Crossing Borders:
Bruce &
Jacob Mills
The 2003-2004 issue of Passage has been published, and the editors of LuxEsto are very impressed. Passage collects images and reflections of students about study abroad experiences and is written, photographed, edited, and produced by students. Sara Vasilenko served as editor-in-chief of this year’s edition. On the next page we provide a sampling from the publication, including Sara’s “Letter From the Editor,” and the poem “Appee: big” by Nora Hauk. Sara studied in Australia, and Nora studied in Thailand.
Letter From the Editor

by Sara Vasilenko

While I was in Australia I learned that Kalamazoo College's study abroad program had been rated number one in the nation by U.S. News and World Report. I think this confirms what most people in the Kalamazoo College community already know: study abroad is a pivotal experience in the lives of a majority of students here. For months after arriving home, my friends, classmates, and I would continually tell stories about our adventures abroad in order to re-live the experience. Study abroad can be an amazing experience in a variety of ways. It is a way to immerse yourself in a new culture and natural landscape, to learn foreign language skills, and to grow as a person. It can be exciting, challenging, frustrating, rewarding, and a lot of fun.

While the study abroad experiences of the Class of 2004 can be said to fit with the College's tradition of study abroad programs, there are also ways in which these travels are different than those of years past. Talk of a war with Iraq began while many of us were in other countries, a war which did commence with the support of a few other nations. I know that my time spent outside the States gave me a new perspective on this issue, as I began to see the diversity of cultures and ideas and learn that the "American Way" is not the only way. As you will see in several of the pieces presented in this issue of Passage, many students' study abroad experiences involved reflection on aspects of American life. Studying abroad during this time of international turmoil makes it clearer than ever that it is vital to learn about other cultures and ourselves if we want to make any progress toward understanding and harmony.

Appee: big

by Nora Hauk

Bare feet grip the tree far above our heads. Appee, the one who doesn't want to come down, climbs higher and higher. Appee, the Lahu word meaning "big," is the nickname of this tiny girl, named as if to spite her tiny body and round belly. Just as her luminous smile, enormous laugh, and bold stories contradict her stature. She does not tower. She climbs, gentle foot, the branches bowing only slightly under her light weight. I fear more that she will take flight than fall to the earth.

Appee: a bird, hollow bones and awkward wings. Appee knows she can't go home, she cannot go to Bangkok, cannot leave her, the most tender garden-enclosed shelter. She will fail English class. She will not come to America, though she grasps me so tightly around the waist, grabs my hand, pulls me to her, asking me to carry her away up in an airplane, giant rumblers that shake the wooden house each day, stopping lunchtime prayer, stealing the breath of a laugh in the afternoon, almost making the delicate flowers, coconuts, tamarinds, and their tree-perched pickers fall to the earth.

Appee grips on tight with her toes, going higher and higher.
The name LuxEsto is based on the College’s official motto, Lux Esto, “be light.”

Features

16 The Best Business Prep is the Liberal Arts
Amy Courter ’83 is a top executive in one of the 100 best companies to work for in the United States. She explains how her Kalamazoo College experience helped her get there.

18 Liberal Arts Roots in a Farming Career
Ken ’71 and Dale ’73 Norton grew up farming, attended Kalamazoo College, and returned to farming. Did the liberal arts undergraduate experience make a difference in their lives?

47 Public Service Courage
Seeking the most effective way to help as many people as possible, David Hanna ’99 has entered the realm of public service. First election: the Democratic primary for the Maryland State Assembly.

Departments

3 Letters
6 On the Quad
11 Commencement
30 Alumni Pages
34 Class Notes

Corrections:
Tim Smith ’76 was a finalist in the 2003 International Tall Tales Press short story contest. Paige Simpson is a member of the Class of 1978. Katheryn and Stan Raynak hosted some 30 international students. Of those 30, about 10 actually lived with them.
Business Maestro

Professor Moffit,

I enjoyed reading your views on the synergy between the K-Plan and the needs of the business world in the Spring 2004 issue of LuxEsto. I have often expressed the same perspective as being consistent with what I gained from a Kalamazoo education.

Our personal backgrounds sound similar in that it seems the combination of a liberal arts education, foreign experiences, and career development significantly influenced our professional careers. After Kalamazoo, a stint in the Army, and earning an MBA from the University of Michigan, I worked for Marathon Oil for 26 years before electing early retirement three years ago. It was the Kalamazoo experience that made me a “crossfunctionalist,” able to comfortably work alongside engineers, bankers, and marketers. It was foreign study that made me both comfortable and effective in a variety of foreign assignments. It was career development that gave me my first significant opportunity in a real-world work situation and the chance to observe operational challenges, personnel issues, and organizational considerations.

It has always been my belief that people think too narrowly when deciding what skills to develop. They try to learn exactly what is required for a task without being prepared to readily associate the task with its place in a business model. All of the “chairs of the business education orchestra” you have identified are essential to fulfilling the business needs of an employer (or self-employer) and to fulfilling the psychic needs of a liberal arts-minded student.

Practical academic orientations such as yours reconfirm my faith in Kalamazoo College. I applaud your work and encourage you to continue to emphasize the merits of “crossfunctionalism.”

Dick Yehle ’68

Professor Moffit,

It was refreshing to read about and remember your challenging teaching style, complete with the advanced textbooks and case studies. I’m certain that the case studies that we did were just as difficult and rewarding as any that followed in graduate school at Michigan, and I’m even more certain that you examined and graded them more closely. I’m thrilled to know that even now you continue to challenge the kids that you see every day. Because of that, some of them will discover their passion for accounting, or marketing, or finance, and will pursue rewarding careers in those areas.

I also was interested that “K” works with students so that they can enroll at Western Michigan University or the University of Michigan in additional accounting classes which would serve as prerequisites to future Master’s programs in accounting. I wish that opportunity had been in place during my undergraduate years. Obviously there is a current of interest among Kalamazoo College students to become CPAs, and these programs will better enable those students to launch their careers sooner.

I’ve been working at Plante & Moran in Ann Arbor, and so far my experience has been wonderful. Over the past few years I have played a limited role in recruiting, usually meeting with potential candidates during office visits. I believe the new programs at “K” (in combination with the caliber of student “K” attracts) will help make Kalamazoo College students prime candidates for internships and jobs in major accounting firms like Plante & Moran.

Again, congratulations on a great article.

Jason Widman ’99, CPA

Dear Maestro,

What a nice tribute to you and the business curriculum at Kalamazoo College. I was proud to read about you in the alumni magazine and made sure that my parents saw the article as well.

The Kalamazoo College curriculum is a richer educational experience because of its inclusion of business career-oriented courses, and you and your classes are an integral part of the College’s degree in economics.

Christa Clapp ’97
To the Editor,
Thanks for the wonderful profile of economics and business professor Tim Moffit. When I transferred to Kalamazoo College in 1979, I was completely unprepared by my previous academic experience for the demanding workload. As my dorm neighbor, Tim had a profound influence on me, teaching me how to “work hard and play hard” and challenging me to reach my potential. As your article documents, Tim is an amazingly talented, creative, energetic, and entertaining person. The crossing of our paths is one of the great blessings of my life.

Rob MacCoun ’80
Professor of Law and Public Policy, University of California at Berkeley

Professor Moffit,
I recently received my LuxEsto and read all about you and the new accounting opportunities at Kalamazoo College. That’s great! I graduated from The University of Texas last year with Matt Parker and have since moved back to the Detroit area where I am now working at PricewaterhouseCoopers in the assurance practice. I am participating as a peer mentor in one of our summer leadership programs and was really excited to see that another Kalamazoo College student (Jeffrey Outslay ’06) will be in the program. It sounds like you are still having a great time out there in Kalamazoo, whipping all those students into stellar business shape! You have no idea how your classes and mentoring helped lay the groundwork for where I am today.

Veronica Wildgoose ’01
PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP

Hi Professor Moffit:
I was so happy to see the article in LuxEsto about you! It brought back all sorts of memories! I was one of your business students and a swimmer. You allowed me to do a special project with you one semester on a marina/boat enterprise (must admit that some of those details are now escaping me!). Your classes were such good preparation for actual business; the cases were the key. We also worked with the [Stryker Center] SBA [Small Business Association] on some real-life consulting projects—mine was a small convenience store in the area that wanted to add a deli or pizza ‘station,’ but I recall that our team advised against that!

A bit of an update on my career that I thought you would find interesting and related. Upon graduation, I moved to Washington, D.C. I have been here ever since and now have a 3-year-old boy, Anthony, and a newborn (3 weeks) son, Nicholas. I worked for IBM for about five years and got my MBA from University of Maryland’s Robert H. Smith School of Business, then moved to PricewaterhouseCoopers Consulting, where I managed the Sales Operations Team for the management consulting group for about four years. The group was purchased by IBM in Oct 2002, so I again left IBM to move to the Smith School and business academics! I am the director of business development at Smith and also direct its MBA Consulting Program. And here’s the “related” part: The program (a graduation requirement for all full-time MBAs) places students in teams on real-time consulting projects with organizations in the D.C. area (and beyond). The program lasts a traditional semester, and the students work with the clients and create and deliver a formal deliverable with results, research, you name it. I just had to let you know that my experience at Kalamazoo College has allowed me to manage this great program! It really is neat, and I gain a lot out of it because I am the ‘recruiter’ for the projects and, hence, need to scope and manage expectations, etc.

Christine (Lomer) La Cola ’92

This issue of LuxEsto features an additional article about the excellence of the College’s curriculum as a preparation for a career in business. See the story about Amy Courter on page 16.

A Tribute of Music
Luel Simmons ’42 sent the following letter to President Jones near Commencement. Dr. Jones departed for Trinity College at the end of June.
Dear Jimmy:
You must be very busy these days, yet I ask a favor of you.

Herewith is “Henry Overley—His Music.” This represents my efforts over the last several years to search for his compositions, which have been lost from the College and St. Luke’s Church. I don’t have all of them, but I have tried.

Will you please direct someone to have this book safely installed where it may provide a little of the history of the College and a bit of a monument to Dr. Overley, the founder and first head of the music department.

If you open the book you will see that I have taken the liberty of dedicating my efforts to you, my friend. Marian and I have already told you how much we and the whole community will miss you and Jan. Now we can only wish you Godspeed.

With admiration and affection,

Luel Simmons ’42

The Value of Externships

Sarah (Lewis) Juliusson sent the following letter to Richard Berman regarding a career development externship that Lauren Puretz ’05 completed with Sarah, who is a midwife in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Hello Richard,
I recently hosted an extern here in Vancouver with my small, home-based business Dancing Star Birth. I wanted to share with you some of my thoughts on the program and how it benefits the hosts.

While Lauren made a valuable contribution to my work with Dancing Star Birth, I was surprised by the effect her presence in our home had on us as a family. Here we are, almost 15 years post-college, two beautiful children, a home, work we love, and I suppose also 15 years older as well—though it seems like yesterday. Sharing with Lauren in this time of incredible transition for her, as she enters her final year at Kalamazoo College and prepares for the unknowns that lie ahead, helped us to step back and take a look at our own lives—where we were back then, where we are now, and where we hope to be in another 15 years. At the time of graduation from Kalamazoo College I never could have imagined how rich my life would be today, or that I would have been doing work with pregnancy and birth! The “porch-time” discussions we shared were as insightful for us as I hope they were for Lauren!

Thanks again for this marvelous opportunity; I definitely hope to host another student with Dancing Star Birth, and my husband is now hoping that he can have the chance to work with an intern as well (do husbands of “K” grads count?).

For more on the externship program, see the inside back cover of this issue of LuxEsto.

Richard Berman informed us that spouses of graduates are welcome to sponsor interns.
Search Underway

by Zinta Aistars

Kalamazoo College is seeking its 17th president, and the candidates will be excellent. So assures Search Committee Chair Donald R. Parfet, chairman of the board of trustees for the College. The vice chair of the search committee is William C. Richardson, president and chief executive officer of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, former president of Johns Hopkins University, and a member of the Kalamazoo College board of trustees. Search committee faculty representatives include David Barclay, history; Karyn Boatwright, psychology; and Regina Stevens-Truss, chemistry. David Anderson, Admission, represents College staff; and trustees serving on the committee are Ronda Stryker, a member of the board of directors of Stryker Corporation and trustee of Spelman College; Harry Garland ’68, chairman of Garland Actuarial LLC; Gwen Fountain ’68, director of investment management at the Children’s Museum of Indianapolis; and Charlotte Hall ’66, vice president and editor of the Orlando Sentinel. Bonnie Wachter Swenby ’69 joins the committee from the Alumni Association Executive Board, and Carrie Brankiewicz ’04 serves as the committee’s student representative.

“The timing for a presidential search is propitious,” said Parfet. “It’s possible we may have a short list of candidates by December or January. We intend to name the 17th president of Kalamazoo College before the end of the current academic year.”

Working in the capacity as a consultant to the search committee is Shelly Weiss Storbeck, managing director of A.T. Kearney Education Practice in Virginia.

“My role in this search,” Storbeck says, “is to recruit and advise. The process of interviewing and making the final choice of who will be the best candidate for the position will be in the hands of the search committee.”

Storbeck has done approximately 300 searches for other colleges and universities across the country, but what makes this one unique, she says, is that “Kalamazoo College requires its president to have international experience. With a study abroad program that is one of the most highly acclaimed in the country, the president must have a strong understanding of what such global outreach involves.”

Information on the search is available on the Kalamazoo College Web site at www.kzoo.edu.
It can be difficult to tell who is more excited—Dhera Strauss or Megan Erskine ’05. For that matter, it’s sometimes difficult to tell who is teaching whom.

“We think we are teaching, but often it gets turned around,” says Dhera. She is the Kalamazoo College video specialist, and she teaches documentary video production. The course is designed to introduce students to the basics of documentary storytelling. Students produce, write, shoot, and edit several video projects that are intended to develop their narrative and technical skills.

Megan Erskine didn’t really have a particular interest in video production when she decided to take Dhera’s class. She’s more sports-oriented and plays on the Kalamazoo College girls’ volleyball team. But still unsure of her major, she took the video class to try something new and different.

“Dhera is an amazing teacher,” Megan says. “The class turned into one of the best experiences of my life, an antidote to our tendency to sometimes isolate ourselves from the community beyond Kalamazoo College. We can get so involved in our academic and campus activities that we forget to reach out to others.”

Megan discovered there was something magical as well as medicinal (for the occasional creeping isolation), about having a video camera in her hands. Dhera had just received a grant to fund what was being called “The Crosstown Project.” The Michigan Association of Community Arts Agencies (the funder) wanted to encourage the making of a video documentary capturing local histories as related by residents of the Washington Square Co-op, a senior assisted-living residence in what had once been a thriving part of Kalamazoo. Dhera asked Megan to spend her summer months with her at the Co-op. She put a video camera in her hands, and Megan felt her own comfort zone being stretched.

“We invited people at the Co-op to tell us their personal stories, reflections, memories, whatever they wanted to share with us,” Megan says. “Each resident was promised a copy of the finished video to have for themselves and their families.”

At first, Megan found the residents were a little shy around her and her camera. And Megan was shy among her subjects. Dhera encouraged her to make personal connections with the people she was filming, and as she listened to the stories, Megan felt those connections begin to develop. She spent many long hours at the Co-op, talking, listening, even participating in an occasional karaoke night. She became friends with an elderly man who talked of his days as a professional boxer. She listened to colorful stories from a world traveler now too tired to travel other than in his memories.

Last spring Megan did some travel of her own, studying in France as part of her K-Plan. She’s considering English as a major with a concentration on environmental studies. Video documentaries, however, continue to be a creative interest for her. Upon completing the video documentary at the Washington Square Co-op, Megan did a second video documentary. This time she filmed a tattoo artist working in his tattoo parlor. “Living Art” was accepted into the East Lansing Film Festival.

“I learned a lot about myself during this experience,” Megan says. “I can’t believe I just walked into a tattoo parlor and asked if I could film the artist as he worked. It put me into an uncomfortable situation outside of the classroom, and it forced me to get to know people beyond the stereotypes. Through the ‘Living Art’ and the Washington Square projects, I realized I love watching people in their own realities and trying to interpret, from an outsider’s point of view, what their lives mean to them. The video camera serves as a sort of passport into other people’s lives. If you have a camera, people talk, and the more they talk, the more you learn. Relationships I have established through both projects give my experience at ‘K’ a third dimension.”

Megan’s Third Dimension

by Zinta Aistars

Megan painting a ceramic figurine at Washington Square Co-op.
Kalamazoo College welcomed (and re-welcomed in two cases) five “new” tenure track professors in classical studies, German, computer science, political science, and economics. Profiles of the five follow.

Elizabeth Manwell, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Classical Studies

Elizabeth Manwell is “thrilled to be back” at Kalamazoo College. Manwell served as visiting instructor for classical studies at the College in the ’01-’02 academic year, before accepting an assistant professorship at the University of Utah.

“I jumped at the chance to come back,” she said. “The College’s focus on global awareness, service, and lifelong learning encourages students to become thoughtful members of their communities. And because students are taught to write and think critically, they are prepared to tackle challenges from medical school to the Peace Corps and beyond. I like being part of that.”

Manwell earned a B.A. degree in ancient Greek from Ohio State University, a M.A. degree in Latin from the University of Cincinnati, and a Ph.D. in classics from the University of Chicago. At Kalamazoo, she will teach introductory Greek, classical mythology, and a first-year seminar on ancient and modern odysseys.

“To me, the classroom is a place for collaboration. I want the courses I teach to enrich every student and offer opportunities to develop individual talents, as well as learn new skills.”

Why study the classics? “To most people, the classics are boring and meaningless to 21st Century life, or they’re like the movies ‘Gladiator’ and ‘Troy.’ But I see real value in them. Rome and Athens are two of the earliest multiethnic and multicultural empires. We Americans can learn a lot from them. Plus, it’s just amazingly fun!”

Manwell has lived and studied in Greece, Israel, and Ecuador. She is proficient in Italian, French, and Spanish, and has a special research interest in Latin and Greek poetry. Plus, she has a passion for Elvis Presley and a newfound hobby in knitting. “I know that sounds ‘old-ladyish,’ but in fact it’s really cool.” For balance, she’s taken up fly fishing.

Manwell will be joined in Kalamazoo by fiancé Matt, two cats, and several portraits of Elvis.

Nathan Sprague, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Computer Science

Nathan Sprague wants to make certain that Kalamazoo College students who enroll in his computer science classes don’t repeat his undergraduate experience with the field.

As a freshman at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, Sprague enrolled in an introductory CS course designed, he said, “to be a kind of boot-camp for programming.”

He worked hard, and by the end of the semester he’d become a competent programmer. Unfortunately, he had developed a narrow and uninspiring view of the field. He left the department, returning a
year later only because he concluded that a background in computer science would be useful for developing a research career in other scientific fields.

"Eventually, as a result of taking courses with several excellent teachers, I came to see that computer science is profoundly interesting and valuable in its own right. It is about understanding the fundamental limits of what we can do with information."

Sprague grew up in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. He earned his Ph.D. in computer science from the University of Rochester (New York). At Kalamazoo, he will teach several computer science courses, including one on machine learning.

He said it’s hard to sum up a teaching philosophy in a couple of sentences "without sounding like an inspirational wall calendar." But he believes the faculty at Kalamazoo, "me included, are here because we want to help students learn to think independently and critically; we want to give them the space and support to develop their own identity and personal philosophy; and we want to give them the skills necessary to pursue a career."

An avid outdoorsman who likes to camp, hike, fish "and generally get away from civilization whenever I can," Sprague moves to Kalamazoo with wife Rebecca and newborn daughter Evelyn.

Michael Sosulski, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of German

Kalamazoo College is precisely the sort of institution Mike Sosulski has always wanted to join. First, he said it personifies a liberal arts education, which "is what shaped the person and the academic that I am today." Second, the College has a deep commitment to international education, "something that is very dear to me."

And third, it has a jazz band. "I'm a passionate jazz and blues man. I play some tenor saxophone, although not terribly well."

Along with a B.S. degree in German from Georgetown University, Sosulski earned M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from The University of Chicago. He previously taught at Valparaiso (Ind.) University and Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Wash.

During his first year at Kalamazoo, Sosulski will teach primarily intermediate-level German classes and a senior seminar. He said he's a firm believer in cultural studies, "which means I think it's just as important to teach and learn about the contexts and milieu in which languages and literatures emerge as it is to understand these cultural products themselves."

For Sosulski, German as a language is a "gateway to a surprisingly diverse and exciting world of people, practices, and traditions including Poles, Russians, Romanians, Jews, Afro-Germans, Turkish-Germans and other growing minority cultures."

Kalamazoo is a good place to teach, learn, and research his field, he said. "What strikes me as so special about this institution is the way the K-Plan so carefully balances structure with creativity. It allows for ample guidance while creating space and opportunity for students to explore, both physically and intellectually."

Perhaps the College will also allow the creative space Sosulski needs to master his sax. "I have a vintage saxophone from the 1930s, a Conn 10M, the kind played by the great Lester Young in the Count Basie Band. I have his horn, but alas—where is his sound?"
Jennifer Einspahr, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Political Science

Jennifer Einspahr, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Political Science

Jennifer Einspahr knew nothing about Kalamazoo, Michigan, and little about the Midwest prior to her arrival here as the newest member of the Kalamazoo College political science department faculty. But when she stepped on campus, she felt right at home.

"The campus and the people seemed so familiar to me, since I earned my undergraduate degree at a similar college in a similar city," she said. "I'm not too crazy about winter yet, but everything else feels right."

Einspahr grew up in Portland, Oregon, and earned a B.A. degree in political science from Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. Her experience at Whitman sparked a desire to teach at a small liberal arts college. "I had a professor who really inspired me, and I always thought it would be great if I could do that, too."

Einspahr actually has one year of Kalamazoo College teaching experience under her belt, having accepted a one-year assignment here in 2003.

During the coming academic year, she will teach introductory classes in political science and women's studies, as well as courses on classical, modern, and feminist political theory. After teaching classes of up to 90 students at Rutgers University, where she earned a Ph.D., Einspahr is thrilled about the small student-to-teacher ratio at Kalamazoo.

"Political theory offers opportunities to examine important ideas such as justice, equality, and freedom. Kalamazoo College is the kind of place where students are able to speak, think, and write about these topics in depth and to connect them to events being talked about in the news. I love being a part of that."

And Einspahr loves the response she often gets when people learn about her travels. "People are always saying, 'Wow, you must be the only person who's lived in both Walla Walla and Kalamazoo! What's next, Timbuktu?'

Patrik Hultberg, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Economics

Patrik Hultberg would seem to be a good choice to teach courses on international economics and international business. Yes, he has a Ph.D. degree in the former and a B.A. degree in the latter. But more than that, he's lived, studied, and worked in Sweden, France, Korea, Taiwan, and the U.S., and he's traveled to many more countries.

"Economics is an extremely powerful tool for explaining human behavior around the world," he said. "I've done a lot of traveling and seen this first hand. I'm really excited about coming to Kalamazoo College where the commitment to the study of economics and to international education is so high."

Hultberg grew up in Helsingborg, Sweden, and attended high school as an exchange student in the state of Wyoming. While earning an undergraduate degree from Ohio Wesleyan in Delaware, Ohio, he studied abroad for six months in Strasbourg, France. After earning his Ph.D. degree from Rice University in Houston, he took a teaching job at the University of Wyoming in Laramie, where he's been for six years.

At Kalamazoo, Hultberg will teach principles of microeconomics, a seminar on the effects of globalization, and courses in international economics and business.

"I'm glad to be moving from the research environment of a large university to a highly selective liberal arts college like Kalamazoo where I can focus on teaching."

Hultberg said he tries to teach the "economic way of thinking" to students. "That sounds like a cliché, but the fact remains that all individuals, firms, and institutions respond to economic incentives and all economic actions and policies carry both direct and indirect effects on people everywhere. All of these have to be understood."

Joining Hultberg in Kalamazoo are two-year-old son Lukas, wife Seong-Hee Kim (pregnant with their second child), and his tennis racquet. "I hope to spend a lot of time with them all."
On the twelfth of June, 261 members of the Class of 2004 proceeded across the campus Quadrangle and were awarded their degrees. Two distinguished individuals received honorary degrees: Richard Ford, author and winner of the Pulitzer Prize and PEN/Faulkner Award; and Ihsan H. Shurdom, retired Royal Jordanian Air Force general and an activist for peace dialogues in the Middle East. Richard Ford’s commencement remarks are reprinted on page 12.

Corrine L. Zann, English teacher at Portage (Mich.) Central High School, was honored with the Pauline Byrd Johnson Award for excellence in pre-collegiate teaching.
Well, well, well. Four years. Here you are commencing – except I know it feels like ending. I look at you today, and you look much older now. You'd better be a lot smarter, I'll tell you that. A lot depends on you.

When we were here together four years ago, and you'd read (or said you'd read) my novel *Independence Day*, one of your classmates, a young woman (who I hope is graduating today, *summa in English*) said to me in class: "Mr. Ford, I'm eighteen. I don't really see why I should be interested in what some middle-aged man's life is all about."

I thought – and, of course, maybe only in my dreams – did I actually say it – but I thought: "Well, aren't your parents middle aged, or thereabouts? Are you really not interested in them?" It surprised me. I'd never thought that young adults might not be interested in the lives of older adults. I was, forty years ago.

It seems to me, though, now – four years later – that if your education at this place has been worth anything at all, that you now know why you should be interested in the lives of middle-aged men, and women. Because that's who's running your country. That's who's sending your less-fortunate high-school classmates into the peril of war. That's who's shaping, or mis-shaping your futures. And that's who you'll be someday, and what you'll be doing – if you live. You can't afford to be un-interested after today, to be narcissistic, to be apathetic, to waste critical time. Everything demands that you not do that; but rather that you be engaged, that with your life you make a palpable, positive contribution to the lives of others, that you be useful and wise and a good listener and a humanitarian, and not just a greedy bunch of solipsists; but rather be people who project the consequences of their actions large and small, and be people upon whom nothing is lost. College graduation, as sweet as it is, is a wake-up call: Large things are happening around us. It's a scary time. School's out.

Now, I don't want you to think I'm going to show up in your lives every four years for this kind of gut check. This is it for me, pals. You're on your own big time after this. The breeze you feel and hear is not the sweet Michigan zephyr, but your parents sighing with relief.

So, how can I, in two minutes, make time feel precious to you, as precious as it feels to me now, and with that recognition, galvanize you to personal responsibility commensurate with your stature as partially-educated women and men?

How long does your college life seem to you, today? A short time? A long time? A blur? I was 56 when I met you; I'm 60 now. Some

Exactly 50 years separate the commencement of Michael Martin '04 and his uncle Frank Ward '54. Frank made sure he attended his nephew's graduation. Michael earned his Bachelor's degree in biology; Frank's degree is in history.
of your friends in these four years have disappeared, some have died, gotten sick, gotten happy, gotten married, had babies, gone crazy, had success, lost their parents, lost their way. That’s how the world runs together, and seems to relieve you of the need to pay strictest attention. Emerson wrote that “nature doesn’t like to be observed;” by which he meant, in part, that it’s hard to “see time passing.” You have to make an effort. You have to decide to do it. (Incidentally, this is also why we need art, to “undo the damage of haste,” Theodore Roethke, of Saginaw, Michigan, said – to stop the world and remind us of its crucial and loveliest and scariest details.)

I don’t need to tell you that you’ve already lived in a time of great tumult in the world and in your country. And I’m sorry that you’ve had to. I’m sorry things can’t come back to what must seem “normal” from even this distance of time. If you’d had better leaders, if my generation had been smarter, better, more humanitarian, better listeners, better projectors of their acts’ consequences, it might not have happened this way. It might’ve been much better.

But do you feel anesthetized to it already? Does time grow vague? Nothing’s been your fault up to now. You’ve been kids. Students. But this is commencement today. Your life’s off the registrar’s records, and onto your own.

At last count, since March of 2003, 830 of your contemporaries have died in Iraq and Afghanistan. And uncounted thousands of Iraqis and Afghans. That alone should make time feel quickened, eventful, exhaustible to you – if you have a heart, if you have empathy. Their time, their choices, their commencement is over. Though by some good fortune, you’re still here. You’ve been in school. But what’re you going to do now?

Emerson also wrote, and this is in “Self Reliance” (which should be your text from this day forward) that “power ceases in the instant of repose; it resides in the moment of transition – from a past to a new state, in the shooting of the gulf, in the darting to an aim. [And] This one fact the world hates; that the soul becomes....”

Today for you is finally just a day. Tomorrow will be another one. There is no REAL GULF to shoot – unless you imagine one, make one be. Make your soul, even at your young age, become.

But let me, in conclusion, make this easier for you by not inviting you to think of time just as something not to be squandered, of losses to mourn, or of waste and dire necessity. But rather to think of time in terms of noticing on this pretty June afternoon how lucky you are to be, and how glad I am for you to be, alive today; to have time to be of use, time to do better than has been done before you (though some of us – with less time left to us – are still out here trying).

So, congratulations to you. I’m honored to know you, to have shared what are for me memorable times with you, and now to graduate with you today. The world needs all of our best now, but especially it needs yours. It’s time.
Kalamazoo College music professors Tom Evans, Les Tung, and Barry Ross planted the seeds of a “new” jazz. Turns out the soil for this harvest was the fertile mind of Matt Lund ’99, composer, jazz guitarist, and recent recipient of an Irving S. Gilmore Emerging Artist Grant. With the money, Lund hired seven backing musicians and spent a considerable amount of time composing what he terms a “textural and melodic” type of jazz, one that utilizes unique instruments such as the bass clarinet, soprano saxophone, and marimba. Lund presented this “new” jazz during a series of performances at Kalamazoo’s Wellspring Theater in August 2003. Since then he and his band mates (they are collectively known as The Music Group) have played venues in Allegan, Battle Creek, Grand Rapids (all in Michigan), and Chicago.

LuxEsto recently chatted with Lund about the K-Plan’s role in the creative process (five years after graduation he still cites Professors Evans, Tung, and Ross as inspirations), its impact on his career as a professional musician, and the future of his special brand of jazz.

**LuxEsto**: Jazz aficionado Albert Murray said: “When you see a jazz musician playing, you’re looking at a pioneer; you’re looking at an experimenter; you’re looking at a scientist; you’re looking at all those things because it’s the creative process incarnate.” This metaphor posits the jazzman as musical alchemist—and in your case that is entirely accurate. Your original compositions fuse all different jazz forms, while also embracing classical music and rock, to generate a completely fresh sound. How did your K-Plan enable you to approach the creative process with such a varying palette of styles?

**Matt Lund**: My foreign study in Bonn, Germany, had a tremendous impact on my career and artistry. Taking a wide range of classes at Kalamazoo College and living in a foreign country opened my mind to many possibilities. I also learned a lot from watching Dr. Evans conduct the jazz band and from playing with my classical guitar teacher Miles Kusik. Miles taught me about musical nuances and how to express myself through different styles of playing. In college I was exposed to everything from Miles Davis to Beethoven to the Blues. The advantage to such a multi-faceted musical education is that I am comfortable playing just about anything. I pick up a lot of side work because I am able to step up and read music with little or no rehearsal.

**LE**: You’ve talked about your classes and foreign study, but what role has your Senior Individualized Project (SIP) played in the work you are doing with The Music Group?

**ML**: The SIP fueled the writing I’m doing now; it is a huge part of the reason I was awarded the grant. Before my senior year I had taken some composition lessons at “K” and wanted to use the SIP quarter to get some practical experience. For my project, Dr. Evans encouraged me to write and arrange music for the Kalamazoo College Symphonic Band. He also invited my fusion band—a band composed of some friends and fellow music classmates—to play with the Symphonic Band. The SIP concert shifted back and forth between the two bands. This period really allowed me to make my self-expression a reality. A lot of the music that was performed during the Music Group Annual Summer Concert was written at Kalamazoo College. My SIP also foreshadowed things to come—conceiving of music and bringing it to life through rehearsing and promoting. I guess you could say that the experience was invaluable.

**LE**: Attending Kalamazoo College also gave you the opportunity to work with some talented up-and-coming musicians—and that seems to have paved the way for your future collaborations. Can you say something about how the student population here had an impact on your own creative transformation?
ML: All of my music classes prepared me to be a professional, but more than anything, membership in the Kalamazoo College Jazz Band has had the greatest influence on my career. I got to be part of a big group of talented musicians and experience first-hand the process of melding all of our sounds into something really fantastic. I also formed a number of offshoot bands with various classmates that performed both on- and off-campus. Right now I play with five bands, including the Music Group. I look back on the opportunity to experiment and play with other musicians at “K” as the beginnings of what I am doing now.

LE: You are a very visible figure in the City of Kalamazoo’s music scene because you belong to so many groups. Talk a little bit about these bands and how each one differs artistically.

ML: My recent bands include: Six Demon Bag, which is entirely improvisational; Burning Tent Revival, a rock band with layered electric guitars and vocals and heavy drums; The Undercats, which is an instrumental fusion band that leans toward dark and dreamy; and The Light Fusion Jazz Trio, which plays music from different eras of jazz. The Music Group performs my more complex compositions and includes more musicians.

LE: You are one of those individuals who has made something loved, something studied in college, something often considered merely a “hobby,” into a full-time career. Did the liberal arts experience help you make that happen?

ML: I think music is the language of human emotion and I feel lucky to be able to listen to it and to be able to play it. I create by letting my imagination tell me what to play. I can do that successfully because “K” instilled in me a need to take risks in my art and gave me a lifelong love of learning. I really believe that it’s that hands-on type of learning, that sampling from numerous genres, which truly defines the essence of the liberal arts education. The professors I had there also inspired me to teach, and teaching guitar lessons here in Kalamazoo at the Broughton Music Center and at Kellogg Community College in Battle Creek has financially enabled me to support myself and make my music a priority. I’m not sure if I would’ve acquired the skills to tutor if not for those private sessions at Kalamazoo College. And just like my instructors did for me, I give my students the tools to explore and to learn.

LE: What lies ahead?

ML: I recently formed a small business titled “The Music Group” with local bass player Bill Clements. I am hoping that this will help us reach a wider audience and make CD distribution a possibility. My long-term plans are to continue teaching music and to continue writing and performing music. Ultimately I’d like to be a part of a group that performs and records music professionally on a national or maybe even international level. And I haven’t ruled out graduate school [for composition]. Coming out of Kalamazoo College I think that’s a natural step.

Readers can contact Matt at: MattLund37@aol.com
Gra duates successful in the wo rld of business and commerce make much of Kalamazoo College's off-campus opportunities—study abroad and career internships—using them as excellent incubators for the qualities of character that serve a person well in the world of business. Many contend that such off-campus experiences become a “playing-fields-of-Eton” foundation to Waterloo-like victories much later in life.

Amy Courter ’83 will agree with that, as long as the sentiment doesn’t minimize the importance to business success of Kalamazoo College’s academic selections. And classes vital to a future in business will be found in many disciplines besides economics and business. “The academic diversity at Kalamazoo College is perfect for a career in business,” says Amy, the vice president for information technology at Valassis, in Livonia, Mich. “My classes in psychology, computer science, and education were perfect preparation for my career as a leader of technology and a designer of business strategies. My combination of those disciplines may not have made sense to some people at the time, but they deepened my understanding in areas that I enjoyed and in which I excelled then and now.”

Back in 1985, Amy worked as a consultant for Valassis, helping out in a variety of information technology assignments. Today she heads up the technology and telecommunications aspects of the company, designing the strategy for those areas and implementing it across the enterprise. Valassis provides a range of marketing services to consumer packaged goods manufacturers, retailers, technology companies, and other customers that operate in the U.S., Europe, Mexico, and Canada. These marketing services include newspaper advertising and inserts, sampling, direct mail, one-to-one marketing programs, coupon clearing and consulting, and analytic services. This diversity of products requires a diversity of approaches.

Amy’s team consists of 70 direct reports in the States and another 100 Valassis IT employees around the world.

“In my role, I often become the ‘business process’ and ‘change management’ leader,” says Amy. “My team supports the business through information technology applications that add efficiency and by continually creating the most effective process possible. In both of these efforts, change is a given, and change can be a challenge. You create something excellent for tomorrow in order to compete and thrive in the marketplace, and immediately you must begin to plan the next changes in order to be excellent the day after tomorrow.”

Her work requires a technical and human perspective, and her Kalamazoo College experiences deepened both of those areas.

Outside of the classroom, Division III athletics played a part. “My athletic opportunities at Kalamazoo strengthened my character and my confidence,” says Amy. She played field hockey and basketball.

Her work-study and career development
assignments prepared her for a future in the corporate world. Those assignments included a position with the Remedial Education Media Center for the Genesee County Public Schools. “I wrote and catalogued software programs for Kindergarten through 12th grade,” says Amy. She served as a computer lab teacher’s assistant for her on-campus work study assignment.

Amy studied abroad in Strasbourg, France, for six months. It was a critical experience for personal development. Her study abroad group learned only a short time before departure that they would be taking every class in French. “I’m not sure we were ready for that,” laughs Amy. But that foreign study experience so long ago remains vitally important today. “Valassis is global,” she explains, “and I now have responsibility for technology in other countries. Study abroad was excellent preparation for doing business with people whose cultural experiences differ from my own.”


Amy currently serves on the Kalamazoo College Board of Trustees and is a former Alumni Association Executive Board president. She also has served as the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) Michigan Wing Commander, leading 1,200 volunteers. She was the first woman to hold that position. Currently she is the senior advisor to CAP’s National Cadet Advisory Board and is a co-creator of a national Civics Leadership Academy for cadets.

Amy (front row, left) with a group of company interns (including two from Kalamazoo College) celebrating Valassis’ selection as one of the 100 best companies to work for in America.
Dale Norton ’73 lives next door to the house in which he grew up. Older brother Ken ’71 lives a half-mile down the road in the house their great-uncle built. In between and all around is Kendale Farm, the 2,300-acre farm they operate with two sons near Bronson, Michigan, about 50 miles southeast of Kalamazoo.

Like the three generations of Norton men before them and two sons who now follow, the brothers till the soil, raise livestock, enjoy good times, weather bad times, and weather the weather itself.

From the loamy muck on their boots to the wind-whipped hair atop their heads, they look the very image of farmers. And while the crops and barns they now tend may appear far removed from the ivy and brick campus they once strode, both will tell you that their Kalamazoo College years continue to be defining influences on their lives.

“Geographically, we haven’t gone very far,” said Dale with a chuckle. “But in other ways we really have come a long way. And we both credit Kalamazoo College for helping us on the journey.” In fairness to Ken and Dale and in contrast to the stereotypical image of farmers, the two spend about as much time in front of computer screens and business plans as they do wrenching on balky tractor engines or nursing sick piglets. For them, addressing farm problems can just as easily mean traveling to Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., as driving over the hill to check an irrigation pump.

But you have to wonder why two boys who hail from a farming background and returned to it after college would enroll at a small liberal arts school in the first place—especially when a big agricultural school was just up I-69.

“Actually, we weren’t sure we wanted to farm,” said Dale. “Neither of us took ag classes in high school. We were active in 4-H, but otherwise were on a college prep path. We played sports and participated in band and choir. Kids who were tied tightly to farm work didn’t have time for that.”

Their parents neither encouraged nor discouraged them from becoming farmers, he added. “If they had pushed us too hard, we might well have decided to do something different.”

Like many young men in the 1960s, the Norton
Ken Norton '71 with some of the 60 Semmental-Angus beef cows, which are just a few of the denizens of the 2,300-acre Kendale Farm that Ken owns and operates with his brother Dale '73. The farm includes 30,000 piglets, 1,500 sows, and Josie the Blue Heeler cattle dog (pictured on the facing page with Dale).

When not tending to crops, livestock, or farm equipment, Dale and Ken are in their farm office poring over crop yield maps, commodity prices, financial plans, and weather radar.
brothers felt the gravitational pull of cultural upheaval and social change sweeping the country, much of it against the backdrop of the Vietnam War.

“On its own merits, liberal arts was an appealing place to be at that time,” said Dale. “And while the draft was not an overriding concern, it did tend to keep you in school.”

Their mother, Margaret, was also a strong influence who pressed her sons to go the small college route. As a teacher and librarian in the Bronson school system, she understood the importance of higher education. As a graduate of Bridgewater College, a small Virginia school closely affiliated with the Church of the Brethren, she valued a liberal arts education at an institution with a strong social program and service interest.

“I had an English teacher, Bill Liggett ’61, who was a Kalamazoo graduate and recommended it to us,” said Ken. “And several friends [Bruce Ellis ’71, Dave Garman ’68, George Laws ’71 and Harry Laws ’68] went there. Those kinds of connections are influential.”

Kalamazoo College was just fine by their mother. And their father, Roland, concurred. He had attended a two-year agricultural program at MSU and piloted a B-17 in World War II. In addition to running the family farm, which he had expanded by the late 1960s to about 300 acres, he served on the Bronson school board and later became the school district’s financial manager. During his sons’ college years, he wound down the farming operation thinking that they would not be interested in carrying it on. With good reason.

Ken earned a degree in sociology and anthropology and strongly considered a teaching career. He spent his SIP semester as a student teacher and a career internship as a camp counselor at an outdoor education center in New Hampshire. “We’d take inner-city Boston-area kids for walks in the woods and fields, teach them basic science and talk about the web of life. I liked the work, and it was fun to be with others my own age far from home.”

Dale also spent an internship semester at an outdoor education center, Camp Ashokan, near Woodstock in upstate New York. He went on to earn a degree in political science. “History, law, and government interested me greatly. I gravitated toward those subjects and considered law school or business school.”

Each traveled to Muenster, Germany, for study abroad, even staying with the same host family two years apart.

In the end, however, Kalamazoo College couldn’t take the farm out of the boys. Following their commencements, Ken and Dale returned home to resume farming with their father. They married schoolteachers, Janie and Bobbi, respectively.

“I decided after my SIP that I wanted to farm rather than teach,” said Ken. “For me, Kalamazoo College was education for living, rather than for a career. It was great preparation for life and work and the world, but ultimately it couldn’t tempt me away from farming. Dale ended up feeling the same way.”

Through the years, the Nortons acquired more land and expanded the scope of their farming operations. Today, their small fleet of pickup trucks, tractors, combines, and other mechanized equipment traverses about 1,000 acres of corn and 1,000 acres of soybeans and a couple hundred acres given over to wheat, alfalfa, and open pasture for their herd of 60 beef cows.

They also maintain about 1,500 sows that produce some 30,000 piglets a year which they sell. All are housed in state-of-the-art—and very humane, they are quick to point out—facilities. The brothers and their two sons (Ken has one son, Seth, who has not followed them into farming) employ six full- and part-time employees.

“Farming has changed dramatically,” said Dale. “What started out as a lifestyle that appealed to us, has become big business driven by a global economy, technology, politics, and science. About the only constant over the years has been our dependence on the weather.

“We still enjoy it immensely, however. The stresses are big, but so are the rewards. Sometimes, we even make money,” he added with a laugh.

In order to feed the world’s population, not to mention their own family, the Nortons have had to
increase more than just the farm’s acreage and number of livestock. They’ve had to keep pace with developments in ag science, animal husbandry, and agronomics, as well as stay current with computer science, production automation, and business management techniques.

“The race goes to the most efficient,” said Ken. “Automation and size are critical. Farm equipment, for example, has gotten larger. One person can cover more acres and handle more livestock than ever before. If you don’t keep up with this, you are at a competitive disadvantage and you’ll be left behind.”

Through the years, the Nortons have augmented their on-the-job experience with knowledge gleaned from agricultural extension service and seminars sponsored by the State of Michigan and Michigan State University. Dale credits Ken with embracing computer technology and using it to automate the farm’s production and accounting systems.

Recently, when their father retired at age 82, they brought in two partners with extensive hands-on farming experience and ag schooling—Ken’s son Josh and Dale’s son Michael, both of whom earned degrees in agribusiness management and animal science from MSU. Unlike the fathers, the sons were convinced at an early age that farm living was for them. But both dads believed that for the boys to survive, they would need to be heavily schooled in economics and finance. For that reason, they didn’t steer their sons toward a liberal arts education.

It was a decision made with some regret. “I have some remorse that Josh didn’t go to Kalamazoo or a school like it,” said Ken. “The benefits of his MSU education are clear, but when he was attending lectures with 400 other students and study sessions led by graduate assistants, I did wonder whether he was getting the best education he could.”

As for the benefits of their own college education, Ken and Dale Norton have no doubts. They continue to value the close friendships they formed on campus. For all but one of the last 29 years, they’ve hosted a hog roast attended by many Kalamazoo College friends. Ken still enjoys the opportunity to speak German whenever such occasion arises. And he enjoys meeting and engaging people from other cultures, other walks of life. “The global perspective I gained from Kalamazoo has been invaluable to me. You are not so ethnocentric when you’ve lived in another culture.”

Family travels to Germany, Ireland, and Russia have reminded him that “living and studying abroad was one of the most important aspects of my education. Being placed into another culture made me realize that the way we do things at home is not the only way or necessarily the best way. But discovery goes beyond the study abroad experience. Exploration was the entire attitude at the College.”

Dale concurs. He said the word ‘perspective’ best sums up what his college education gave him. “Kalamazoo helped me see the world better both from my point of view and from the viewpoints of others. It gave me the knowledge and temperament to seek common ground with others instead of locking horns with them. Maybe that’s why I get along so well with Ken now, because we used to beat each other up a lot before we went to college.”

He also credits his political science courses for helping improve his view of the political and social landscape, especially when looking at the world of farming. Through the years, Dale has been involved with the Michigan Pork Producers Association, the Farm Bureau, and several commodity organizations. He was part of an ag leadership program funded by the Kellogg Foundation that looked at government-sponsored ag programs at the local, state, national, and international levels. That program took him to China, South Korea, and Thailand. He’s traveled to Washington, D.C., often to lobby Congress on farming issues.

Ken has also participated in state and national ag politics and has traveled the lobbying circuit to Lansing and Washington. But he’s been more active in community circles, serving 12 years on the Bronson school board (11 as president) and more than 25 years on the Branch County fair board (10 as president). He now sits on the county’s intermediate school board responsible for special education issues and managing the district’s technical/career center.

“Farmers are perhaps the original multi-taskers,” said Dale. “And I suppose Ken and I are good examples of that. We are always looking for ways to specialize that will make us successful. But we also like to seek out new opportunities, find new potentials, and diversify. As a farmer, you just never know where your life will take you.”

Or how far.
Like Bruce Mills and his wife Mary (see cover story, page 25), Kalamazoo College graduates Matt ’94 and Kelli ’95 (Johnson) Stapleton know first-hand the challenges and difficulties of raising a child with autism.

Their five-year-old daughter Isabelle, “Issy” for short, was diagnosed with the disorder when she was two. Issy seemed to be “normal and perfect” up until Kelli and Matt had their third child, Ainsley, now three. (The Stapletons also have a six-year-old son, McEwen.) Kelli says Issy started to become “more of a handful” and then stopped talking altogether. Concerned, Kelli took her to be examined for possible speech difficulties. That’s when she and her husband got their first premonition that their daughter’s condition might be much more serious. “The diagnosticians said Issy exhibited autistic-like behavior,” Kelli recalls. “I almost had to be helped to the car; it was such a shock. I hadn’t really thought about autism before, so I went home and looked it up on the Internet,” Kelli says. “What I found described her exactly—she doesn’t sleep, she twirls her hair, she’s ornery. She used to be fine, but now she’s not.”

The path to find help for their daughter was not an easy one, Kelli remembers. Issy’s school originally offered the Stapletons one hour of speech therapy a week for their daughter, but they soon decided that both they and their daughter needed more help.

Today, neighbors and teachers help the Stapletons with Issy, and the couple also employ two college students to work with her. A therapist three hours away from the Stapletons’ Cadillac (Mich.) home checks Issy’s progress monthly. Working with Issy is a full-time job for Kelli, even more so for Issy herself. “She works every day,” Kelli says of her daughter, and has had to miss out on a lot of the normal activities that are a part of childhood.

Most of the work with Issy involves repetition of basic skills, and even though Kelli is optimistic, she admits to occasional frustrations. “We have to catch up for lost time, the things she should have been learning since she was two,” Kelli says. “She also has to learn the things she should be learning now. Some of the literature suggests that, in some cases, autism can be reversed or overcome,” Stapleton says. “I’ve read that you can turn a low-functioning child into a high-functioning child, and that sometimes progress is so dramatic that the diagnosis is dropped altogether. That’s our hope. Our specialist had said that once autistic children hit five or six years of age, the condition is likely to be permanent. So right now we really have to work. I always want to know that we did our very best.”

Like Mills, Stapleton says that there is a price to raising a child with autism. “Even if we get her recovered, which I absolutely expect to do, we’ve still missed some things, like her bringing something to show to me and saying, ‘Mommy, look!’ I think the hardest part was losing and having to let go of my conception of who she was and who I expected her to become,” Stapleton says. “That ‘she’ was here. We had a perfect little girl, and somehow she disappeared and I didn’t even know it. I would have said ‘goodbye’ somehow,” she says.

“But I think that little girl is still there somewhere,” Kelli adds. “We just have to help her get home.”
Three months ago I moved into the president’s office,* and every time I look at a particular painting that hangs there I think of you.

By “you” I refer to all those who donated to the College’s campaign, *Enlightened Leadership: Kalamazoo College in the 21st Century.* And you are many! The painting happens to be a gift to the College from the late Nancy Todd Ackerman ’42. Like you, she gave a gift to *Enlightened Leadership.* I first spoke with her during the campaign’s infancy. In fact, I was quite green in my job as vice president for College advancement (and had just moved into that “new” office) when Nancy telephoned to inquire about donating the painting and, more importantly, to discuss a bequest, which, when she died, might be used to endow a scholarship that would make accessible for young women recipients the Kalamazoo College adventure. “Adventure” was Nancy’s word for the learning experience here. (And she qualifies as an expert on the subject of adventure. For example, at the young age of 60 she began pilot lessons, and by age 65 she and a friend flew all over the United States visiting friends and family.)

Nancy attended Kalamazoo College for two years and then completed her undergraduate degree at Knox College in Galesburg, Ill. She loved Kalamazoo College, and two years, she said, was enough to instill the Ulyssian spirit of restless curiosity and love of journeys. Because her adventure here meant so much to her she wished to share it with young women in the future.

I explained that the College’s threshold for an endowed scholarship usually was a principal of $100,000, an amount that on average generates an annual endowment income of $5,000, that is used to defray tuition costs for the scholarship recipient or recipients. A portion of the annual endowment income is reinvested with the principal in order to increase that base total. In that way, the principal (as well as the yearly earnings) of endowed scholarships increase over time.

For example, the College’s oldest endowed scholarship on record—an 1873 bequest of $2,540 by theology professor Louis Taft, has grown over the years some hundred-fold. Today its quarter-of-a-million-dollar principal generates annual earnings of more than $12,000, which is dispersed as scholarships for students for whom the Kalamazoo College learning experience might otherwise be inaccessible.

* I became acting president of the College on July 1, 2004, and will serve a one-year interim appointment while the College searches for its 17th president.
So, whenever I gaze on this particular painting I think of Nancy’s voice. She made her bequest and expressed her wishes that it endow a scholarship for a deserving young woman or women. Sadly, Nancy passed away last year; but she left that legacy. A small portion of the adventures that composed her life she has shared with young women of the future.

Nancy’s voice reminds me of your generosity. Enlightened Leadership was a call and your response inspired, in me, a sense of awe. Prior to the campaign kick-off, we had conducted what is called a “feasibility study.” This tool, based on research into the results of previous campaigns and interviews with graduates and other potential benefactors, is used to forecast an achievable dollar goal. Our feasibility study suggested that an overall campaign goal of $65 million would represent a considerable challenge, a goal which—like most worthy objectives—illustrates the adage that for the sake of growth one’s reach should exceed one’s grasp. Your response was far more magnanimous than the study suggested we had a right to expect. At the end of the campaign you had given more than $77 million to support your College’s particular practice of liberal arts learning.

I should have used the word “calls” in the previous paragraph for, in fact, the campaign was a series of calls.*** But in this letter I would like to focus on one—the call to build the endowment for general scholarships for students. Nancy Todd Ackerman responded to that particular call, and so did many others. We had hoped to raise $10 million for student scholarships; you gave $14 million.**** What explains such altruism? We learned that the answer to that question is your desire to make something that was valuable (and in a surprising number of cases, life-transforming) for you available to others.

In part, that impulse is about giving something back in return for gifts bestowed. Today at Kalamazoo College the per-student price of full tuition, room and board is about $10,000 less than the cost of educating a student. For 40 years, **** at least 24 percent of the four-year cost of educating each individual graduate has been covered by what I call the “hidden scholarship.” The hidden scholarship for most of these individuals actually exceeded 24 percent of the actual cost of education. The revenue sources for this ubiquitous hidden scholarship have been and continue to be endowed scholarships, unrestricted endowment income, and Kalamazoo College Fund (KCF) gifts.

Your generous response of $14 million to our call for $10 million inspired us to allow KCF donors to designate annual KCF gifts into three unrestricted categories, one of which is general student scholarships. In the past, most KCF donations have in fact supported student scholarships, but today our donors can make that choice themselves.***** It is clear to us that what resonates with you is making the kind of learning you experienced here available to others.

Robert Maynard Hutchins—educator, president of the University of Chicago (1929-1945), and founder of the “Great Books” undergraduate program—said, “The best education for the best is the best education for all.” Another word for “scholarships” is “access,” and Kalamazoo College scholarships provide access to, in my opinion, the best education in (and for) the world.

On page 48 of the “Donor Honor Roll” in this issue of LuxEsto, you will find the College’s financial statement for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2004. Under the “Educational and General” category in the “Expenditures” column you will see the line “Scholarships and Fellowships” and next to it a figure of more than $12 million. That money represents access for students who might not otherwise have access to the kind of undergraduate learning experience you enjoyed. During your four years here there was a similar line in the College’s financial statement. Your experience depended on it. The many donors whose gifts helped build that line helped ensure that the best was the best for you.

So what exactly does $14 million do? It makes available a four-year experience with the power to change a life. Professor Louis Taft knew that. Alumna Nancy Todd Ackerman knew it too. So did all who made a campaign gift to endow general scholarships. And so did everyone who made a KCF gift.

James Michener wrote that the only thing a person truly owns is his or her education. Access to an excellent education can mean a beautiful mind, and the gift of such access comes from beautiful minds.

***The final fundraising outcomes for each of the 12 “calls” is reported on page 2 of this issue’s Donor Honor Roll.

****Of this $14 million, $11 million is available for student scholarships today or within five years (the period of time during which all campaign pledges will be collected). The remaining $3 million represents deferred gifts (such as bequests) which will come to the College sometime in the future.

*****The year 1964 is as far back as I have currently probed with my research on the question of the hidden scholarship. I will continue to the study the matter in order to learn whether the hidden scholarship applies to all graduates. I suspect it does. The College was founded in 1833 but opened for its first classes only after three years of intense fundraising. So even those first students benefited from the gifts of others.

******The insert in this issue of LuxEsto specifies the KCF gift designations. An article on this change appeared in the summer issue.

The End
by Antonie Boessenkool ’99

Even before a baby is born, a parent’s imagination can create entire chapters of the child’s future. The images shift with various life stages, and a mixture of anticipation and love makes each one seem real.

You might see yourself pitching a whiffle ball to your three-year-old daughter, holding a red plastic bat the size of Montana, and she hits it! Or your son holds your hand all the way to the bus stop on his first day of school.

She sinks the game winner in the state finals. He grimaces through the inevitable and annoying prom pictures for the parents.

Each image takes on life in the mind, and many of these lives must be put to rest with a diagnosis of autism. Of course, those interments take time. And then the question becomes: just which images must be relinquished? And when?

When English professor Bruce Mills discovered that his son Jacob was autistic, he had much to learn about how his life—and the lives of his wife, Mary, and daughter, Sarah—would change. Just one small component of that change was learning everything they could about the disorder.

A different way of thinking

Autism usually develops before a child is three years old and affects his or her ability to communicate with others. Parents or teachers usually spot the disorder when a child fails to interact with others or interacts in ways significantly different from the behaviors of his peers. To many, a child with autism at first appears to have a hearing problem. The disorder is lifelong and usually
results in some amount of social isolation.

In 1997, Mills created a class for first-year students that combined service-learning with his personal experience with autism. "Crossing Borders: Autism and Other Ways of Knowing" is, on one level, "Autism 101," Mills says, providing students a background understanding upon which to build.

"Autistic children process the world differently—not through language, as we do, but visually," Mills says. To help his students appreciate this difference, Mills has invited artists into his class and assigned readings on autism by experts and by the parents of autistic children. Students explore and write about the theme of limitation. Each student meets with a local family who has a child with autism. They get to know the families, observe the autistic children, and, at times, interact with the children. The service-learning component of the class is the respite students offer parents. Parenting an autistic child is a continuous challenge, and short periods of restoration are critical, Mills says. In some cases, circumstances may preclude students the chance to offer parents respite by watching their children, but the opportunity for parents to tell their story to the student can be therapeutic, Mills says.

The benefits for students are many, says Mills. For starters, students learn to make connections in the community. The chance to interact with a person with special needs is part of learning to live in a diverse world, part of the College’s mission.

"It’s difficult to overcome the fear of meeting someone with special needs," says Mills. "Usually the fear is rooted in our feeling that we don’t know what to do or say when we meet such a person," he says. "Students who have taken the course say they learn to overcome that fear. They are more confident."

These lessons serve students long after the class is completed, Mills says. "When students go on study abroad, they haven’t necessarily learned how to make the most of that experience yet. They have to cross cultural barriers," he says. "That’s what they do in this class. They cross the barriers created by special needs when they enter the homes of families with autistic children, or make 'cold calls' to parents of autistic children. They exit the boundaries of the College and of their comfort zones when they reach out into that community. And that’s a skill they can transfer to study abroad."

The service-learning component of the class fits well with Kalamazoo College’s focus on experiential education. Students understand the disorder better by seeing it from all sides, Mills says, through readings and meeting those who are affected. Mills has served on the College’s Experiential Education Committee, which seeks ways to help students combine their classroom work and select experiences outside the classroom in a way that enriches their learning.

"Service-learning is consistent with the development of social responsibility and good citizenship, which is another part of the College’s mission," says Mills.

Last year, Mills was named a LaPlante Faculty Fellow, giving him more time to devote to service-learning initiatives and the College’s Mary Jane Underwood Stryker Institute for Service-Learning, which supports professors who are interested in including service learning in their classes.
weekend, we went to see a movie with Jacob. He was slurping on his drink, probably talking to me or to Mary, and making noise that we both tend to filter out. A man sitting in front of us leaned back to say something about keeping Jacob under control. I reacted angrily. He made a false assumption about our son and our ability to parent him.

“For Jacob to reach the point of being able to sit in the theater was a major step forward for our family. For years, we didn’t leave the house together. It just wasn’t possible because Jacob needed lots of supervision. I wanted that man to know. He was not wrong in asking us to attend to Jacob’s restlessness. He was wrong in assuming that we were bad parents or that Jacob was poorly disciplined.”

Jacob’s autism also affects the other relationships in the Mills family. Thirteen-year-old Sarah, for example, sometimes gets less attention than she should, Mills admits.

“There is a beauty to autism, but it’s also painful to think about what kind of life Jacob’s could have been,” Mills says. In his essay, “Thinking in Pictures” (page 28), Mills compares his boyhood with Jacob’s. The essay reflects upon a time when Jacob was four years old. He is now 12. “Originally, the essay was exclusively about Jacob. What wasn’t there was how I was dealing with his disorder. Watching him reminded me of grade school, but I also realized that I was mourning the loss of the person he could be had autism not developed, and I was trying to accept both who he is and who he’s not.

“The opportunity to see the beauty in autism is less when you think about it from that perspective, but you have to find something beautiful in order to survive,” Mills says. “I begin to see things that are important to him, like getting a drawing to look exactly right or communicating in a complete sentence. There is something intensely alive that comes out of those moments, and I can celebrate those things with him, and celebrate the fact that he pursues those things enough to make me see them and communicate them to me.

“For Jacob, autism means he’s entering an alien world, and trying to communicate in it. Autistic children don’t have a sense of other minds. They have what has been termed mindblindness—meaning they assume that what they know everyone knows. For him to try to communicate in this world takes a lot of courage, just like it takes a lot of courage on the part of students to try to communicate in a foreign country.”

Bringing personal experience to the classroom

It may seem strange, or even risky, to base a class on a deeply personal experience. But according to Mills, the decision to share his knowledge and experiences with his students wasn’t a difficult one to make.

“I had trouble separating something that is so important to my life from my career,” Mills says. “I’ve learned a lot about autism from books and my experiences, so it just made sense to look at it as something to bring to students. I can enrich their learning by the very concrete experiences I can sometimes relate.”

Mills has served as the president of the Autism Society of Kalamazoo/Battle Creek. He sees his involvement in the community as an example of what Kalamazoo College seeks to cultivate in its students. “The mission of the college charges faculty to prepare students to be good citizens and active members of their communities,” he says. “With my involvement, hopefully they can see that engagement in the community is a possibility for themselves.”

The family enjoys the trampoline.
Thinking in Pictures

Donna Mills

With my four-year-old son, Jacob, I enter the front doors of Croyden Avenue School and move toward the steps that descend to the classroom for children with autism. He lingers at the top of the stairs and, as most days, picks up the receiver from the pay phone and awkwardly tucks it between his cheek and shoulder. The ritual is not new so I wait, calling his name once or twice out of habit, before slipping the phone from his grasp and directing him down the steps to his room. In these moments when Jacob drifts outside the hurried current of the morning, I sometimes enter my own memories of grade school. The sounds of stiff jeans scissoring down the halls calls forth other sensual details of my youth: the sharp cries across a playground, the art room odor of crayon, the touch of white paste and papier-mâché, the brilliant reds and purples of thick-textured paintings dried and cracking like late summer creek beds.

I remember walking down to the playground of my northwest Iowa elementary school, Arctic Cat snowmobile boots tossing fragments of snow from my heels, blackened mittens on my hands, a basketball tucked under my right arm. Alone, I launched shot after shot at a hoop positioned on the end of the asphalt surface in front of the school. Before long, the ball grew slick and harder to balance on the wide mitts. But, in my imagination, I was always a point behind and poised for the miraculous last shot, for some sign that divinity still intervened for those who held out in the cold. When it was near zero or below, I wore a ski mask. On those frigid dusks of mid-winter, the moisture from my breath would dampen the thin cloth, and the cotton would freeze and harden. Once, when the mask rubbed awkwardly against my cheeks, I pulled it from my face and gave life back to the vacant expression by blowing my hot breath through the thin frozen layers. When it grew dark not long after five, I would slowly walk over to the west side of the building, position my forearms on the brick ledge of the window casement, kick my feet against the wall, and balance precariously to see the time on the clock above the cursive alphabet.

I find it odd to have such intimate knowledge of this child who has no memory of me. Pushing himself back from the wall of the school, he bends to embrace the ball and tightly shuts his eyes to melt the ice that has laced together his long lashes. His measured strides across the small, snow-covered baseball field are occasionally interrupted by the syncopation of a sudden slide over a patch of ice or a spontaneous skip and rising puff of kicked snow. Around him, the wind has risen slightly, and the streetlight catches the crystals of scattering snowflakes before they disappear into the shadows. I follow their scattering into the dark. When I look up, the boy has vanished, and I feel my feet on the dry ground of such an unfamiliar place, my hands upon the shoulders of a son whose vacant stare seems blind and so unmindful of me.

Later that afternoon, I wait on a bench outside the front office at Croyden. Jacob climbs the stairs; his hand glides up the rail. He is strange. He wears his backpack unlike other children who know how other children wear their backpacks. He backs into my embrace. As I kneel before him, I gently turn his shoulders until his face is before mine, until I can feel the faint touch of his breath against my lips. “Jacob, what do you say?” He does not raise his chin. “Look at Daddy, Jacob.” He lifts his head, but our eyes are like repelling magnets. I raise my hand and hold his chin. He is still learning to see me, to acknowledge my gaze. When he finally fixes his eyes momentarily on mine, it is hard to know whether he apprehends me in a way that I understand. It is daydreamer’s glance, a glimpse of some reverie initiated by my voice. I seem to exist as a memory, not flesh and bone.

“Hi, Daddy.” His voice is nourishment, a food that fills me.

Driving home, I ask him if he had a good day. He disregards my question and begins the motif that will become the ritualistic chant of the afternoon.

“Watch TV.”

“First lunch and then TV.”

“Watch TV. Oh, yeah, watch TV.” The “Oh, yeah” is from TV.

“First we eat lunch, then TV.” I reply calmly.

“Haveta gonna draw! Haveta gonna draw!”

“Would you like to draw when we get home, Jacob?” I enjoy the innocence of my irony.

“Haveta gonna draw!”

“When we get home.”

When we get home, I draw. I start to sketch in pencil the small Mickey Mouse logo from his Beauty and the Beast video box. He watches the ritual acutely; it is always new. He is wary lest I should color the yellow shoes red or the blue hat black. “Erase it,” he says, when I begin the third Mickey. I have learned to draw gently so that my erasing will not leave marks.

“This one,” Jacob says, pointing to the Walt Disney Productions lettering. I loop the large “W” and “D” with practiced flourish as my son chants one of the Disney musical motifs. Then he sees something wrong, something that I do not notice. It has to do with the “t” in “Walt.”

“This one.”

I hear urgency in his voice. I look closely at the letter. I amend.

“This one,” he insists. He traces the letter on the table as if I can see on the plastic tablecloth the vivid design in his mind. I watch his fingers; in my palm, his hand would disappear; it seems so small.
“Show me,” I say, handing him the pencil. On most days, he refuses. Today, he takes it. He presses hard on the lead and the cross in the “t” slides toward the “D” like a train wreck.

“Oh no, look what you dee-id!” Jacob laments, mixing pronouns and using a phrase and intonation gathered from a Curious George video. Or is it I who he sees as the curious little monkey, creating a mess of things again?

I pick up the pencil and try again and again. Finally, among the scattered drawings that litter the table, I succumb to the frustration, to the seeming emptiness of these unthinking patterns. I toss the pencil down and say, “This one is my ‘t,’ that it is the way I will draw the “t”, and that Jacob should draw his own ‘t.”

“Draw it!” he replies.

“No, you do it!”

“Daddy do it!”

“No, Jacob do it!”

Suddenly, the papers take to the air, and Jacob runs screaming into the living room. More colors than I can name spread through the room: red and blue and green Duplos clack against the sides of the couch and picture window, the yellow of the box glances off my arm, and the glare of sunlight catches them all, a prism undone. His words break against me, spread through the room: red and blue and green Duplos clack screaming into the living room. More colors than I can name and names that have fallen off the edges of his sentences. “I held the syntax of this pleading.

Children are arriving for the afternoon. I hear the whir of the elevator of the first bus. From its side emerges a young girl in a wheelchair. Her head tilts against the sparkling plastic hood of his fall jacket. I run after him. He refuses to come with me until I bribe him with getting french fries at McDonald’s. It takes fifteen more minutes to get to the car. My ears are numb from the cold air; my palms still feel the steel handles of my Stingray bicycle pedaling through an empty street to a 6:30 a.m. basketball practice. It is middle December. A night snow has covered the street with a blanket of white; except for the edges of past river channels. It is a world that I had not seen, and so I let myself linger in the space between past and present, this borderless landscape of beauty and loss.

More buses and cars move up to the curb. A few parents enter with their sons or daughters. One child catches my eye; he seems older than the others. After the boy leaves to go down the stairs to his classroom, his mother takes a seat on the other end of my bench. When our eyes meet, I introduce myself and am about to tell her about Jacob just as she is called into the office to talk with the school psychologist. She hesitates a moment, and I sense that she does not want to do the unkindness of not hearing about my son. But I glance toward the office to divert her eyes and assure her. “Perhaps another time,” I say.

After she goes, I can feel the vibrations of my son’s unuttered name on my tongue and the way my lungs had filled to hold the beginnings of an unformed tale. For a moment, I see myself through her eyes—an eager father whose son now plays in a place previously unimagined and who pauses on the threshold between a world just opening up and another seemingly canceled out. I glimpse with sadness the distinct outlines of that person that Jacob has begun to erase. At first, he remains distant, but I coax the ghost forward with my yearning. Wordlessly, he lifts his head as if in a daydream and meets my gaze. If we can hold another’s eyes for just a moment, I wonder, perhaps that is enough. And then I think back to the woman’s eyes and the healing pause of a hesitant recognition, a shared longing, a hunger for the retelling or a new telling of a story she well knew. It is what we both needed, this amending, this wash of words.

Jacob has had a rough morning, his aide says. He had to have some quiet time because he would not join snack group. During recess, he stood at the top of the Purple Mountain, a favorite climbing toy, and danced on one leg. Even now Jacob is dancing and laughing and saying “Lucky get down! Lucky get down!” Around me I can feel the movement of other children exiting and entering through the sliding glass door.

We walk outside and before I can stop him he races to the slide at the back of the building, the wind blowing back the hood of his fall jacket. I run after him. He refuses to come with me until I bribe him with getting french fries at McDonald’s. It takes fifteen more minutes to get to the car. My ears are numb from the cold air; my palms still feel the steel handles of the slide.

Once home, we draw. I search for unmarked paper in the piles of half-done drawings atop the refrigerator and kitchen counter. We have run through the ream of blank paper, so I gather four pieces that promise the easiest erasing and carefully remove half-written words and the limbs of cartoon characters.
“Haveta gonna draw Walt Disney Productions,” Jacob commands. I take up the pencil, bracing myself for the fight I see coming. When I get to the “t”, Jacob moves off his chair and, clutching the video box, crowds in upon my lap.

“This one. This one.” His voice is calm, and I am surprised by how the words seem empty of memory, how the phrases merge together quiet, encouraging, and full of trust.

As I am about to retrace the lines from our previous play, I see something that I had not seen before. Just above the small curve of his pointing finger, barely showing through the dark background behind the lettering, a small loop appears where I thought I had seen a straight cross line. It was never a straight line. It was always a small but clearly discernible loop. With this revelation, I see the smaller letters of the words anew: the way the crossing middle of the “a” touches, but barely touches, the initial “W” in “Walt,” the way the “s” in “Disney” keeps curling, how the final “y” reflects the hurry of the last letter of any signature. I let the pencil rest for a moment and smell the back of my son’s head. I press my lips against his cheek until he lifts his shoulder, leans away, and says, “Haveta gonna draw the ‘t.’”

Slowly, gently, I press the lead to the page. After I finish, Jacob holds the paper in his hand and, satisfied, lets it fall. It slices the air and then rises for just a moment, suspended, as if hesitating playfully before a final slide to the floor.

When my son was three, he refused to let us open the shades or curtains or play music in his presence. Soon, I had acquired the habit of pulling down the shades even before my son awoke in the morning or from a nap, and my wife and I would drive seven hours one-way during Christmas vacation without turning on and singing along with the radio. In the routines of surviving, of dying for the order of the moment, it is possible to lose the past and the future. It is another kind of autism.

When I was young, I would frequently stare out the north window of my house. Beyond the railroad tracks just twenty feet from our garage and not far from the highway running parallel to the tracks spread the flat expanse of a field. I was five and struck with awe at that endless stretch of furrows stitched so seamlessly to the distant horizon, and I stumbled into the question of beginnings. What started all this? What came before the feel of the field upon my eyes, before the dirt itself, before the pulling back of ice and snow? At times, it seems as if I began living that day. The spirit demands the expansiveness of such imaginations.

We walk on vast flood plains. Beneath our feet, the firmness of the ground seems to confirm the permanence of the river channel. To hold up the banks, we press rocks and concrete, believing that our labors can prevent the slide of soil. But there is no telling what may happen when the snow thaws or the next rain comes. The bend in the distance may straighten and, suddenly, the landscape is no longer recognizable.

Living with Jacob is about more than allowing the language of his mind to erase the chalk lines of my own patterns. It is about unexpected intersections, the willingness to walk blind, to discern shadows in the lay of the land. It is a replenishing grief.
What made you choose Kalamazoo College?

Cliff: I chose Kalamazoo College twice. After high school, I was impressed by the College's reputation of intellectual rigor, the K-Plan, and the international study component of the program. However, due to family problems I left the school in my first year, and never thought I would be able to go back.

When Mary Beth got accepted to the college, I spoke to some folks to see if there was even a possibility that I could come back. With the incredible support of Kalamazoo College I was able to return.

Mary Beth: I'm from a small Michigan town, so I was looking for a small school but also wanted a school that would provide some variety. My high school Latin teacher convinced me to apply ("How can you go wrong with 'Lux esto,' she said.) I saw the K-Plan as an intriguing way to encourage me to experience progressively more challenging opportunities that would have been nearly impossible to fit into the system at other schools.

What do you remember most fondly about your years at “K”?

Cliff: International study is an incredible experience and will always be one of my favorite memories in life. However, I most fondly remember my friends and professors. Bob Grossman, Diane Seuss, and Conrad Hilberry are amazing, intelligent, and caring people.

Mary Beth: Although I was initially terrified to go on foreign study (for some reason I didn’t catch onto Spanish very well at first) some of my best memories involve what happened and what I learned while so far away from “K”. It still amazes me how well my off-campus experiences (including foreign study) fit with my on-campus experiences, even though every quarter was very different. There were definitely a lot of great friends and professors like Beth Jordan, Gail Griffin, and Bob Grossman, who helped me connect these various experiences.

Why do you give to the Kalamazoo College Fund every year?

Cliff: An alumni gift enabled me to return to Kalamazoo College. My family couldn’t afford to send me. It’s important that Kalamazoo keep offering opportunities to students who have different backgrounds, since that variety makes both the College and the world better places. I want to be able to help students as I was helped.

Mary Beth: For two quarters, I worked on the annual Kalamazoo College Fund phonathon. I definitely developed an appreciation for the need for KCF. I learned that the cost of my education was not fully covered by tuition dollars. The little that Cliff and I have contributed to KCF is small compared to the cost of our educations and the scholarships we received. But I know that what we give, when it’s leveraged, invested, and added to other contributions, has a significant effect. I feel committed to keep sending my envelope every year so that other students may have a chance to experience an education at Kalamazoo.

Mary Beth: I am often grateful for having improved how to think, write, and live in a way that promotes reflection and balance. There were so many great discussions that occurred in the classroom and outside of the classroom that helped to expand my thinking. Sometimes I wonder if I am taking advantage of the performances and lectures available to me in the community where I live—“getting the LACC’s in” as I used to say at “K”. That aspect of the K-Plan for me helped develop the habit of attending a wide variety of community events.
Reciprocal “Fare Well”

At its second annual senior “4 and Forever” event, the College bid farewell to members of the Class of 2004. And in an act of philanthropy that will help make the College fare well for future students, 40 percent of the graduating class made a pledge to the Kalamazoo College Fund for fiscal year 2004-2005.

The “4 and Forever” program, launched with the senior class of 2003, provides opportunities for students to hear from graduate speakers about the relationship between the College’s excellence and alumni and alumnae philanthropy. At the senior class “4 and Forever” event, students are asked to make a pledge to the Kalamazoo College Fund, just as they will be asked to do as graduates of the College. The College is thankful for these gifts, and the quality of its learning experience depends on them.

During the event, seniors gathered in Dalton Theatre to hear from Andy Miller ’99. He suggested that when graduates receive their annual KCF solicitations, they reflect on the people of the College who most shaped their undergraduate experience (see sidebar at right for excerpts).

Class agents Ali Beauvais, Laura Mazzeo, and Brian Weitzel followed Andy and articulated how each gift makes a significant impact.

Following the ceremony in Dalton, the seniors enjoyed an evening cookout in the Tyler Little Tedrow garden where they ate, pledged to the Kalamazoo College Fund if they wished, and celebrated with their classmates. Every student received a commemorative senior “4 and Forever” T-shirt, courtesy of Rod Wilson ’60.

Excerpts of remarks, “Who is Your Ben Imdieke,” delivered to the Class of 2004 by Andy Miller ’99, June 4, 2004

... Before I go on to talk about why I give to the Kalamazoo College Fund every year, I want to briefly address a conundrum I have heard many recent graduates voice: ‘How am I going to be able to afford giving the College any more money?’ Charitable giving is not about having a lot of discretionary income. A small check to Kalamazoo College should be a priority.

I give because I believe in this College and the people who make it what it is. I walked into ‘Introduction to Creative Writing’ on the first day of my first year, and here was this lady with hair like a raven’s nest. I walked out of Diane Seuss’s class having learned the power that several lines of carefully-chosen language can have. I give every year because of Diane Seuss. Who is your Diane Seuss?

Tom Breznau introduced me to more effective and authentic ways of communicating and interacting with people. I give every year because of Tom Breznau. Who is your Tom Breznau?

From my classmate and great friend Ben Imdieke I learned firsthand how incredible Kalamazoo College students can be. From Ben, I learned that my generation could inspire hope for the future. I give every year because of Ben Imdieke. Who is your Ben Imdieke?

Kalamazoo College is full of students who give me hope. Kalamazoo College is a place that prepares and sends out into the world people with character, skills, a remarkable work ethic, and the potential for doing good. In your class I think of Bryan Goyings and Colleen Perry, two extraordinary science teachers about to do great things for thousands of future high school students. I think of Jessie Wagner, who created the Up ’Til Dawn organization. Or Jevon Caldwell-Gross, the preaching point-guard, whose chapel sermon made me want to attend church again. I think of Marla Hahn, who pours every ounce of her heart and soul into her Frelon dancing.

By giving to the Kalamazoo College Fund, you give future students the opportunity to meet the people and have the experiences at our alma mater that will shape the rest of their lives. The check I write to the Kalamazoo College Fund inevitably ends up being the check I feel best about writing each year because it is philanthropic (the love of humankind) in the truest sense of that word. Writing that check is thinking beyond myself, and it helps me feel that I am doing my small part to ensure the future health and well-being of this place we believe in and love.
Finding Fellow Alumni

Kalamazoo College announces the launch of AlumNet (www.kzoo.edu/aluminfo/alumnet), a free service exclusively available to Kalamazoo College graduates that can put you in touch with "K" alumni and alumnae across the country. The program allows for specific or broad searches.

Looking for a vet in Boston who is a "K" alum? AlumNet can help you find that person.
If you live on the Loop and are hosting a party for your German exchange student and would like to find Chicago-area alumni and alumnae who studied abroad in Erlangen, Bonn, Hanover, or Muenster, AlumNet can help!
Have you moved recently, and simply want to find graduates who live in your new area? Search by city and discover your Kalamazoo College neighbors. AlumNet allows you to search for alumni by class year, major, city of residence, sport played, study abroad location, profession, and more!

To register for AlumNet, you will need your Kalamazoo ID or the last four digits of your social security number.

Please read the terms of use prior to using AlumNet. Among other restrictions, the directory may not be used to promote a business or for any political purposes. Violators of the terms of use will have their access removed.
You update your own information by selecting "view/update my listing" after logging in. You have the option to "hide" information that would otherwise be open to viewing by AlumNet users.
Information on alumni and alumnae who have requested an "absolute hold" on their records will not be viewed on AlumNet.

Call for Nominations

The office of Alumni Relations is accepting nominations for the following alumni awards:
- Athletic Hall of Fame
- Distinguished Achievement
- Distinguished Service
- Weimer K. Hicks Award

To see award guidelines and to submit a nomination, visit www.kzoo.edu/aluminfo/awardnomination.html

For more information, contact Carol Dombrowski, (269) 337-7302 or cdombrow@kzoo.edu
David Hanna’s decision to enter the field of public service was a matter of conscience and courage.

The 1999 graduate believes in the nurture and freedom of the human spirit. To those ends society should dedicate itself, and to those ends individuals should work.

Immediately after he graduated from Kalamazoo College, the psychology major enrolled in a Ph.D. program (clinical psychology, specializing in children, youth, and families) at the State University of New York (SUNY)-Albany.

“I wanted to earn my doctorate, then work with children and families, and eventually run a foundation focused on youth and family issues,” says David.

But plans change. “I wearied of reading about critical social issues without personally taking action to help solve them,” David says. “Public service seemed the best way to immediately affect broad and beneficial social change.”

He withdrew from graduate school after earning his Master’s degree, and then received a fellowship to work in the Mayor’s office in Baltimore, Md. That posting proved excellent for both parties, so when the fellowship ended, the Mayor’s office hired David on a permanent basis.

In Baltimore he volunteered to work on the campaign of a city councilman, and in that capacity he went door to door throughout city neighborhoods, talking with many citizens, most of whom he discovered to be deeply disgruntled with the political process. Many did not know the name of their State Delegate and no one seemed aware of any young political leaders in the making.

“The word ‘politics’ carries such opprobrium these days that I am careful to describe myself as an aspiring ‘public servant,’” David says. “It’s important that both leaders and citizens began to restore the respect and dignity that should be associated with politics and the political process.”

Such a restoration requires courage, and David’s has manifested itself in his decision to run for election as State Delegate (representing the City of Baltimore) to the Maryland State General Assembly. The primary will occur in September of 2006. The district sends its top three vote getters as delegates. David is likely to be one of three or four newcomers running against each other and the three incumbents.

“I’m running as a Democrat,” explains David, “but I consider myself a progressive independent, a person who thinks...
critically on each issue and who will build consensus even in cases where consensus would seem hopeless.”

To hone his critical thinking and consensus-building skills, David has been active on many city boards, including the Parent and Community Advisory Board, which advises the School Board on policy matters; Midtown Academy School; and the After-School Institute. He also serves as the treasurer of the Baltimore City Young Democrats. David’s enthusiasm for service extends to the Kalamazoo College community as well. In June he was elected to serve a four-year term on the Alumni Association Executive Board.

David thinks the most pressing issues facing Baltimore constituents are education (“More than three-fourths of African-American males in Baltimore do not graduate from high school”); economic development (“which is closely related to the depressing statistic above”); crime and drug addiction (“both of which are affected by and in turn affect the quality of education and economic development”); and access to health care.

How would David begin to address these issues? “You start with a process of information gathering that is genuine in its wish to learn,” he says. “Such a process means meeting with and listening to a variety of persons, including local leaders, community members, best-practice experts, and then customizing solutions for the City of Baltimore.”

That customization requires connecting different people, a task for which Kalamazoo College has well prepared him, says David. “The liberal arts encourages and demands its practitioners to seek information from different fields and apply it to problem solving,” he explains. “An effective public servant does the same thing.”

During his undergraduate years, David earned a minor in sociology. He studied abroad in Caen, France, played four years of football as a running back and strong safety, sang in the College chamber choir, and served as president of the Black Student Organization. The diversity of his undergraduate experience will serve him well in his campaign, he says.

So also will the friendships he forged at Kalamazoo College. Classmate Kant Desai (who was president of the Asian Student Association on campus) is David’s chief campaign strategist. And Tamara (Pryor) Tucker ’99 is organizing a fall fundraising event for David in Lansing (Mich.) near his hometown of Okemos. That event is expected to draw leaders from Baltimore, corporate and foundation officers, and many members of the Kalamazoo College community.

In an essay that appeared in the Spring issue of Social Research, author Marilynne Robinson wrote, “The present dominance of aspersion and ridicule in American public life is a reflex of the fact that we are assumed to want, and in many cases perhaps do want, attitude much more than information. If an unhealthy percentage of the population gets its news from Jay Leno or Rush Limbaugh, it is because they are arbiters of attitude. They instruct viewers as to what, within their affinity groups, it is safe to say and cool to think. That is, they short-circuit the functions of individual judgment and obviate the exercise of individual conscience. So it is to a greater or lesser degree with the media in general. It is painful to watch decent and distinguished people struggle to function politically in this non-rational and valueless environment.”

David’s decision to run for office hopefully will help change that environment and restore the dignity of public service to the word “politics.”

Look for an occasional column by David in upcoming issues of LuxEsto focusing on a newcomer’s first experience in our country’s political process. And anyone interested in learning more about his campaign may contact David at 410.669.3139, or FriendsofDavidHanna@yahoo.com, or 2333 Madison Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21217.
Externship Program Grows in Numbers and Quality

Career externships generally last three to four weeks; internships are longer. But that's not the only difference. Externships may be a better work immersion experience for several reasons. Their shorter time frame allows sponsors to create a more meaningful career exploration experience with a more modest pre-externship time investment. That's one reason why more and more alumni and alumnae are volunteering to become externship sponsors. And therein lies a second great advantage of externships: the opportunity for students to interact (and even live) with graduates of the College, an experience that can provide a more authentic assessment of a career over time and a frank appraisal of the career development value of liberal arts learning. The program pays great dividends for graduate sponsors as well, according to Jack Lundeen ’69 (front row, center), a driving force behind the program who has sponsored 13 externs (the most of any alum) in his Portland (Ore.) law practice. “Formerly, my primary contact with College had been contacts with its annual fund [Kalamazoo College Fund],” he says. “These student interns have connected me more deeply with my alma mater. In a sense, I interact personally and professionally with the College’s ‘product,’ if you will. I meet the persons whom my financial gifts support and I learn of their experiences, in and out of class. As a result, giving is much more meaningful for me.” Pictured with Jack are other architects and beneficiaries of the program (l-r): front row—Harry Gaggos ’04, who worked with Jack in Portland during his senior spring break; Jack; and Patrick Castle; back row—Richard Berman, dean of experiential education, and Marlo Farmerie-Pastore, associate director of alumni and employer relations. Patrick Castle worked informally with Jack, who provided advice on connecting the College’s Pre-Law Society and Mock Trial Team to alumni and alumnae who work in the field of law.
The Burdick-Thorne Foundation and the H.P. Connable and Genevieve Connable Fund provided a combined gift of $500,000 to the campaign, Enlightened Leadership: Kalamazoo College in the 21st Century. The gift was used to renovate the Light Fine Arts Building, and in recognition of this generosity, the College named the building’s recital hall to honor A.B. Connable—H.P.’s father, a founding member of the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, and a lifelong lover of music. An event celebrating the gift featured a musical performance of a Beethoven piece by music professors Barry Ross (violin) and Les Tung (piano) and A.B. Connable’s great-granddaughter Andrea Thorne (cello). Pictured with Andrea (left) are Barry Ross and Andrea’s sister Betsy Thorne. Mary Thorne and Jim Thorne, founders of the Burdick-Thorne Foundation, are the parents of Andrea and Betsy. The connections between the Connable family and Kalamazoo College run deeply. Genevieve (Wildermuth) Connable, Virginia (Connable) Burdick, and Virginia’s husband Larry Burdick attended Kalamazoo College.