putting others before self, in standing up for what you believe even if it flies in the face of popular sentiment. The stuff of common, everyday bravery, sadly lacking in many of the very arenas you will enter.

It's an old and central belief of ours. Seniors, you and the class of 1910 could compare notes. I can hear John Blossom, president of the 1910 class, asking today's head monitor, Bo Redpath: "Did you guys talk about honor or service? Did the teachers

demand excellence? Were they always on you about how you conduct yourselves?" And Bo: "Are you kidding?"

What Horace Taft said at the 20th Commencement is lost to history, but I suspect that his themes and mine are similar. His world was so different from this one, but they are, in the end, more alike than they are different, the fundamental challenges the same. Both worlds need men and women who will do hard things well and bravely.

He must have gazed on those 13 seniors and wondered, as we faculty do today, if he had served them well. We teachers may feel a combination of doubt and faith—we live at the intersection—as we know the true test of a Taft education will be known only at eulogy. But I doubt there is ever a day we feel more brimming with hope than this one.

Those 1910 graduates are all gone now, but I think I know what they would say if they sat in the dining hall in a booth with their brothers and sisters from 2010. I think they would start with, "We never had a place like this." And then they might offer the wisdom of their collective days. I bet they would say something like, "Do hard things well and bravely, live a life of honor and commit to serving others." That's a good place to start a conversation.

Then they would say, when you are done today, come through that arch and join us. ■

*(The remarks above are excerpts only. Listen to the audio online, view more photos of the day or read the talks in their entirety at [www.TaftSchool.org](http://www.TaftSchool.org).)*

#### **Thomas Sabin Chase Awards In Art**

Danielle Simonne Donnelly  
Ki Suk (Brian) Jang

#### **Dance Award**

Alexandra Nicole Hutchinson

#### **George H. Morgan Award**

Brian Veasna Sengdala

#### **Mark Potter Award In Art**

Kopano Laura Ramsay

#### **Theater Award**

Charlotte Stuart Jacob  
Lara Anne Watling

#### **Bill Waldron Memorial Prize**

Lara Anne Watling

#### **P.T. Young Music Award**

David William Florence IV  
Charlotte Stuart Jacob

#### **Marion Hole Makepeace Award**

Kristen Elizabeth Proe

#### **Lawrence Hunter Stone Award**

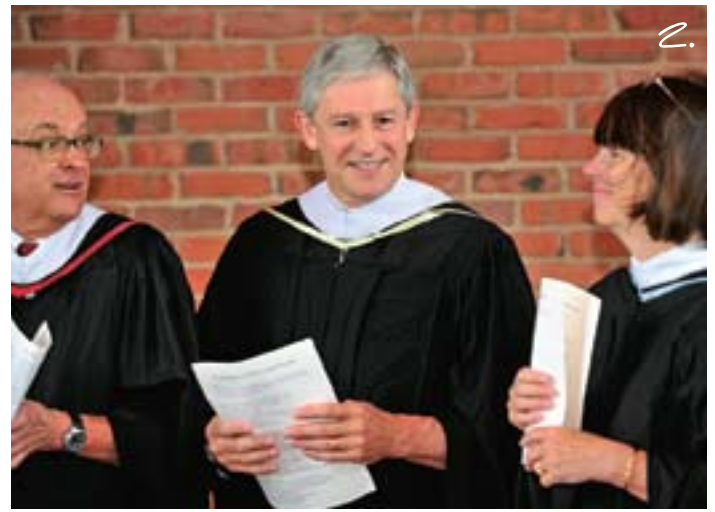
John Patrick Barr

#### **Senior Athletic Awards**

Kathryn Jeanette Alberti, John Patrick Barr, Katherine Ann Carden, Ryan James Collier, William Crossin Einstein, Garnett Maximillian Frew, Jared Denzel Jackson, Tucker Torrence Jennings, Maxwell Michael Kachur, Chelsea Eileen Maloney, Alexander Horton Masucci, Conor James McEvoy, Thomas Gerard O'Mealia, Michael John Petchonka, Kristen Elizabeth Proe, Keefe Wynn Rafferty, Edward Bowditch Redpath, Thaddeus George Reycraft, Reed Lang Shapiro, Kevin Andrew Spotts, Hunter Lane Yale



“The one great principle of education is doing hard things and doing them well and bravely.”



1. Valedictorian Toan Duc Phan takes home the Chemistry Prize, the Physics Prize and the John T. Reardon Prize in history. PETER FREW '75

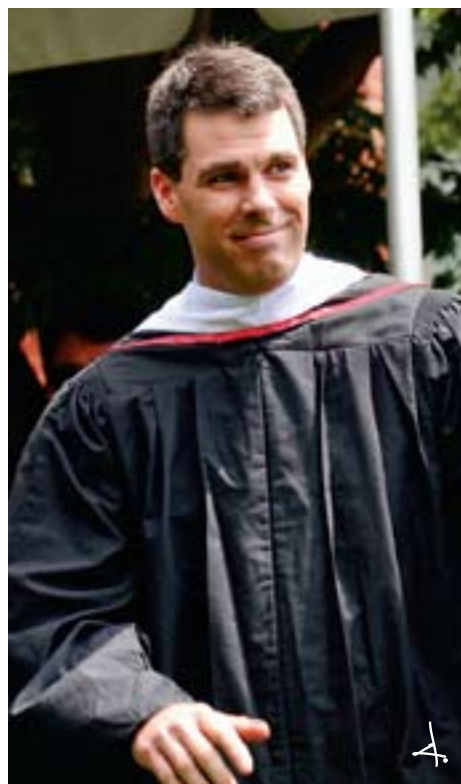
2. A combined one hundred ten years of teaching experience and none of them looks any older. PETER FREW '75

3. Bagpipes lead the seniors in. PETER FREW '75

4. Mid class dean Mark Traina is recognized with the William and Lee Abramowitz Award for Teaching Excellence. ANDRE LI '11

5. Bruce Fifer sings “Old Man River” after Jen Zaccara’s talk on Mark Twain. PETER FREW '75

6. Aurelian Award winner Caroline Castellano. ANDRE LI '11





*tales of a* **TAFTIE**

## Robert F. Wagner, Class of 1929

THE MAN WHO WOULD BE MAYOR

PHOTO:  
NYC Mayor Robert  
Wagner '29, left, with  
Tammany boss Carmine  
DeSapio, right, at the  
National Democratic  
Convention in 1956. GREY  
VILLET/TIME & LIFE PICTURES/  
GETTY IMAGES

SOURCES:  
*Encyclopedia of World  
Biography*  
*New York Times*  
Wikipedia  
[www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov)



Robert F. Wagner '29 dedicated his life to public service. He was elected mayor of New York City in 1953 with the support of the infamous Tammany Hall political machine. Yet he played a role in the decline of the political machine when he ran for his last term, after rebuking the leader of Tammany Hall and running on his own. He won that race and thus contributed to the decline in political corruption in American politics.

Raised by his father after his mother's death when he was nine, Wagner was clearly shaped by his father's career. Robert F. Wagner Sr. was the illustrious U.S. senator who helped create the Social Security system under Franklin D. Roosevelt and the National Labor Relations Act, which legalized collective bargaining. This landmark legislation was named the Wagner Act in honor of its principal author. Growing up in this political life, Wagner was infused with a strong sense of public service, which was only strengthened at Taft.

Wagner attended Yale University and then went onto to Yale Law School, graduating in 1937. He began his political career early, serving in the New York Assembly for three terms. Continuing his public service, he enlisted in the Army to serve in World War II, ending his army career as a lieutenant colonel and earning a Bronze Star and the French Croix de Guerre.

Only Edward Koch and Fiorello LaGuardia served as mayor for as long as Wagner—12 years. In that time, Wagner made significant changes to the infrastructure of New York City. He connected the city in many ways by overseeing the building of the Van Wyck Expressway, the Grand Central Parkway, the Long Island Expressway, and the Verrazano-Narrows and Throgs Neck bridges. When the Giants and the Dodgers left New York, he built Shea Stadium to lure the new Mets baseball team to the city. Realizing the importance of entertainment to city living, he built Lincoln Center for the Performing

Arts and helped bring the 1964–65 World's Fair to New York. He also helped create a beloved New York institution—Shakespeare in the Park—over objections that the producer was a communist.

When Wagner was first elected he promised to produce a “government dedicated to the best interest of all people” and he expressed the value of public service as “among the most noble challenges and among the greatest responsibilities.” Wagner saw significant demographic changes taking place in the city after World War II, and tackled their political ramifications head on. Many whites were upwardly mobile and moved to the newly created suburbs. Opportunities for jobs and new lives were created for blacks from the South and Puerto Ricans who flocked to the city. He cleared slums for better public housing and improved schools, including the creation of the City University of New York. He tackled corruption in city government, hired more police officers and hired minorities to work in the civil service. When there were riots in Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant, Wagner created a “jobs program for disadvantaged youth” and other anti-poverty programs.

Wagner always wanted to follow in his father's footsteps to the U.S. Senate, but was defeated in 1956 by Republican Jacob Javits, who was swept into office on the coattails of Dwight Eisenhower. Had it been any other year, Wagner would likely have won. Nonetheless, former governor Mario Cuomo believes that Wagner was “the city's greatest mayor,” and Koch said that LaGuardia and Wagner were the two best mayors of the city. He was a man who dedicated his life to public service, and the public was well served. ■

—Rachael Ryan

*Rachael teaches AP Government at Taft. She and husband Greg Hawes '85 were profiled in the spring 2005 issue.*



from the **ARCHIVES**



## Varsity Softball

In the spring of 1974 girls had been at Taft for only two and a half years. When this picture was taken early in the season, this group looked radiantly ahead to compiling a 13–1 record, beating schools that had fielded girls teams for many years.

—Alison Gilchrist

△ Team Members: (back row) Molly Heminway, Victoria Ryder, Laura Cassidy, Tina Shealy, Sarah Hoyt, Coach Martha Patrick, Coach John Sadowsky, (front row) Gloria Board, Helen Millett, Dee Dee Strickland, Marian Reiff, Pam Ryder, Wendy Cassidy, Susan Salisbury

Have any stories? We look forward to hearing from you!

## Taft Bulletin

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