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Serendipity days

The dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences launches the inaugural issue of *Currents* with an essay on unplanned adventures. By Elizabeth E. Dunn

Serendipity has long been one of my favorite words—sort of a mash-up of *serene* and *zip-a-dee-doo-dah*. A word like that makes you smile just to see it on the page. A serendipitous event equals a happy accident, and we all love those while they are happening and because, like an exquisite summer evening, they linger sweetly in memory. You know what I mean—that family vacation to South Dakota planned to climax perfectly for the kids at Mount Rushmore, but on the way you happen to see the signs for the Reptile Garden, take a chance, and pull off the road. Four hours later one happy ten-year-old is announcing to anyone who will listen that, if we see an alligator along the road, she now knows how to “wrestle it down!” Your memory and hers, locked in joyful embrace for years to come. Mount Rushmore was cool too, but the main event, the important one, was a different roadside attraction. The one not planned.

Sometimes education is like that too. An off-hand conversation with a classmate that suddenly makes sense of Plato or the biology course taken just because it fit your schedule, yet twenty years later you still remember laughing while your classmates choreographed and performed a dance that demonstrated how enzymes

work. (And you still remember how enzymes work, too!) Now and then such an unplanned experience can be transformative, with an impact on the academic major you choose, the career path you take, the calling you discover.

Mackenzie Cook, a senior who unexpectedly wound up with a major in women’s and gender studies, is a good example. Two years ago, interested in acting and planning to teach, she tried out for and received a role on

You set out in good faith for elsewhere and lose your bearings serendipitously.

stage in *Michiana Monologues 2010*, and discovered feminism in the process. She changed her major and her life course. The experience of giving voice to another woman’s story, and of hearing stories about injustice, violence, and strategies of healing, awakened her to a field of study she hadn’t known anything about. Now, she’s about to launch a practicum project bringing these ideas into high schools, since she realizes that students need these insights much earlier than college. And she’s investigating graduate programs that will help her in what she now sees as her life’s work—gender equity for all.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “serendipity” is a word invented by Horace Walpole in 1754 and used to describe three fairy tale heroes,

“The Princes of Serendip,” who had the knack of finding very cool stuff they weren’t intentionally looking for. Or as John Barth rephrased it in *The Last Voyage of Somebody the Sailor* (1991), “you don’t reach Serendib by plotting a course for it. You have to set out in good faith for elsewhere and lose your bearings serendipitously.”

Barth captures one of the key roles of the liberal arts in all its manifestations—the social sciences, the humanities, and the sciences. Just when you think you are in a class to learn about the Puritans, you find the lovely poetry of

Anne Bradstreet. Just when you settle into what you expect to be a routine psychology class, you find yourself playing a game about the American Revolution and experiencing the “mob mentality” first hand!

Serendipity brings joy to the academic enterprise. It is often accompanied by a moment of discovery and satisfaction, whether in the library, lab, or classroom, that inspires and empowers students, invigorates faculty, and generates a cache of stories never forgotten. May we all have more serendipity in our lives!

More at Currents.IUSB.edu
Check out the fact-based role-playing games that bring IU South Bend students into great moments of world history.

CURRENTS

nature, society, and the human experience

Inaugural Issue
Summer 2012

A unified theory of everything

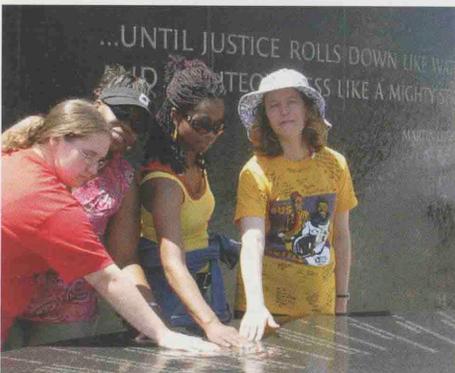
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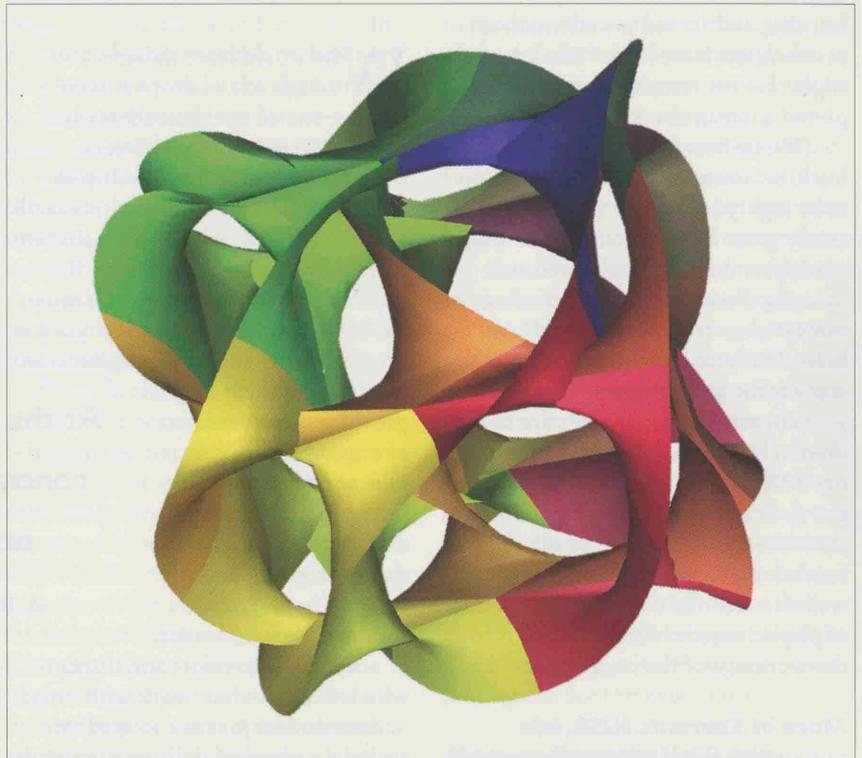
A unified theory of everything

Rolf Schimmrigk and Monika Lynker involve their students in the most fundamental physics research being carried out today. By Douglas McMillen

A gentle breeze blew on that warm evening in 1665 as he stole shade in the family's orchard. The falling of an apple stirred his inquisitive mind, "Why should an apple always descend perpendicular to the ground?" Every field has its favorite kind of question, and this was a physicist's question. How do physical things—atoms and apples and asteroids—behave, and what theory can account for their motion? By asking his physicist's question, in time Isaac Newton built a mathematical framework for the laws of gravity, but he could not explain what gravity is.

More than three centuries later, the quest for an understanding of the physical universe, from the fundamental properties of particles to the complexities of galaxies, remains at the heart of physics. However, the origin of gravity and a unified theory for all the known forces of the universe (i.e., gravity, electromagnetism, and the weak and strong interactions of subatomic particles) remains elusive.

These fundamental questions lie at the heart of the research conducted by Monika Lynker and Rolf Schimmrigk, the recipients of the 2011 IU South Bend Distinguished Research Award. The ceaseless quest for a unified theory of everything in physics has given rise most recently to the young field of string theory. The two major branches of theoretical physics, quantum mechanics for particles and Einstein's theory of relativity for space and time, fail to yield a unifying theory. However, string theory has already provided a basis for understanding gravitational force, and as Schimmrigk says, "String theory is the only game in town for a unified theory—there is no competitor."



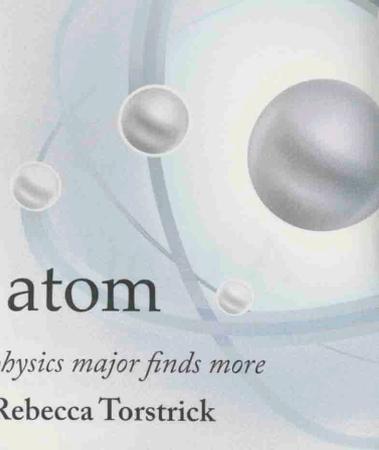
Representation of a Calabi-Yau space, a tiny unseen dimension in string theory. (Andrew J. Hanson, IU Bloomington)

String theory is a highly mathematical model with concepts called "superstrings," "branes," and "extra dimensions," and, unless you are up to date on your theoretical physics, the beauty of string theory is lost in the mathematics. In its most basic form, string theory treats particles, such as protons, as stretched points or one-dimensional strings instead of points in space. These strings have enough structure to account for the properties of all particles in the universe.

Schimmrigk and Lynker have published dozens of papers since their University of Texas graduate school days, when they were co-discoverers of mirror symmetry, which allows for

the compaction of the ten dimensions predicted by string theory to the four that humans easily perceive—space and time. Mirror symmetry has given rise to thousands of papers in physics and mathematics, dozens of books, and new fields of study.

Lynker and Schimmrigk actively involve undergraduate researchers and share the philosophy that research is addressing a problem for which you do not know the answer. They affirm that research students must "learn to live with uncertainty"—which greatly differs from the physics classroom, where problems ordinarily have solutions and can be solved using known techniques.



A life journey to the heart of the atom

Lured by the mysteries of subatomic particles, a physics major finds more success than many would have imagined. By Rebecca Torstrick

This undergraduate research is transforming. Kayleigh Cassella, a recent IU South Bend graduate and now National Science Foundation (NSF) graduate fellowship recipient at the University of California, Berkeley, asserts "Research excited me about physics and learning, and turned my attention to pursuing graduate work." She acknowledges that her research in string theory played a role in obtaining the fellowship.

Despite heavy teaching and service loads, Schimmrigk and Lynker continue to be highly productive. They were recently given an NSF grant of \$120,000 to support their continuing research in string theory and to extend string theory to an understanding of black holes. This grant also provides summer support for undergraduate students.

Schimmrigk and Lynker are honored to be the recipients of the campus's Distinguished Research Award, but their motivation for research stems from the insatiable need to ask the fundamental questions of physics as well as to cultivate another generation of physicists who desire to understand the workings of the universe.

More at Currents.IUSB.edu

Fine science writing helps readers unravel the threads of string theory.

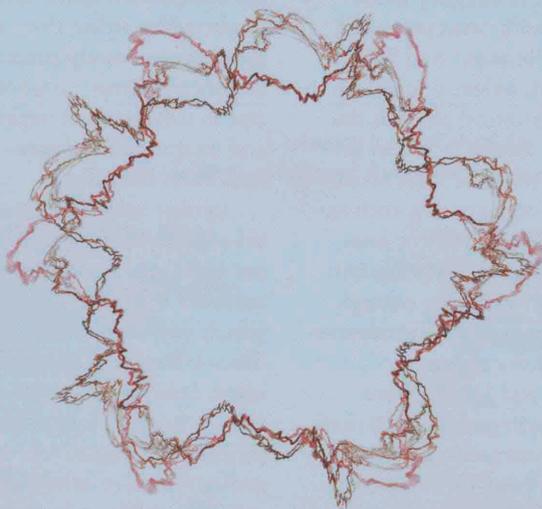
Who would have thought that a high school dropout would become one of twelve students to win a \$120,000 National Science Foundation research fellowship in theoretical physics? But that is exactly what Kayleigh Cassella accomplished! Graduating in May 2011 from IU South Bend with a bachelor's degree, she began doctoral study in physics at the University of California, Berkeley last fall. Cassella's award provides three years of stipend and tuition plus opportunities for international research and professional development. The fellowship program fosters a new generation of scientific innovators and teachers who will share their work with broad audiences. Her journey to graduate study is a wonderful illustration of the old maxim, "it takes a village to raise

a child." Kayleigh, the oldest child in her family, left high school early. Planning to join the navy, she entered a Michigan GED program, her first step in order to enlist. However, her teachers realized that she could better fulfill her potential by going to college, and they convinced her to forget about the navy and enter college instead.

When Cassella started at IU South Bend in 2005, she intended to study

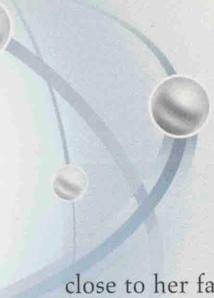
At the atomic scale you find strange, contradictory results, and intuition becomes about as useful as a pogo stick in a chess game.

for a year and then transfer, but she stayed to be nearby while her mother was undergoing cancer treatment. Her mother recovered but a new circumstance intervened to keep her



What is a string?

String theory addresses several unsolved problems in physics. The oldest of these arises from Newton's theory of gravity, which handily explains the motion of familiar objects such as ripe plums and planets. But Newton's work, successful as it is, can only explain the motion of objects moving at fairly slow speeds. Einstein's theory of relativity, proposed more than 200 years later, provides a foundation for much of theoretical physics and accounts for some of the universe's more extreme



close to her family. Her son Finn was born between the semesters of her second year of school.

Cassella spent her first year playing catch-up from leaving high school early. Then she moved into coursework in biology and chemistry, eventually declaring biochemistry as her major. Her first taste of research came in the chemistry lab of Dr. Matt Marmorino. However, she was mathematically minded and intrigued by theory, so her interests soon brought her to Dr. Rolf Schimmgrik. She took introductory physics and quantum mechanics courses while still a biochemistry major, and “got hooked.” As Schimmgrik noted, “Kayleigh has a mind that wants to understand things at a fundamental level.” She was, he said, the first student in ten years to pick up on the finer nuances of the introductory physics course. Cassella recruited fifteen students in order to convince him to teach relativistic quantum mechanics, a course not usually offered at the undergraduate level. “She wanted to really understand what spin is and what charge is,” recalled Schimmgrik, using just two of the terms that abandon their everyday meaning when one peeks into

the workings of the atom where, one physicist noted, the common sense of our daily lives is “about as useful as a pogo stick in a chess game.”

In beginning physics classes, students are taught that spin is a “non-classical degree of freedom.” To understand what that means, however, they need to move out of the world as we know it through our senses—the world of classical physics as established by Galileo, Newton, and Maxwell—and into the world of quantum mechanics, where classical physics is turned on its head. Because the quantum world can only be understood on a mathematical level, it’s a bit like Alice going through the looking glass.

Cassella changed her major to physics and began doing research with Schimmgrik, her new advisor. She was at first a quiet student, but during a summer project in theoretical physics her progress was quick and impressive. Schimmgrik offers early research experiences for exactly this reason; students catch fire and demonstrate their capabilities when they are actively engaged in this way. Cassella’s current research uses Ashoke Sen’s description of microscopic black hole entropy as a tool to probe the geom-

etry of the extra dimensions predicted by string theory. Black holes can be viewed as physical probes that allow researchers in principle to test the existence of the extra dimensions predicted by string theory. If it is possible to produce black holes in the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland, the behavior of these objects should tell us about the detailed nature and geometry of these extra dimensions. While Cassella decided to stay at IU South Bend for family reasons, she was very happy with the wonderful opportunities that a smaller campus provides to work closely with excellent faculty, saying, “Everyone had a hand on me and shoved me in the right direction.” Faculty members supported her research and counseled her on crafting application essays for graduate school. In the end, Cassella found the perfect fit: the Berkeley program includes two female faculty members working in string theory, both of whom have raised children. Kayleigh notes that she’ll have wonderful support there as she continues her journey, with Finn joining her for the experience.

More at Currents.IUSB.edu
It’s a new day for women in physics.

and spectacular kinds of motion, motion as fast as the speed of light.

But within a few decades, Einstein’s explanation for gravity, now called the “general theory of relativity,” ran into a problem very similar to Newton’s theory. General relativity turned out to be incompatible with quantum mechanics, the theory that describes the physical properties of subatomic particles, the smallest things known in the universe.

This problem proved insurmountable, finally leading to the idea that

perhaps the very notion of a subatomic or “point” particle as a fundamental building block might have to be reconsidered. Thinking along these lines led to the concept of a vibrating, microscopically small string as the basic fundamental unit in the universe. Thus string theory was born.

Strings are one-dimensional objects, much like a line in mathematics. A string can be open like a shoestring or closed like a rubber band, and each one vibrates like a plucked guitar

string or the air blown into a flute. The vibrational variation of these tiny strings determines properties like mass, spin, charge, and so on.

String theory has seen spectacular progress, particularly in explaining black holes, objects that are abundant in our universe but mysteries in the context of Einstein’s theory. Progress has also been made in particle physics, and physicists hope that these two advances will lead to better insight into the nature of the early universe.

Woke up this morning with their minds on freedom

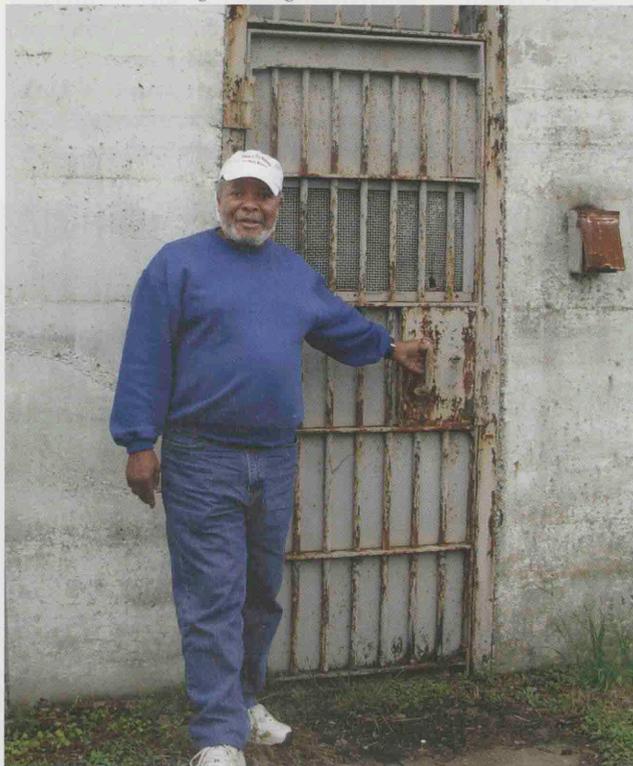
Day after day, students step off the bus to learn from participants in one of the country's great social revolutions. By Jonathan Nashel

The challenge for historians is often to make the past relevant for students and to show them why history matters. Even a history as powerful and resonant as the civil rights movement can sometimes seem like a hazy collection of names and dates from an increasingly distant time and place. But what happens when students experience the past through a living present and move to places far beyond the walls of a university classroom? In 2000 one professor listened to students' demands for relevance and big things have come of it in a few short years, most impor-

tantly the creation of the Civil Rights Heritage Center and the renovation and reclaiming of South Bend's Natatorium from its history of racial segregation. What could have happened on this bus trip that was so powerful?

The Freedom Summer tour dates from 2000 when history professor Les Lamou developed an intensive three-credit class named after the 1964 Mississippi voter registration and freedom school project. In Lamou's course, students travelled through the American South with encounters at a series of major civil rights sites. The goal was

Charles McLaurin shows students an isolated Mississippi jail where he and other activists were held during a voter registration drive in 1963. (David James)



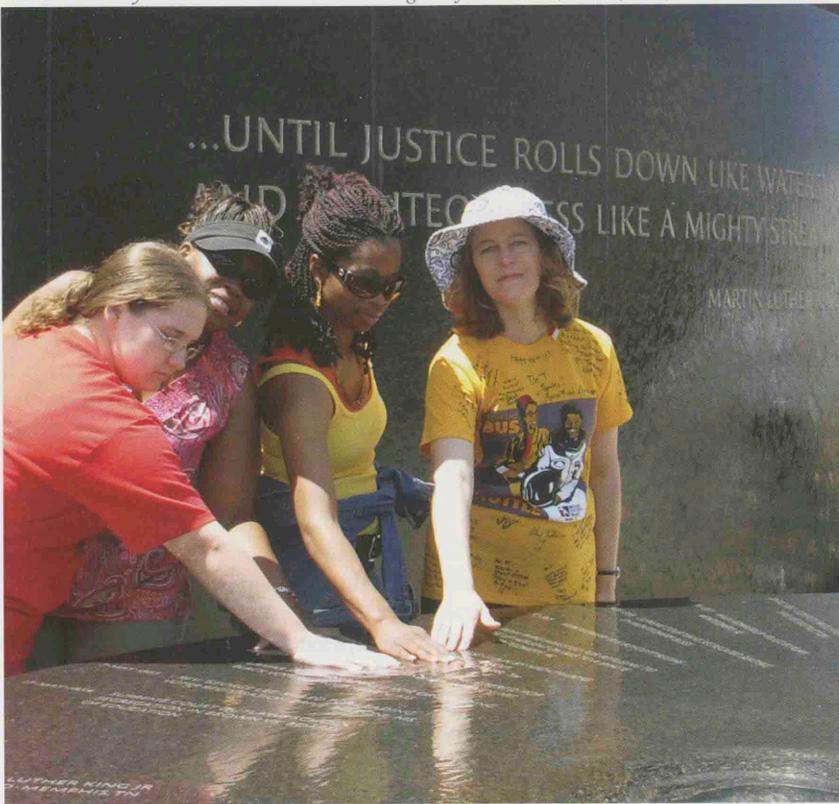
not only to read and study about the past, but to meet with participants in the civil rights movement and to see the places where active citizens risked their lives to end segregation in their own country. As any historian can tell you, it is one thing to read about a march that Martin Luther King Jr. led; it is another thing entirely to meet someone who heard him speak, who worked beside him, and who held his hand as he lay dying in Memphis. It is still another thing

to walk in activists' footsteps, sit in the rural jails where they were confined, and sing the songs with them that they sang to banish fear in the face of police, the Ku Klux Klan, dogs, fire hoses, and mobs bent on harm. Participants at a lunch meeting were spellbound by Catherine Burke Brooks, who was "taken for a ride" by arch-segregationist Sheriff "Bull" Connor and lived to tell the tale. IU South Bend students took a rollicking singing and poetry-reading Mississippi Delta tour on their bus with 1960s Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee activists Charles McLaurin, Margaret Kibbee, and Margaret Block. In Selma, Alabama, they marched over the Edmund Pettus Bridge with Joanne Bland, who told the chilling tale of cradling her bleeding sister's head during the March 7, 1965, "Bloody Sunday" march to Montgomery. History came alive for the students and it continues to affect them deeply in personal and professional ways.

Many participants from the 1964 campaigns name them as the defining moments of their lives. Similarly, this person-to-person encounter with history in the places where it happened has made the Freedom Summer Study Tour transformative for IU South Bend students. And the adventure continues for a new group of students as a Freedom Summer tour leaves from the IU South Bend parking lot.

The course has developed with the help of historian Monica Tetzlaff who took over the tour in 2006. She was joined in 2011 by sociologist Kevin James (now the director of the Civil Rights Heritage Center) and Master of Liberal Studies graduate David James,

Students and Professor Monica Tetzlaff part the waters at the Southern Poverty Law Center monument in Montgomery, Alabama. (David James)



who often accompanied the 2008 and 2011 groups on guitar and harmonica as he taught them the freedom songs that were sung at civil rights demonstrations. David James also treated the 2011 party to a boisterous harmonica rendition of delta blues at B. B. King's Club Ebony in Indianola, Mississippi.

The 2011 tour had the good fortune to coincide with the 50th anniversary commemoration of the 1961 Freedom Rides, which tested the court-ordered desegregation of interstate travel. Students met with Freedom Riders in downtown Montgomery, Alabama, when the Greyhound bus station was dedicated as a museum to the events of 1961. Freedom Riders Congressman John Lewis and the Reverend Jim Zwerg spoke with the students about fleeing their burning bus set alight by segregation terrorists who had waited for them by the roadside. Students also heard another Freedom Rider, the Reverend Bernard Lafayette, speak at a mass meeting at the "Brick-a-Day" Baptist Church in Montgomery. He recounted the time in 1961 when Rever-

end Dr. Martin Luther King, Freedom Riders, and community supporters were surrounded in that very church by rock-throwing, firebombing Klan members before being rescued by the National Guard. Tear gas and smoke drifted through shattered stained-glass windows and threatening taunts were hurled as leaders pleaded for help from Attorney General Robert Kennedy's Department of Justice in Washington, DC.

Great events happened in those years, but the urgency of history has not evaporated. Lafayette exhorted students to turn failures into opportunities and called on all to pay attention to young people like the elementary school children in the audience. When asked if they knew someone who was thinking about dropping out of school, nearly two thirds of them raised their hands. He spoke of volunteering in and advocating for public education today. IU South Bend students met with many others from all over the nation at the campus of Tougaloo College, north of Jackson, Mississippi,

and talked about twenty-first century civil rights issues, such as rising school segregation, high education costs, bullying, and GLBTQ rights.

Later, in Jackson, students and busloads of Freedom Riders witnessed the unveiling of historical markers at the home of murdered NAACP leader Medgar Evers and at the gravesite of Ruleville, Mississippi, native and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee voting rights organizer Fannie Lou Hamer. They heard Myrlie Evers, Medgar's widow, tell the sorrowful story of her husband dying as he crawled bleeding toward the house's carport. Hamer's close friend Charles McLaurin celebrated his fallen friend, a singer whose voice was like a mountain come to life, who thundered condemnation of Mississippi's segregated voting practices as head of the 1964 Freedom Party delegation to the Democratic National Convention. McLaurin praised his hero but raised anew the cry for justice unfulfilled.

On the afternoon of May 16, 2011, John Seigenthaler, a former assistant to Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, met with thirteen of our students in the Civil Rights Room at the Nashville Public Library. He told of his days as a young white man growing up in the South, slowly awaking to the civil rights movement as a journalist covering the sit-ins, and then more dramatically as a negotiator for President John F. Kennedy, confronting ball bat- and lead pipe-wielding thugs outside the Montgomery, Alabama, Greyhound bus station. The evening of May 16, Seigenthaler continued the story of how he tried to rescue a woman Freedom Rider and was knocked unconscious by a white racist—this time on the PBS program *American Experience: Freedom Riders*.

More at Currents.IUSB.edu
Follow the day-to-day adventures of a Freedom Summer travel course and learn about the original 1964 Freedom Summer activism.

The president takes a stand

After moving cautiously for months on the charged issues of racial division and discrimination, the Kennedy administration weathers a crisis one decisive day in the final months of the president's life. This excerpt comes from the essay that won the 2010 undergraduate research award. **By Sara J. Lowe**

On the evening of June 10, 1963, President John F. Kennedy delivered the commencement address at American University in Washington, DC, but his true audience was the entire world. Kennedy spoke against ignorance and promoted diversity, arguing that the most basic human rights—*to be free and to enjoy life—should be provided and protected.* “The quality and spirit of our own society must justify and support our efforts abroad,” he said. The next day he confronted the main threat to peace under his own flag.

Two black students, James Hood and Vivian Malone, planned to register for classes at the University of Alabama’s Foster Auditorium, and Governor George Wallace intended to block their entrance. Attorney General Robert Kennedy, the president’s brother, decided to allow Wallace, within reason, to have his show of standing in the schoolhouse door for fear that, otherwise, violence would erupt. Wallace insisted that his aim was to prevent the kind of rioting that erupted at the University of Mississippi in September 1962. The university’s board members, too, feared that “the events would spin out of control if he did not have his moment in the limelight.” After many attempts to contact the governor, the attorney general had no clear idea whether Wallace would step aside in the presence of federalized troops or allow himself to be arrested in contempt of the court order requiring the integration of the university.

To forestall fresh rioting, the president helped direct the government’s efforts in Alabama, asserting that his

intervention there was to make sure Wallace obeyed the court order. Robert Kennedy had told Assistant Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach to take advantage of the situation to “make [Wallace] look ridiculous; [the governor] is a second-rate character to you . . . wasting your time, wasting the students’ time.” The university’s board of trustees had already indicated that they planned to obey the court order. What the governor intended to do the attorney general was not sure, and he had to make a decision at the last minute: “if we move too quickly with too much force, we will be subject to criticism; if we fail to do so we run a greater risk of genuine resistance and mob violence.”

Prior to the confrontation, the question was raised: when, *not if*, the president would address the nation on the issue of civil rights. Robert Kennedy argued that the administration could not get by without having a speech quickly following a resolution in Alabama. During this conversation, the president looked directly at Ted Sorensen, his counsel and speechwriter, and announced that they must begin getting a speech ready, saying “we may want to do it tomorrow.” But he was also hesitant to give the speech unless their efforts yielded a positive result. According to Burke Marshall, “the Attorney General was very much in favor of speaking out to the

country . . . on moral terms. I don’t think the President [ever intended] not to [make the speech] for a minute.” The timing of the speech, however, had to be delayed until the events of the day proved favorable for the students and the Kennedy administration.

The events unfolded nearly perfectly, according to the plans made by Robert Kennedy and Katzenbach. Katzenbach met Wallace in the 95-degree Alabama heat, asking him for assurance that he would allow the students to register. Among a large crowd, Katzenbach announced that the students had a right to be there, that they will register, that they will attend classes the next day, and that if the governor would not step aside, federalized Na-



President Kennedy addresses the nation in 1962. (Library of Congress)

tional Guardsmen will command him to do so. At the president's request, the students remained out of the scene between Wallace and Katzenbach for fear that they suffer further indignity at the hand of the governor.

Wallace agreed to shield the students from the confrontation, but not for the reason of protecting their dignity. He did not want the confrontation to center on race but on states' rights and the federal government. Journalist Robert Drew filmed Wallace's statement: "The might of the central government offers a frightful example of the oppression of the rights and privileges and sovereignty of this state by officers of the federal government." After the governor completed his remarks, Katzenbach said: "I ask you once more. The choice is yours. There's no choice that the federal government has in this but to see that the orders of this court are enforced." Wallace refused to stand down and, at 1:30 that afternoon, the president federalized the Alabama National Guard. An hour and a half later, General Henry Graham led one

hundred troops onto the campus to face the governor. Wallace offered a short statement and then abandoned his position at the door.

Wallace's show was for the benefit of his constituency who loved him and praised him for his courage. Even the *New York Times* offered a complaint against the Kennedy efforts in Alabama: "[The president and attorney general] threaten the good order and the integrity of the American people, and [create] confusion about the whole Negro problem under the slogan of civil rights." In contrast, also in the *New York Times*, a group of attorneys agreed with Kennedy's actions to uphold the court order, quoting philosopher John Locke: "The end of the law is not to abolish or restrain but to preserve and enlarge freedom."

The Kennedys, however, were not fazed by Wallace's dramatic performance before a national television audience. Robert Kennedy immediately took a call from the president. The time had come for the president to deliver his planned address to the nation.

The Address

Speechwriter Ted Sorensen was not prepared for a civil rights address on June 11th. He began planning on June 10th but did not believe that a major national address was proper until the legislation was complete. Also, he thought that the crisis in Alabama was not "directly related to the most controversial parts of the legislation, [and] seemed an unlikely basis for a major presidential speech." Further, Sorensen and presidential advisor Ken O'Donnell suggested that it would be politically disadvantageous if Kennedy spoke on the moral issue of civil rights, as it "would involve [Kennedy] much more as a person and it would lose him political support in 1964." To Sorensen's surprise, as the president watched Wallace on television in the doorway of the Foster Auditorium, he turned and said, "I think we'd better give that speech tonight," leaving Sorensen less than six hours to prepare one of the most important speeches of Kennedy's administration.

Assistant Attorney General Marshall was present with Robert Kennedy when he received the news that the address would be made that evening. Since Wallace retreated around 5 p.m., television time was requested only two hours before the speech was to be made. Marshall and the attorney general joined Sorensen and the president at the White House to assist in finishing the address.

At the White House, Sorensen worried about the very short deadline. He had no previous civil rights file from which he could borrow passages and ideas for a major address. Based on a speech that he, himself, had given about the issue, he drafted the following passage for the president's address:

Are we to say . . . that this is a land of the free except for the Negroes; that we have no second-class citizens except Negroes; that we have no class or caste system, no ghettos, no master race, except



Outside the Oval Office, the president consults with his brother, Robert Kennedy. (Library of Congress)

with respect to Negroes? When Americans are sent to Vietnam or West Berlin we do not ask for whites only.

Further inspiration came from a June 3 phone conversation in which Vice President Lyndon Johnson offered these suggestions:

[The president] should stick to the moral issue and he should do it without equivocation.

The Southern whites and the Negroes share one point of view that is identical: they're not certain that the government is on the side of the Negroes. What Negroes are really seeking is moral force, . . . and until they receive that assurance . . . dramatically and convincingly, they're not going to pay much attention to executive orders and legislative recommendations.

I know one thing, that the Negroes are tired of this patient stuff . . . and what they want more than anything else is not executive order or legislation, they want a moral commitment that [the president is] behind them.

Sorensen worked with bits and pieces of conversation from Kennedy, Johnson, and others as he quickly wrote the body of the president's address.

Robert Drew filmed Robert Kennedy studying the draft in the Cabinet room. Burke Marshall recalled:

[T]he preparation of Kennedy's civil rights address was extemporaneous. . . . [N]ot more than three minutes before he went on television . . . the president was making notes in longhand on a scratch pad and saying "now, come on, Burke, you must have some ideas," but he knew what he was going to say, and I guess it didn't make much

difference whether it was typed or not.

While waiting for the draft, Sorensen told the president not to worry, that it was being typed. Kennedy replied: "Oh, I thought I was going to have to go off the cuff on national television." At 7:57 p.m., the president was handed the typed draft, which he edited for two minutes, and at 8 p.m., he looked straight into the camera and began his speech with a justification:

This afternoon, following a series of threats and defiant statements, the presence of Alabama National Guardsmen was required at the University of Alabama to carry out the final and unequivocal order of the United States District Court. That order called for the admission of the two clearly qualified young Alabama residents, who happened to have been born Negro.

Kennedy then addressed the recent Birmingham racial discrimination crisis:

I hope that every American, regardless of where he lives, will stop and examine his conscience about this and other related incidents. This nation was founded . . . on the principle that all men are created equal and that the rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened.

Then in the cadence of the civil rights movement he considered the emotional response of blacks when told it is too soon to demand equality and justice:

One hundred years of delay have passed since President Lincoln freed the slaves, yet their heirs, their grandsons, are not fully free. They are not yet freed from the



Governor George Wallace and Assistant Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach face off at the University of Alabama in 1963.

bonds of injustice. They are not yet freed from social and economic oppression, and this Nation, for all its hopes and all its boasts, will not be fully free until all its citizens are free.

The speech reflected Kennedy's passionate commitment to secure fundamental rights for all Americans. During the Birmingham crisis, Kennedy saw the worst of man in those who denied basic freedoms to fellow citizens: "Now the time has come for this Nation to fulfill its promise. The events in Birmingham and elsewhere have so increased the cries for equality that no city or state or legislative body can prudently choose to ignore them." Kennedy then described the urgency of introducing civil rights legislation after two years of delay: "The fires of frustration and discord are burning in every city, north and south, where legal remedies are not at hand. Redress is sought in the streets, in demonstrations, parades and protest which create tensions and threaten violence and threaten lives."

Ted Sorensen realized that both John and Robert Kennedy had finally acknowledged that new legislation was needed; the rights of all were jeopardized when the rights of black Americans were denied. The speech continues:



(Library of Congress)

The old code of equity law under which we live commands for every wrong a remedy. But in too many communities, in too many parts of the country, wrongs are inflicted on Negro citizens and there are no remedies at law. Unless the Congress acts, their only remedy is in the streets.

The Kennedys understood that no law brings about a change of heart. But the administration felt increasing pressure to provide a legal remedy so that blacks would not become violent when, after eight years of non-violent confrontation, no remedy existed. Kennedy reached out to Americans, looked at them face to face, and stated that beyond new legislation—his underlying purpose—it was *they* who would bring about real change:

The heart of the question is whether all Americans are to be afforded equal rights and equal opportunities, whether we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated. If an American, because his skin is dark, cannot eat lunch in a restaurant open to the public, if he cannot send his children to the best public school available,

if he cannot vote for the public officials who represent him, if, in short, he cannot enjoy the full and free life which all of us want, then who among us would be content to have the color of his skin changed and stand in his place? Who among us would then be content with the counsels of patience and delay?

The presidential papers for June 11th include seven paragraphs added extemporaneously by John Kennedy, handwritten while awaiting Sorensen's final typed draft. Kennedy concluded the broadcast with his own thoughts:

My fellow Americans . . . today, there are Negroes unemployed, two or three times as many compared to whites, inadequate in education, moving into the large cities . . . young people particularly out of work without hope, denied equal rights, denied the opportunity to eat at a restaurant or lunch counter or go to a movie theater, denied the right to a decent education, denied almost today the right to attend a State university, even though qualified. It seems to me that these are matters which concern us all, not merely Presidents or Congressmen or Governors, but every citizen of the United States. . . .

As I have said before, not every child has an equal talent or an equal ability or an equal motivation, but they should have the equal right to develop their talent and their ability and their motivation to make something of themselves.

We have a right to expect that the Negro community will be responsible, will uphold the law, but they have a right to expect that the law will be fair; that the Constitution will be color blind.

This is what we are talking about and this is a matter which concerns this country and what it stands for, and in meeting it I ask the support of all of our citizens.

Thank you very much.

Responses

Can you believe that white man not only stepped up to the plate, he hit it over the fence!

—Martin Luther King Jr.

The South will decide who the next president is because you can't win without the South and the South will be against some folks.

—Governor George Wallace

There are costs and risks to any action. But they are far less than the long-range costs of comfortable inaction.

—John F. Kennedy

Robert Drew filmed a seemingly satisfied Robert Kennedy leaving his office at the end of a very long day on June 11, 1963. In Jackson, Mississippi, that same night, after viewing the speech and meeting until the very late hours, civil rights activist Medgar Evers returned to his home. As he stepped out of his car, he was assassinated in his driveway and bled to death in front of his wife and children. The president had asked the nation to consider the morality of denying a person the basic freedom and equality enjoyed by white men and women every day. For Evers, the speech meant little in the stark reality of his life and death. For the die-hard segregationists personified in Evers's assassin, the moral directive did little to change their feelings toward blacks.

More at Currents.IUSB.edu

Find out more about the adversaries in this complex struggle for American civil rights.

What are you going to do with *that* degree?

At the 2011 Honors Night celebration, the author spoke playfully about graduates' newly minted degrees. By Gail McGuire

Professors and university administrators often argue that a liberal arts education is the heart and intellectual core of the university. The liberal arts, they claim, teach students how to think critically, to communicate effectively, and to navigate a complex world. That's why every student at IU South Bend takes courses in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. My experience as a sociology major suggests some additional benefits of receiving a degree in the liberal arts and sciences.

Humility

In 1997, I had just completed my Ph.D. and moved to South Bend to start my first job as a professor. I had a problem, however. The fifty dollars in my checking account would not cover a security deposit on an apartment. Know what I did? I called my father, of course! I had a degree in liberal arts and sciences; I had no money! Humility is a really underrated quality in the United States, yet so important when you have a degree in the liberal arts and sciences.

In all seriousness, my training in the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities gave me the humility to know that I didn't always have the answer, but I knew how and where to find the answers. This is why large corporations

want to hire people with a liberal arts education. They need people who can weigh options, work with others, seek relevant information, and interpret

Apple visionary Steve Jobs called the liberal arts essential for innovation.

data. Because I had these skills, I was offered a job with one of the largest financial services corporations in the country. *That's what a liberal arts degree will get you.*

Tough skin

I grew up on a farm near a small town in Connecticut. The summer I received my Ph.D. my father and I went out to breakfast at the only diner in town. When my proud father told one of the local farmers about my recent academ-

ic accomplishment, the farmer replied, "But is she married yet?" Other people may not appreciate the value of your liberal arts education, but your liberal arts degree has given you the confidence to weather the occasional ignorant question.

Developing a tough skin comes from taking some risks, experiencing failure, and letting yourself be challenged. People don't develop confidence by being spoon fed information and by completing easy tasks. We develop confidence by being pushed beyond what we think we can do and by being encouraged to move outside of our comfort zone. So, I thank my composition teacher for tearing my writing apart so that I could better express myself. I thank my math instructor for giving me brain-blurring problems to solve and



Picked apart and put together again

That's what studying feels like sometimes

in the liberal arts and sciences. By Hannah Stowe

I thank a sociology professor for encouraging me to undertake independent research. None of these things were easy—thank goodness! Because they weren't easy, I developed the confidence to take risks and therefore to have successes in life. *That's what a liberal arts degree will get you.*

A life full of questions

When I was growing up, *good* children did what their parents said without question. When I became a parent, I was determined to raise my children differently. They were going to have a voice! They were going to be encouraged to ask questions! Well, be careful what you wish for! Most recently, for instance, one daughter asked, "Why do I have to brush my teeth? My teacher told me that eating an apple cleans your teeth as well as brushing." And, "Why do I have to work for my American Girl doll when all of my friends get theirs as gifts?" Another daughter asked, "Why can't I have two husbands at the same time?"

While answering such questions can be tiresome, I'm thankful that my liberal arts degree taught me, and subsequently my children, to ask questions. It was through courses in women's studies, political science, history, and sociology that I learned to ask questions, for instance, about inequality and other social problems. The more I questioned, the more I felt responsible for doing something

English majors, as a close friend and fellow English major said to me recently, are always picking things apart and then building them back together again. She was talking about the way we find meaning in books. Still, her words struck me as an interesting metaphor for my experience as a college student, which I was struggling to describe on my own.

At IU South Bend, I have encountered so many challenges and opportunities that I often feel like I am being "picked apart," as if by a literature student when she marks up a text, underlining certain sections, circling others, drawing question marks next to others. In a similar way, various college experiences have highlighted and nurtured many of my own interests and abilities. Often, the process reveals inconsistencies and weak points.

about these problems. This led me to become a community organizer during college, helping the poor gain access to affordable housing and health care. Learning to ask questions led me to be a critical consumer of information and consequently to use information to empower myself and others. *That's what a liberal arts degree will get you.*

A career

There is one thing that a liberal arts degree will *not* get you: a job. Instead, you'll find a career. A job is work you do to receive a paycheck. A career is a lifetime journey of developing and using your skills, knowledge, and experience. I've had many jobs—

Initially, academic life exposed many of my weaknesses. I even failed three classes in one of my first semesters at IU South Bend. With the help of my teachers, dean, and classmates, however, and with a few second chances, things started to build back up. I received a research fellowship with a teacher whose class I had failed a year and a half prior. I retook an American literature course from which I had withdrawn late in a previous semester, and it proved to be one of the most thought-provoking, enjoyable courses of my college career. At times, I still struggle to rise to the challenges college presents. However, that sense of being torn apart under challenges is something I value, as it begins the creative process of "building back together again."

grocery clerk, waitress, hostess, farm worker—and they all felt like *work*. In my current career, I work more hours than I ever did in any of these jobs, but I rarely feel like I'm working because I'm doing what I love and I feel effective doing it.

So, when one of your relatives or neighbors asks, "What are you going to do with *that* degree?" just tell them, "I'm gaining humility, a tough skin, a life full of questions, and avoiding a job!"

More at Currents.IUSB.edu

Steve Jobs and other notable Americans ponder the liberal arts and sciences. Let us know where your liberal arts and sciences degree has taken you.

Reality theater South Bend-style: *Michiana Monologues!*

The woman sitting next to you might tell her story of grief and triumph on stage tomorrow. By Rebecca Torstrick



Recital Hall grows dark and the stage lights come up on a row of empty chairs. Music rises and the performers, all women, dance their way down the aisles and onto the stage. The music recedes, the cast takes their seats, and the first actor steps up to the microphone. In the lively style called “reader’s theater,” she performs a monologue, one woman’s story written by an anonymous member of our community. It may be a story of joy or shame, of childhood or coming of age or aging, of public life or private. Audience members find themselves laughing or crying or calling out, “You tell it, sister!” This is a performance of *Michiana Monologues*, an annual tradition in our area. Everyone leaves at the end of the evening knowing—and feeling more deeply—the reality of women’s lives, and grateful for the dozens of writers who have shared their most important, sometimes most personal stories.

After many years of students producing Eve Ensler’s *The Vagina Monologues* on our campus, April Lidinsky suggested a grassroots writing project, a local *Monologues* inspired by Ensler’s vision and a production at Saint Mary’s College. *Michiana Monologues* would provide a venue for local women to speak out in all their richness, humor, righteous anger, and complexity. Lidinsky explained: “My background in teaching writing has shown me how transformational it is to write one’s own story and to witness someone else listening carefully. Stories break open hearts and minds. They are tools of revolution, and I think of the *Michiana Monologues* as nothing less than revolutionary; they are an opportunity for our campus and community to come

together to reflect on who we are, and who we could be.”

Michiana Monologues uses performance art to raise awareness about issues facing local women and to raise much-needed capital for local organizations working to stop violence against women. Beginning in 2007, these new productions have had astounding success, playing to sold-out crowds and raising between \$10,000 and \$15,000 each year to donate to local anti-violence organizations.

Producing the *Monologues* is a year-round endeavor that bridges campus and community and empowers local women to see their personal stories as worth writing and sharing. Interactive writing workshops lead participants through brainstorming exercises and offer strategies for telling big life stories in small spaces. Lidinsky, advanced undergraduates, and community writers lead the workshops in college classrooms, women’s shelters, community centers, public libraries, and shops in Elkhart, South Bend, Goshen, and Niles during September and October, leading up to the November 1st submission deadline. Each year, between 50 and 100 stories are submitted anonymously through a website (michianamonologues.org) or through the mail. The next step is choosing which monologues to present on stage. A diverse editorial board (made up of faculty, staff, students, a health care provider, and community members of all ages and life experiences) takes on those difficult decisions. Each year, the material in the production is new and covers topics that go far beyond Eve Ensler’s static script, with stories, for example, about being feminist and

Mennonite, experiencing an illegal abortion in the Midwest in the 1960s, deciding to have a home birth, enjoying a lively love life long into marriage, healing from abusive situations and addictions, and finding power in the community of women. The pieces are performed by actors from campus and the region chosen through audition. There have been as many as 30 performers with ages ranging from 18 to 72. The local focus of this production attracts men and women of all ages into the audience.

Lidinsky has received inquiries from colleagues in New York, Ohio, Iowa, and California who are interested in borrowing our model for monologues productions in their communities—a wonderful legacy for this ongoing project that, she says, brings “women’s studies everywhere.” When asked if she will ever tire of producing new *Monologues* versions, she responded: “Is this a sustainable project? Let me answer that with another question: Do people *ever* get tired of telling and hearing stories? What we’ve learned from this project is that people in our community have a bottomless supply of surprising stories (sad, hilarious, outrageous, and outraging) told from innumerable perspectives. Every year fresh voices move us in refreshing directions and continually astonish the editors with what we learn about life in Michiana. I expect that we’ll continue to fill theaters in the region for as long as people have stories to tell.”

More at Currents.IUSB.edu
Be a part of the next *Michiana Monologues* production!



The Owl and the Pussycat by Katie Hoffman.

Literature of childhood

The haunted fields

On neighborhood lawns and playing fields, we were our own heroes and the broadcasters of our own brief moments of local fame. By Joseph Chaney

Skates & Geometry

Winter pastimes and neighborly encounters.
Two poems by Nancy Botkin

Iona, the Devil's Girl

Beyond the Whip and the Dodgem rides, a state fair barker tempts two boys into a mysterious carnival tent. By Tom Vander Ven

The process

Birthday candles, soda in glass bottles, adults chatting in the kitchen. A poem by Clayton Michaels

Uneasy motherhood

Kelcey Parker's short stories peer into the troubled waters of family life. By Jane Wang

Mermaids

While icing the cake for a party at Chuck E. Cheese, a child asks her mother probing questions about certain fairy tales. By Kelcey Parker

That other family

In a neonatal intensive care unit, the promises of life hang in the balance. By Jenna Gensic

Acorn

That age when a child likes the taste of pebbles and acorns. A poem by Susan Carol Hauser

Protesting by petition

After young Eileen signed a petition, men in trench coats came knocking on her door. By Eileen Bender

Childhood in the extremity of war

Chieko tells her daughter about her family hiding in the hills near Nagasaki in the final days of world war.
By Linda Wingrove

The haunted fields

On neighborhood lawns and playing fields, we were our own heroes and the broadcasters of our own brief moments of local fame. By Joseph Chaney

Childhood has changed. If you're a man in your forties or fifties, you only have to walk through your own neighborhood on a clear, chilly Saturday to sense that something is wrong. Near my house are several open fields, places where my childhood friends and I could have spent an entire day playing football. Today they are barren of activity, unless some "organized," adult-supervised team is practicing, which isn't the same thing at all.

I had the organized experience, too—in little league baseball, which was less enjoyable, more stressful, and more politically charged than the backyard variety. I can remember

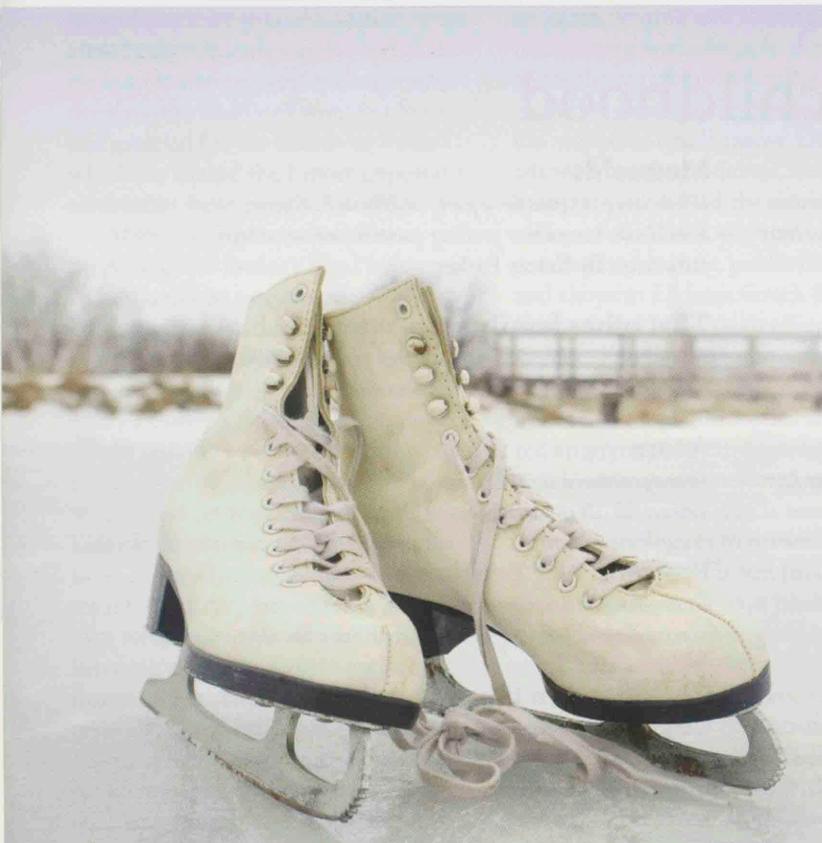
coaches who cared too desperately about winning, and insanely partisan parents (not mine, I'm happy to say) who couldn't refrain from shouting rude complaints from the stands. Kids don't need adults as much as adults think they do. The old neighborhood games weren't just more fun, they were actually more educational, an informal training ground in human relations and group dynamics. Our games presented a series of problems we kids needed to solve on our own.

In my neighborhood in the 1970s, the boys began almost any vacation day by running from house to house gathering together enough kids for a

game. For football, almost any large rectangular area would do. Sometimes we combined a couple of treeless front yards. We set out markers for the sidelines and end zones; then we formed teams—a process that called for a fair weighing of the various kids' abilities, because the point was to enjoy a competitive game. Any kid might be allowed to play—girls, even first-graders. If necessary, we altered the rules about tackling, and so forth, to fit the situation. In fact, if we needed more players, we conscripted kids. My older sister could sometimes be talked into joining us if we promised not to tackle hard. It was easy to hurt her feelings, too, so we had to man-

Skates

In childhood you unfold the map of the world and smooth it out with your small hand, and with one finger trace a path somewhere not very far, usually a block or two from home where the pond is frozen over, where the trees sag a little from the weight of ice, where the birds are talking their language of pearl and pit, where the creek has stopped its constant complaining. You arrive there with your new skates, you try a little spin, and you spend the rest of your life with that image. Not the branches or the brambles, not the pale moon, not even the birds, but the skates, all white and amazing, there below you at the end of your body.



In my old neighborhood in Tennessee,
the spirit of those days survives—if only
in the imagined shadows of children
coursing over the grass.

age her carefully to keep her from suddenly quitting and ruining the game. Keeping the game going meant keeping the peace, which meant we had to make sure that everyone was having fun.

Disputes about calls were rare. The older boys generally functioned as player-referees. Although they were striving to win, they also understood that fairness and compromise were more productive than rancor. I remember a few of our games quite well, either because of a dramatic finish or a hilarious incident, such as the time when we allowed a five-year-old named Brad Gaines to play. Afraid of being tackled, he'd run the wrong direction to avoid us. Once, just for fun, several of us defensive players herded him all the way back down the field

into his own end zone before tackling him—gently, of course.

Ironically, Brad grew up to be a star fullback at Vanderbilt University. But for kids like me, those games defined our days of football glory. On our neighborhood fields, over countless games, we came to know the pleasure of a perfectly thrown pass, an amazing one-handed catch, a sure tackle, or an elusive run. We were our own heroes and the broadcasters of our own brief moments of local fame. Away from the adults, we had everything we needed. There, more than

anywhere, we celebrated the freedom and creativity of childhood.

That's how I know that my present neighborhood is haunted. In my old neighborhood in Tennessee, the

spirit of those days survives—if only in the imagined shadows of children coursing over the grass, playing well and thinking well, competing and cooperating, learning how to maintain an event that was too great to lose. Now it seems that our old playing field is one of many lost worlds. At the time, I felt it would last forever.

More at Currents.IUSB.edu
Listen to Joe Chaney's original broadcast of "The haunted fields" on 88.1 WVPE and sample some of his other Michiana Chronicles essays about life in our region.

Geometry

All the roofs sloped at the same angle. The distance between the houses was the same. There were so many feet from each front door to the curb. My father mowed the lawn straight up and down and then diagonally. And then he lined up beer bottles on the kitchen table.

We knew them only in the summer when the air passed through the screens. The neighbor girls talked to us across the great divide: attic window to attic window. We started with our names. Our whispers wobbled along a tightrope, and below was the rest of our lives.

Nancy Botkin

More at Currents.IUSB.edu
Find links to Nancy Botkin's paintings, books, and video versions of poems.



Iona, the Devil's Girl

Beyond the Whip and the Dodgem rides, a state fair barker tempts two boys into a mysterious carnival tent. By Tom Vander Ven

I don't remember whether our mother warned us about anything before we started out for the 1948 Michigan State Fair along Eight-Mile Road and Detroit's Woodward Avenue of street-car rails, electric cables, and traffic. And she was a worrier. Creeks. Silos. Polio. Milk trucks rolling along the town's highway a block away. Our World War II terrier, Ike, was the only family casualty of that traffic. Well, there was the fox that would become, posthumously, a family pelt. It ran in front of my father's car as he was driving home from the Chrysler Tank Arsenal. He published the town's weekly newspaper and during the war worked nights at the plant. When we got up that morning, the fox, propped up on a box beside our garage, looked alive.

My brother and I were ready for carnival rides and pig barns and side-shows. At the fair grounds, we entered a dimension unlike anything I'd ever traveled in my little-twerp mind, including a closet in the house on School Street where the chipped plaster statue of some hybrid mold of the Statue of Liberty and the Madonna appeared on the day we moved in, blessed us in glitter and blue and red paint, and got me off to a luminous beginning in the first town I can remember. The Protestant Village of my Carnival Madonna had maybe two Catholics, one Jew, one displaced Japanese-American family from the state of Washington, and a Baptist minister who, before the war was over, was rumored to be a Nazi sympathizer. Someone claimed to have seen in the church basement a red flag with a swastika.

What's the appeal of hay, straw, road apples, and cow pies? We town-boys swam through the fertile aromas of state fair barns filled with cattle,

horses, sheep, and pigs, inhaling the sweet, foul swirl of dung and cotton candy on our way past pigeons and scattered popcorn to the carnival rides—the Whip, Dodgem, and Ferris wheel, the hustlers and ride drivers, and the mindless, festival mechanism of a player-calliope whistling carnival tunes through perforated rolls of music. We wanted to throw baseballs at milk bottles and rise up rockingly over the tents and freak shows on the death-defying, clattering wheel of girders and bolts.

Bobby Huff climbed the town's water tower that summer, *a cappella*, clambering up the erector set to stand atop the tank and wonder, "Now what? What next?" Someone saw him jump around and wave his arms. From the tower he might have looked down at

playing in a sandbox with Dwight Stanlake. Bobby stepped into the sandbox, kicked cars off their roads, and leveled hills. My mother told him to leave the yard. "Now what? What next?" A frayed thread, unspooling. Everybody talked about it for weeks, but nobody said anything. He was from some other town, visiting his aunt.

Nobody ever really said anything about death that made a difference. You fell off a water tower into the arms of Jesus. You fell

Dare to see her here today.

What few have ever seen before.

Gaze into her eyes. Iona.

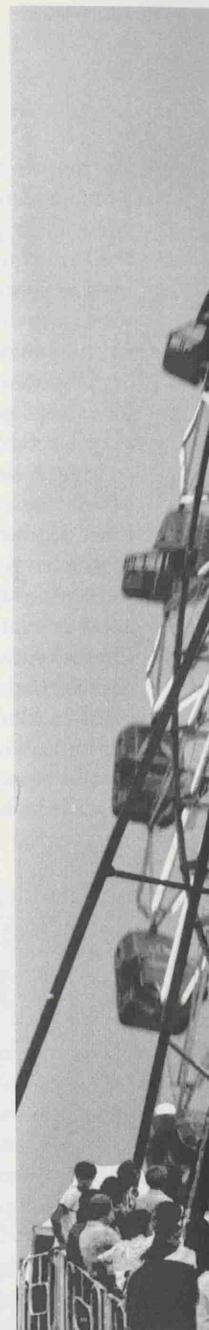
The Devil's Girl.

Begin the journey now. Twenty-five cents.

the vacant band shell in the little park or beyond the stoplight to the unknelling steeple of the Congregational Church. On his way down, did his foot slip, his grip fail? He brushed past an unnerved kid who hadn't made it to the top. The sod beneath the tower absorbed some of the impact, and he was still moving a little when people arrived. Dr. Burley came from his house across Saint Clair Street and closed his eyes.

Before he killed himself, he wandered into our backyard where I was

off a dead log into a green pond and into the lap of the Lord. Some of us boys went together to the hushed room at the funeral home across the street to see what was left after drowning. Mickey Winkler just lay there, wearing his face like a painting or a towel. I looked from way across the room where it felt safe. I thought—when you die, you're a window display, and all the shoppers pass by. They slow down, stop, look stupefied, and move on. But nobody admits anything.





queso." On-call orderlies pushed gurneys down dim hallways to freight elevators to the sub-basement morgue's refrigerator doors. But first, always—as in ALWAYS—check the room number—as in 11-B—and check the name eleven times before you go into the room to get the body. Don't try to tag the toe of a sleeping patient. Or wrap gauze around its jaw. It wakes up. You'll wish you were flipping burgers on the day shift at Crazy Jim's. Once you know it's dead, it's doable. If it's a child, stack blankets and towels on top to make it look like laundry. And act like it's laundry when you push past visitors.

The evanescence of Ferris wheels. It's mostly the anticipation. Jack wanted the wheel to stall while we were on top and scare the pants off us. Maybe they'd have to send someone up with food and a can to pee in. We looked around at Detroit's tall, shadowy buildings in the distance over the thin sounds of the

rides. And then we were back on earth, heading for the next gaudy wonder, the sideshows with the two-headed baby, the world's smallest woman, and a crocodile with the head of a man.

I had no idea what was under the red fur, hanging by a rope from a rafter in Biff Baumgartner's garage. We swarmed like flies. Biff was a magician, his knife unzipping the skin, peeling it away in one aimless length

of tail and legs. Muscle, membrane, teeth, and tongue crawled out into a thin, gleaming, pink fox. All along, an unseen light had been shining beneath the red fur. When we die, we glow and get smaller. Like the monstrous black bear hanging from the Standard Oil sign that winter, glittering in the indifferent snow. Then, unpelted, beheaded, rendered. No one said that they saw themselves or god skinned, hanging from a garage's rafter.

The sideshow men with voices like auctioneers sized us up to believe that we were about to buy the cosmic, real thing, the exposed, deformed, living world-of-flesh, in what turned out to be large jars of soaking, peeling, white fetuses, pickled circus miscarriages. I thought that maybe under the ghostly, fetal skin it might have something to do with death.

In a rocking, clattering train across the brute December snowfields of Michigan, four years before, I rode with my mother to Holland, where Grandpa George had had an accident. The businessman, the blacksmith, the Dutch army veteran, the immigrant who read Plato and Spinoza and who forbade his daughters to speak Dutch or to read the lurid novels of Thomas Hardy, hidden in their dresser drawers where no man might go. This hammer of fishing spears. This man brought down by sidewalk ice, in bed in the great stone 9th Street house near Kollen Park, with pneumonia, white-mustached and frail, flattened by blankets. He knew my name. He smiled and asked me how I was and then died, posed at home in a parlored casket, wearing his wire-rimmed glasses, grave and answerless, and just beneath his tight skin something like a skull.

Wild, black hair coiled around the red sign above us. Snakes stared. *Iona the Devil's Girl. Child of the Jungle. From the remote forests of the Amazon. Silent, mysterious child of dark rivers. Her parents unknown. Her world undiscovered. Dare to see her here today. What few have ever*

They just say you're in a better place. So stop staring at me. I'm not going to tell jokes or ride a bike or apologize. I'm not coming back.

At the university hospital in Ann Arbor, I worked the weekend midnight shifts on my way to an 8 a.m. Spanish class where I routinely pitched forward about forty-five degrees before regaining consciousness of conjugations and "un sandwich de

seen before. Gaze into her eyes. Iona. The Devil's Girl. Begin the journey now. Twenty-five cents. Walk through the dark door you see before you and enter into another world. Iona's world.

What was it like to walk out of Michigan through that sullen arch into the land of the child of dark rivers? Jack and I were *National Geographic*-style drugged virgins at the edge of a volcano. Until that day, the most exotic girl I had ever seen or thought about was Norma the Neighbor's Girl, with braids, one blue eye, and one brown eye. Now Iona the Devil's Girl silently beckoned. Really. Summoned. Compelled. But to do what? Through a black curtain we entered, maybe twenty people, into a space surrounding a large oval arena with a low wall around it, like a small hockey rink, and a white canvas floor with snakes everywhere. Nothing but snakes. None of them were coiled. None of them moved.

In the middle of the floor, on a metal folding chair, a figure sat with her back to us. It had to be Iona. Long, black, straight hair fell nearly to the floor. A blanket of immemorial colors wrapped itself around her shoulders and legs. She leaned back in the chair with her extended legs covered and her bare, brown feet exposed. Motionless, displayed, and concealed. With her snakes, a traveling juggle tableau. We had no idea what we were looking at. She was probably alive. Aware of us? Maybe. But there was no jungle welcome. The guide in blue jeans and a green T-shirt was silent. We were on our own in Iona's shabby, wordless court of anticlimax. Jack counted the money in his pocket. Now what?

Ladies and gentlemen, you have traveled into Iona's distant land of darkness, of lurking reptiles and strange silence. But the journey doesn't end here. We now go farther into the dark jungle where Iona lives. To look on the face of Iona herself, the very face of darkness, the face of

the Devil's Girl, we have to cross to the other side. For twenty-five cents, you can gaze on the face of Iona, into the eyes of darkness itself, the Amazon, the monster crocodiles that infest its waters. See into her eyes, into the dark world.

It was Jack's money. His paper route. He bought our tickets to the other side. The crowd thinned as we moved around to watch Iona reveal herself. At first, all we could see was more black hair, covering her face. We stood safely behind the necessary wall, waiting for something to happen, for Iona's hair to open like the curtain on the high school stage. Then her hands rose slowly out of the blankets, and

her hair began to move and spread like the wings of a dark bird. In the light's gloom, I began to see that Iona wore brown skin, heavy-lidded, dark eyes, a full, solemn mouth, and a wide nose and nostrils. But she had no face. She seemed to be erased. Iona, if she was ever a girl, was not there for me to see. This life of panting forms and auras dies into unspeakable silence, dim and blank and pitiless, stripped bare, rendered, blanketed, by ritual and display made diminishingly whole. The art of dying. Or to watch, dying. Wordless.

More at Currents.IUSB.edu

Listen to Tom Vander Ven read this story and a sampling of his poems.

the process

The children drink soda from glass bottles.

They litter the lawn with bottle caps,
their sharp edges lie in wait

among the dandelions.

The adults are in the kitchen,
talking about formica.

I am meditating on a negative image of fire,
or perhaps it's an image of fire
filling a negative space—

I watch the individual molecules of oxygen
sorting themselves by temperature

before being swallowed by the flames.

In another room, someone urges someone
else to blow faster,

before wax drips all over the cake.

Clayton Michaels

Originally published in *Gloom Cupboard*.

More at Currents.IUSB.edu

Hear Clayton Michaels read this poem and check out the IU South Bend creative writing blog for news about readings on campus.

Uneasy motherhood

Kelcey Parker's book of short stories peers into the troubled waters of family life. By Jane Wang

What happens when a woman, tired of domesticity, gives up her family for Lent? How does a mother find redemption at Chuck E. Cheese? These are two of the playful, acerbic tales Kelcey Parker spins in *For Sale by Owner*, her first book. So, what drives a young fiction writer to tell stories about women in minivans who struggle with their lives as mothers?

In Parker's hands, our dead ends become something hopeful and beautiful.

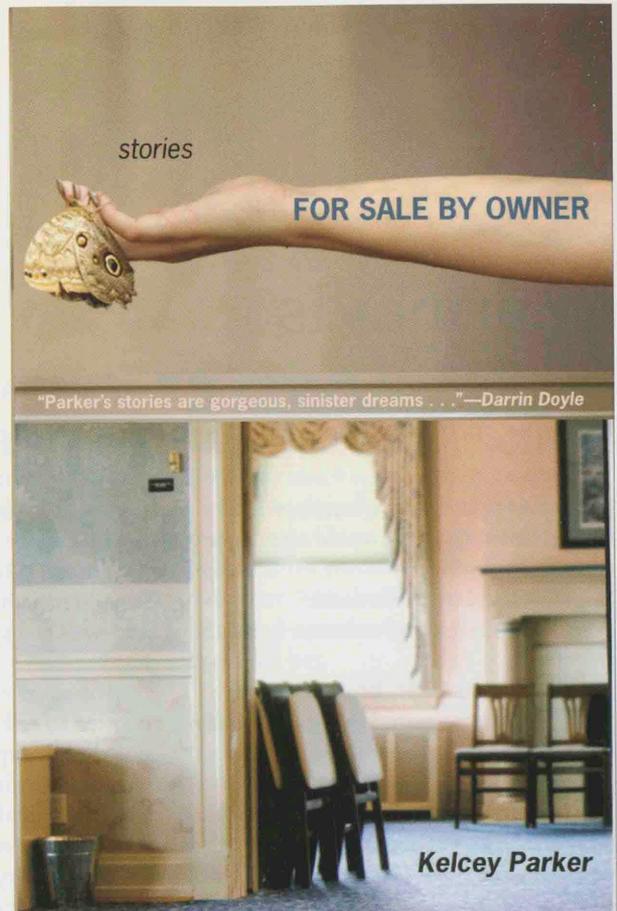
"At the time I was writing most of these stories, I was in graduate school and my daughter was in preschool and eventually elementary school," she says. "I was feeling the tension between being a mom and a student, and particularly a tension with 'mom culture.' By extension, my characters are women who have an uneasy relationship with motherhood." Parker, assistant professor of English and director of the creative writing program, received a 2011 Next Generation Indie Book Award for her short fiction. Probing past the external gestures of suburban motherhood—minivans, soccer practice, grocery shopping—she guides us through the everyday emotions and struggles of modern women fulfilling traditional roles.

Of her own journey, Parker admits it was initially difficult to

embrace a seemingly Pleasantville life.

I crave art and literature; the suburbs are about convenience and practicality, bland music and barbecues. I was this strange combination of homeroom mom at my daughter's school, soccer coach, and graduate student. Most of the time, I felt like I was failing at all of my pursuits. But that's because, in my limited view, all the other moms were dedicated to being moms, and all my fellow students were exclusively focused on being students. I was trying to do these two major undertakings at once.

What kept me going in both worlds was my love and excitement about each. I have always been humbled and awestruck over my daughter and the amazing experience it is to raise a human being. I've since chilled out a lot and learned to embrace the dual aspects of my existence. Writing about it was a way of working out the tensions and formulating a literary perspective on suburban experience. And the fact is, for as much as I crave art and literature, I crave backyard barbecues.



Author Brock Clarke praises her suburban encounters this way: "In Parker's hands, our dead ends become something other than dead ends, something hopeful and beautiful and mysterious. Art, in other words."

Parker's next project, *Liliane's Balcony: A Novella of Fallingwater*, is set at the famous house built by Frank Lloyd Wright. It begins inauspiciously on a September night in 1952 when Liliane Kaufmann, tired of her husband's infidelities, overdoses on pain pills in her bedroom. *Liliane's Balcony* alternates between Liliane's story and the fictional narratives of four contemporary tourists. Parker uses the design of Fallingwater, with its multiple cantilevers jutting from its vertical core, as the architectural base for the interchanging stories that seem to mirror each other.

Turn the page to read the opening chapter of "Mermaids," a story from *For Sale by Owner*, published by Kore Press and reprinted here with their permission.

Mermaids

While icing the cake for a party at Chuck E. Cheese, a child asks her mother probing questions about certain fairy tales. By Kelcey Parker

"Nothing gave her so much pleasure as to hear about the world above the sea."

—"The Little Mermaid,"
Hans Christian Andersen

The birthday girl begins her day with a question: "Do wishes really come true?"

She is using a plastic knife to spread blue icing along one side of her cake.

The birthday girl's mother, at work on the other side of the cake, wonders why she asks.

Because the birthday girl doesn't think they do. For she has wished upon stars and eyelashes and last year's birthday candles and pennies in the fountain, and she has not told anyone (except for her doll, Annabelle, and her unicorn, Chloe) her wish—it is always the same one—and it still has not come true.

"Do they?" she asks again, pausing from her work.

The birthday girl's mother says that sometimes they do and sometimes they don't and that it just depends.

The birthday girl wants to know on what it depends.

The birthday girl's mother looks at her. "On how much it costs, on whether it's even possible—that kind of thing."

Which brings the birthday girl to another question. She plunges her knife into the icing container. "Are mermaids real?" she asks. The birthday girl's mother hesitates. Between them on the table is a plastic figurine of Ariel, the Little Mermaid, whom

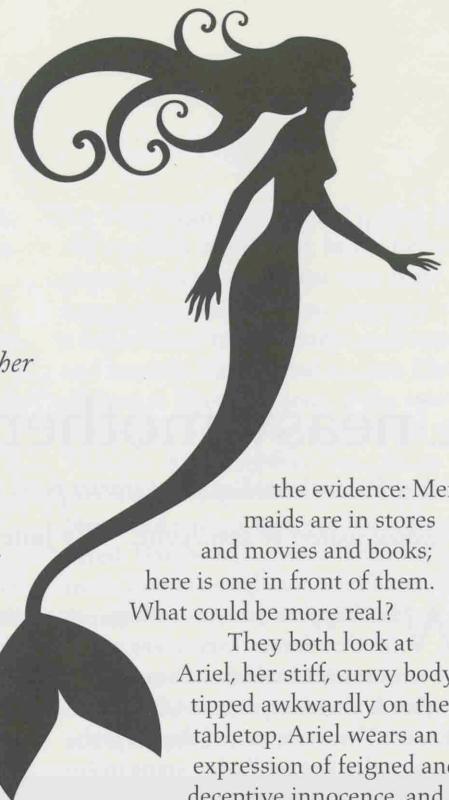
they will set atop the cake, iced like the bottom of the sea. All over her daughter's room are images of Ariel, with her red hair and green fish tail and eyes the size of the shells on her breasts.

For some time she has wanted to tell her daughter not that mermaids aren't real—that would be too simple—but that Ariel isn't real, that there is another, better mermaid story. She has thought to tell her daughter that what the real Little Mermaid wanted was not the prince but an immortal soul. That the real Little Mermaid never even married the prince. That when it became

She has at times reached out to touch her daughter—stroked her hair, squeezed her hand—just to know she has not dreamed her.

clear the prince would marry another, she could have killed him to save her own life, but she tossed the knife into the sea. Strangely, instead of dying, she was taken by the Daughters of the Air, who spread health and the perfume of flowers around the world. The birthday girl's mother has wanted to tell her daughter that the real Little Mermaid became a Daughter of the Air, able—unlike her merman family who would live for three hundred years and then turn to foam—to earn an immortal soul.

The birthday girl challenges her mother's silence with a statement of



the evidence: Mermaids are in stores and movies and books; here is one in front of them. What could be more real?

They both look at Ariel, her stiff, curvy body tipped awkwardly on the tabletop. Ariel wears an expression of feigned and deceptive innocence, and the birthday girl's mother wants to diminish her appeal.

"No, sweetie," she says, looking straight into Ariel's eyes. "Mermaids are not real." And then, in a moment that feels like inspiration, she adds, "Besides, mermaids can't ride bicycles!"

She watches for her daughter's response. Later today, her daughter will find a bicycle topped with a bow awaiting her in the garage, and the birthday girl's mother thinks how perfect it would be if she could get her daughter to wish for a bicycle, rather than to be a mermaid.

But then again, she thinks, isn't it better for her daughter to learn that wishes don't always come true?

She becomes aware that she is once again complicating something that is actually quite simple. That is what her husband would say. "Stop making things more difficult than they are," he would say if he were there. That, or, "Keep it simple, stupid."

But he is out getting the bicycle.

The birthday girl takes another angle. "Are unicorns real?" she asks.

That's when the birthday girl's mother realizes that her daughter's

line of questioning is going beyond mermaid wishes, and into, well, ontology. And she suddenly longs for the days of diapers and bottles, which had overwhelmed her at the time with their relentlessness and which she'd been relieved to finally move beyond, and which seemed, now, so mindlessly simple. If the diaper stunk or swelled up, she changed it. If her daughter cried a few hours after her last feeding, she fed her. Now her daughter wants to know if her play-mates are real. If wishes come true.

The birthday girl's mother makes a decision: to keep it simple.

"No," she says. "Unicorns are not real."

"Are princesses real?" the birthday girl asks.

The birthday girl's mother tells her that there were princesses in the past and that there are still some princesses in other countries, but that they are different from the princesses she knows about.

The birthday girl wants to know which countries, but her mother doesn't know. And she's not about to mention Diana.

"Is Elmo real?"

She is told he is a puppet with a human voice.

Then the birthday girl wants to know if Michael, the blond boy on *Barney*, is real.

"He is a real person, but his name is not Michael, and he's probably twenty-one by now."

The birthday girl is quiet. She sullenly jabs the cake with her knife, and the birthday girl's mother begins to question her approach.

See? She finds herself arguing with her husband in her

head. *I don't make things complicated. Things are complicated.*

But the birthday girl is persistent. She tries again. "Are Pilgrims real?" For she has just learned about them in kindergarten.

"Yes!" her mother is finally able to say. "Pilgrims are real!"

But, no, the birthday girl cannot see one because they were real a long time ago.

"Is the Tooth Fairy real?"

"Is Benjamin Franklin real?"

"Is Scooby Doo real?"

"Is heaven real?"

The birthday girl's mother looks at her daughter, who, herself, was not real, not even imagined, merely six years ago. And even though the birthday girl's mother watched her own stomach grow, and felt and witnessed

the slick being emerge from within her, and even though she has also witnessed each day of her daughter's life, the child's very existence seems more fantastically impossible than that of any unicorn or mermaid. She has at times reached out to touch her daughter—stroked her hair, squeezed her hand—just to know she has not dreamed her.

She reaches out to her daughter now to wipe some icing from her cheek. She lets her daughter lick it from her finger. "Let me finish the cake," she says. "You go get dressed for your party."

More at Currents.IUSB.edu

Read the next chapter of "Mermaids" along with other fiction and nonfiction by Kelcey Parker.





Mikan, less than one month old. (Courtesy of the author)

That other family

In a neonatal intensive care unit, the promises of life hang in the balance.

By Jenna Gensic

Immediately after his birth, his mousey face was cute, poking out of the quicksand of blankets. "He's so small." I smiled at my husband and then turned back to soak up our swaddled peanut of potential, just like the new moms on television or in magazines. Mikan was the boy my husband hoped for, named after George Mikan, a basketball player who shared my husband's Croatian heritage. Mikan's eyes inspected the space around him, and his perfect nose bobbed over a fold of blankets with each breath.

"OK," the nurse said, "we have to take him now." I squeezed my husband's hand in awed reverence for our son's life. The nurse clutched the blanket and disappeared behind the teal, sterile sheet haphazardly drawn across my chest.

The next time I saw him he was sprawled out on a warmer, IVs and wires tangled around his limbs like

restraints, his face hidden underneath tubing shoved in his nose and around his ears with an oversized knit hat meant to hold the apparatus in place. My cute mouse looked like death, his exposed limbs veiny and skeletal. When he dipped to one pound, nine ounces in a matter of days, I prayed for his delicate systems to endure.

But after Mikan finally reached two pounds, his neonatologist began fighting his edema, an excess of fluids that puffed up and exhausted his little body. At only three weeks old he already faced half a dozen life-threatening conditions. He lived in a clear plastic case surrounded by a labyrinth of tubes and wires that would thwart Theseus. Most of the connections led to a black box the size of a tube television. The nurses called it a jet ventilator. The monstrosity shot hundreds of small breaths through a tube in Mikan's throat and into his lungs each

minute, rippling his rib cage. I sat in a chair next to him and watched the digital readings on the box like a hopeless fan willing the numbers to change on a scoreboard. My swollen son required high oxygen and regular blood transfusion, but I was still permitted to hold him. I waited for assistance, contemplating his future.

He was so fragile and the machines so complex that it required a nurse and a respiratory therapist to maintain the separation of each line, like a multi-stringed lanyard, and transfer him out of his clear isolette so I could kangaroo him against my chest. Swimming in and out of self-pity, I snuggled Mikan and his machinery, feeling newborn skin in glimpses of heat between metal and plastic. I noticed another set of parents across the room sitting through a procedure a doctor was performing on their twenty-five-week-old child. From an

earlier conversation with his mother, I knew the tiny boy had contracted a dangerous infection. The parents watched their doctor don a blue gown, white surgical cap, and gloves. Nurses crowded around the baby's isolette, handing the doctor instruments and supplies. At least we weren't undergoing a procedure, I thought. Not this moment, anyway.

Then came a beeping from the monitor above their baby's bed, first cautionary, then more urgent. The small crowd watched the flashing numbers drop as they worked. The nurses pulled out an Ambu bag for CPR, and the doctor shot orders and aggressively checked each changing number on the monitor while tending to the failing boy. The monitor's tone and duration, we knew by now, signaled a plunging of both the blood oxygen saturation and heart rate. Scrubs scurried around the isolette, and one ran for the epinephrine to restart the baby's heart; the mother wept into her hands, muttering, "What's wrong? What are they doing?" When I made eye contact with another nurse, she set screens around the baby's isolette, leaving room only for the doctors and nurses who were now forcing oxy-

genated air into his bird-like body. My heart raced, and while I wished I could will my extra beats across the room to the still child who needed them, I checked Mikan's vital signs.

The doctor escorted the parents out of the unit and then back in again several times, depending on the level

It often happens that the real tragedies of life occur in such an inartistic manner that they hurt us by their crude violence, their absolute incoherence, their absurd want of meaning. —Oscar Wilde

of the mother's hysterics and the urgency with which he was needed at the bedside. I held my breath as the hospital chaplain, dressed in black, entered the unit and performed a baptism. At the chaplain's cue, the staff at the nursery, all engaged in different activities caring for other babies around the large room, bowed their heads and recited,

"Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name . . ." The unexpected harmony of their voices sur-

rounded and stunned me. Touched by the staff's prayerful awareness of the fragility of life, I wondered how often this sad ritual occurred.

The crowd reluctantly dispersed, leaving the parents behind with the doctor. I heard the mother whisper, "So, those are just vent breaths?"

and the doctor walked them away from the bedside.

Finally, the baby was freed from the Medusa-like uniform of tubes and wires, wrapped in a white receiving

blanket, and carried out from behind the screens to meet his parents in a private room.

The nurses neatly packed up his baby blankets and onesies in plastic bags, and disconnected the machines attached to the isolette. Two nurses brought the baby's body back and made moldings of his hands and feet for the parents, then packed up NICU memorabilia such as his heart monitor lead and his Band-Aid-sized blood pressure cuffs. Screens remained around his empty isolette, waiting for an environmental team to come and sanitize it.

Frozen and humbled, I stared at the empty space across from me, holding Mikan and his wires with cautious tension. A nurse who participated in "The Lord's Prayer" walked past us, looked down, and said, "Makes you want to hold him a little tighter, huh?"

And dammed up tears ran down my cheeks.

I hugged Mikan *and* his tubes.

More at Currents.IUSB.edu
Listen to the original WVPE radio broadcast of "That other family" and visit Jenna's blog about Mikan growing up.



Mikan, three years old. (Tara Ashlee)

Acorn

Now you have the earth
firmly beneath your feet.
At eighteen months you can even run,
paying no attention to where
you are going. Only the acorns
in the driveway bring you
to consideration. They have taken
their seasonal place among the pebbles
that all the summer long
you claimed as yours.
We had learned to watch
for the quick move of your
hand to mouth, and to know
what it was your lips
closed on as though on a secret.

Give me the stones, we'd say,
and you learned to let them go,
released into a proffered hand,
dropping like coins from a slot machine.

No one saw the acorn go in, but in
the house when you tried to answer
the question I gave to you, I saw it
rolling in there, wet and shiny,
the brown nearly amber with the polish
you'd been giving it.

You let it go into my hand
but I understand the call
of acorns and we returned
to the driveway and you bent
knees and waist and harvested
by the handful. I showed you
the pocket in your Levis
and one by one you placed the acorns
into the slot, then kept
your hand there, rolling them
as though on your tongue, accepting
the kiss of their mute promise.

Susan Carol Hauser

More at Currents.IUSB.edu

Sample Susan Carol Hauser's lively and diverse body of writing.



Protesting by petition

After young Eileen signed a petition, men in trench coats came knocking on her door. By Eileen Bender

My doorbell rang yesterday morning. There on my front step stood a bespectacled middle-aged man, holding a clipboard in his hand.

"Happy with gas prices?" he asked. I tried to be civil. "No way!" I answered.

"Sign this petition and let your legislators know how you feel about the energy bill," he said, thrusting the clipboard in my direction.

Another petition? There are always requests for my signature in my morning email—from senators, ex-governors, and, last week, one to "save public radio." Of course I signed that one but I wondered: what impact could signing a petition make? Then I remembered an experience I'd had as a sixth-grader. On my way home from school, I saw a woman stopping people and asking them to sign her petition. She was wearing a stick-on badge with "End Nuclear War" printed over a mushroom cloud. It was the 1950s, and we had nuclear bomb drills at school—diving under our desks when the alarm rang.

"I'll sign it," I volunteered. "I hate nuclear war!" I signed my name and address in my most grownup cursive handwriting on her petition almost filled with signatures. I felt pretty good that I had done my bit to stop nuclear war, until that weekend. I was home

Standing on our front walk, wearing tan trench coats, were two men I'd never seen before.

when the doorbell chimed and my Dad went to the door. A minute later, he called me over. Standing on our front walk, wearing tan trench coats, were two men I'd never seen before. "This is Eileen," Dad said.

One of the men looked at me, laughed, held up a piece of paper, and asked, "Did you sign this petition?"

"I certainly did," I said. "I hate nuclear war!"

The men looked at one another, laughed again. "No problem here," the first man said, and in another minute they were on their way. Dad said they were FBI agents. They were going around the neighborhood, showing their badges, and checking on all the people who signed that petition. I was stunned.

"Was there something wrong with signing it?" I asked. "Did they think I was a criminal?"

It was Dad's turn to laugh. "Maybe. But they made a couple of mistakes. First, they assumed you signed as a member of some 'subversive' group. You know what that means?"

"Sneaky," I answered.

"But then when they saw you, they thought you were just a kid who didn't know what she was signing."

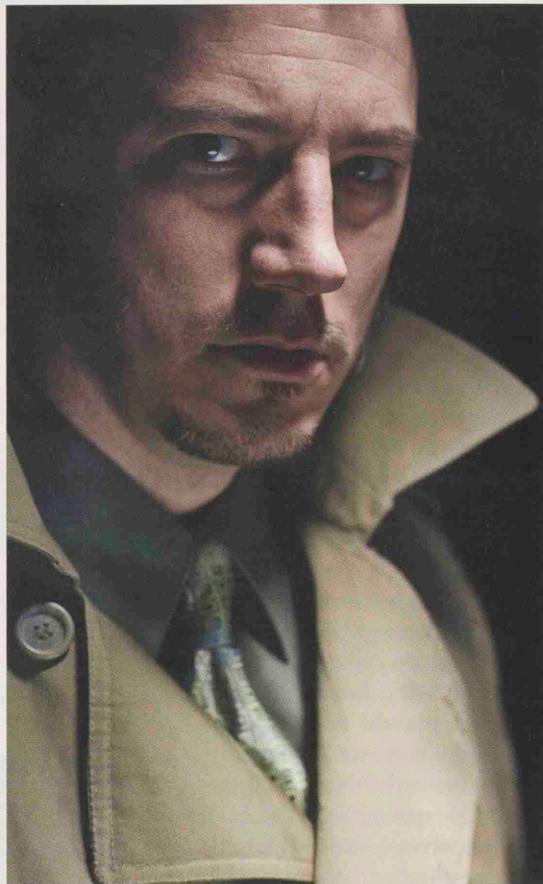
I got angry. "Of course I knew.

I hate nuclear war! But I guess I won't sign any more petitions."

"Of course you will!"

Dad said. "Signing a petition is like voting. It's a way a person—even a pint-sized

person like you," he winked, "can join her voice with others who also care about important public issues. The right to petition the government for redress of grievances is guaranteed by the First Amendment. Just remember



two things," Dad said. "Never sign something you haven't read. And don't forget, your signature is YOU. Never lend it to a cause you don't believe in."

Standing at my own front door yesterday, scanning the petition, I remembered those men in trench coats. No matter what they thought, a signature on a petition is serious—not an idle gesture but a way to speak my conscience.

"OK," I said. "Where do I sign?"

More at Currents.IUSB.edu
Listen to Eileen Bender's June 7, 2005, WVPE broadcast of "Protesting by petition" and sample her other American Democracy Project essays on the ups and downs of active citizenship.

Childhood in the extremity of war

Chieko tells her daughter about her family hiding in the hills across the bay from Nagasaki in the final days of world war. By Linda Wingrove

It was a cold spring night, the promise of warmer days nowhere in sight. My mother and I ate take-out pizza and talked at the kitchen table for a long time. She told me stories I had not heard before about the last weeks of the war.

"On July 1st, military squads went through our neighborhoods urging us to evacuate the city if we were able. Your Grandpa Uoizumi and my uncle, who was a good carpenter, made a cart to carry our things to the foothills surrounding Kumamoto. We were to stay until the bombing ceased," Chieko explained to me, her hands moving slowly to and fro to help her tell the story.

They loaded bags of rice, mats and blankets, a few tools. The smallest children rode on the cart.

"I don't remember how long we walked, but we walked at least all day to get there. We did not have to go very high into the hills. We stayed toward the bottom."

The terrain of the foothills had everything and nothing; an abundance of slopes, terraces, needled trees, browns and blues, higher rising land, and stout oaks, but nothing of obvious sustenance. Food was hidden inside the trees, in the rooted ground, or disguised as a plant or flower. Water ran freely in far away streams and would not be fetched without much effort. Shelter came in the form of cool limestone, uninviting to young children needing peaceful sleep.

The family found a small cave opening on the hillside. Grandfather Uoizumi decided that this was as good a place as any to set up a shelter. The first night they did not try to make a fire. There were still too many things to think through and a fire would bring attention, breeding too many

opportunities for mishap.

The first days were new and different in a way that was not much fun for the children, still haunted as they were by recent concussions of fire, falling houses, and running neighbors. Yet to their relief, there was a quiet up there on the high ground. Even the wind coming across the steep terraces seemed gentle and courteous as any wind on a mild July afternoon. Outside the cave



Chieko and a high school friend.

Life did not return to normal, but the routine of it did, until one morning the monotony was broken.

entrance, my grandfather constructed a small, sturdy dwelling out of pieces of wood and branches. The six children would sleep inside the cave, while the two parents and baby stayed in the wooden hut at the cave's opening.

There was much to do to get situated. On the hillside other families had settled in fairly close proximity. They seemed to respect each other's plight and stayed rather separate from one

another. The heat of summer was a mixed blessing, for the nights were not unbearable without covers, especially when sleeping on cool tatami mats, but the day's sweat added to dehydration and a growing sense of fatigue brought on by hunger and thirst. Water and food always had to be a priority.

"Every day I went to try and find some food. There was a small stream nearby, so there was some water, but nothing to eat. The bullets from the small planes often killed the people who traveled to the shore to find shrimp. We just stayed close to the hills and tried to find berries and roots."

Chieko had the responsibility of looking after her siblings Amiko, Toshihiro, Toshiharu, Toshimitsu, and Setsko. Toshiko, the oldest girl, helped mostly with the baby who had been born just weeks earlier in March. With the young children in tow, Chieko set out every morning to search for things edible. The bulbs of lilies could be boiled and tasted like potatoes, but then again, many things that were last-resort edible in the wild were often described as tasting like potatoes. Who knows how bitter and vile lilies, orchids, cones, and bark actually taste?

They say that the bark of a black oak or white pine can be ground into a powder and used as a soup thickener, and surely the families on that hillside needed something to put in the pots of boiling water at night.

Grandmother situated herself in the back of the cave in the early evening to build a small fire that would cook the food gathered that day. The hunger was fierce. Some days a few snails from the stream would end up in the pot, a protein delicacy that was happily anticipated.



The waiting made too many waking hours to fill. Digging pits for toilets and covering those that had filled were unpleasant tasks that helped pass the time. But waiting for what, they did not know. No air raids reached them; there were no accidents or wild animal encounters. Life did not return to normal, but the routine of it did, until one morning the monotony was broken.

Many had stayed behind in the city. The two women who showed up at the family's dwelling had stayed in Kumamoto City and were injured by a fire raid the night before. The younger woman carrying her mother over her shoulders approached their dwelling that over the weeks had taken on its own patina of comfort and safety.

"They had found their way to the foot of the hills where we were. They didn't have to climb far to get to us. The mother was badly burned and was dying. The girl asked if she could have some water. She put her mother down and I heard her moaning for water, but I knew that giving water to someone that badly burned was no good. She was dying, though. We gave the young woman what she needed and she eventually picked her mother up and they went on their way. I don't know what happened to them. I am sure the mother died."

Chieko rubbed her cheek. "When the old woman was lying there she looked at me. She put her hand on her burned face and touched her cheek. Her skin came off."

After long weeks of hunger and barely surviving, Chieko said she herself was ready for the comfortable rest of death.

When a child speaks with a philosophical twist—when she can speak of death calmly—we sometimes call her wise beyond her years. When a child of war does so, we call it post-traumatic stress disorder. Sometimes young people face situations that are so traumatic, and are so distressed by memories of the ordeal, that they develop a variety of unhealthy behaviors: emotional detachment and a self-destructiveness born of self-loathing or the guilt of having survived when others did not. Mental health experts talk about a "numbing," and in my mother's case this pain-killing manifested itself in a final resolve to die. She spoke of the many instances of being ready to die, expecting it, welcoming the relief from all that is chaotic in the small world of a child forced to witness war.

While I sat and listened, I thought about how often she spoke of suicide while I was growing up in that house, usually in the evening before my bedtime. She would not say much, merely remarking that she did not want to go on. When it was bad, she would say the word *suicide*. I will probably never know if my mother felt guilt over these ruminations of hers, but all of my siblings felt her despair at one point or another while growing up. When our older brother was five years old, our

mother found him in the neighborhood going door to door trying to solve her unhappiness by asking the neighbors for money so his mommy could go back to Japan. Children, even the very young, must have been radar for despair.

But children are resilient. Her story of the P-38 that dove down from the sky taking pot shots makes me appreciate her character during this time of war. The rice paddies in July were still wet and clumsy with new growth. The air was hot the morning when Chieko and her older sister, Toshiko, set out to check on their house in the city. My grandfather instructed the girls to depart for the city early and return quickly to the hills in hopes that they would not have to walk for too many hours in unfamiliar darkness on the hillside. I was told that Grandfather always spoke calmly and kindly. He did not hesitate, though, to send them into danger to check on the house. A plan needed to be made depending on whether the house had been destroyed or not.

Chieko was wearing old shoes. A whole school year had gone by and her shoes were too small and worn, and her feet ached, her toes pressing into the front of the shoes when she walked downhill. The long climb up and down just reminded her how hot the air was, and her sister, her walking companion that day, reminded her that the situation was serious and that anything could happen.

As she tells it she begins to hum. "That's what the planes sounded like, hum-m-m-m-m-m-m-m." She gave up her throat to a low moaning to mimic the planes that were flying toward them.

"Were you scared?" I asked.

"Not really. We were numb. We were just waiting to die," she said. I suppose that the smaller fighter planes, like the twin-engine P-38 that was coming toward them, were old news to the girls. The plane flew past the two sisters walking, and they did not notice it turn and angle back around until it was low enough in the sky for them to

realize that the pilots could probably see them out in the open rice paddy.

The girls began to run, but where? Had they learned nothing about where to hide? The plane was aimed at them, and the four .50 caliber mounted guns “went hot” and bullets began to fly down perfectly spaced, like the rows in the paddies. When the bullets hit the ground, the dry dirt from the small path they were walking jumped, clouding the way momentarily. The girls fell or jumped or tripped each other, landing behind a small berm on the edge of the wet acreage. They were holding hands now. Tears one would expect weren’t there. A frantic quiet, a wet and waiting expectation of death, that thing they had seen so much of, would finally touch them and answer the questions of what comes after.

“The bullets came as close as from here to there,” she explained, pointing her finger at me. She is convinced that the pilots of the careless P-38 didn’t mean to harm them.

“I know they were laughing,” she insists. “They see two young girls and want to have some fun.” Giving the pilots in this lone warplane a pass, an excuse for the terror they struck, seems like an act of gratitude from the girls who did not really care one way or the other if they died that day. They did, however, discover what was truly in their hearts at the moment of possible death, and it was good. There was an absence of fear. There was an acceptance that they would not return to the hills where their family waited. They would not grow up and have children. They would never be hungry again. They would have simply disappeared into the rice paddy. The girls waited to make sure the

plane would not make another pass. Chieko does not remember how long they lay there holding hands. Slowly, they stood up and began to run, and returned to the cave. Not wanting to cause worry, the girls decided not to tell anyone what had happened.

In the last days they were to stay in the hills, at a time you would think she had seen as much war as one could, there came upon her a suddenness, a rapture of light that made her fall to the ground. The August morning had been beautiful and quiet; the season of summer

“The bullets came as close as from here to there,” she explained, pointing her finger at me. She is convinced that the pilots of the careless P-38 didn’t mean to harm them.

was a regular guest and, until now, unremarkable. Thank God, Buddha, or whoever, that their escape to the hills had been during the summer. In the rainy season or in winter they might not have survived, but there in front of her growing on

the hillside were things alive and edible. Her head was down much of the time, searching and bending.

Alone later that evening, I used the TV for background noise while I took a bath and got ready for bed. Soaking in the hot water, not having fooled myself that a bath would take my mind off things, I thought about how the young Japanese girl, whose family was evacuated from her urban home to the foothills surrounding Kumamoto City, described the morning of August 9th. Her words do not emphasize the never-seen-before bright flash of the atom bomb’s detonation across the bay in Nagasaki, but how hungry she was on the hillside on that beautiful sunny morning foraging for food. The blast, heat, and ensuing fires leveled Nagasaki. Forty thousand people perished that morning.

More at Currents.IUSB.edu
Follow BBC stories of Japan in August, 1945, along with eyewitness accounts of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The hands-on skills of active citizenship

This year’s Eldon F. Lundquist Award winner for excellence in teaching, scholarship, and community service teaches political theory through practice. By Neovi Karakatsanis

When Elizabeth Bennion was an undergraduate, a family friend showed her a newspaper clipping, a photograph of a frowning nine-year-old girl at an Equal Rights Amendment rally. “The unhappy child was me,” Bennion recalls, “literally, me at a rally.” The picture brought back memories like a torrent—memories of concern and disappointment. “Why wouldn’t people want girls to be equal to boys?” she recalls thinking.

The photo reminded her of the hope and excitement of being involved in something larger than herself, something transformative. More than anything else, the clipping reinforced her commitment to living a civically engaged life. She caught this bug from her parents, especially from her mother, a League of Women Voters veteran who regularly took her to the polls and to political protests and rallies.

Not surprisingly, Bennion believes that people develop the skills and habits of political engagement by immersion. While her courses include a good mixture of assigned readings, discussions, and short lectures, she requires her students to move beyond books and exams to actively engage the political process. “My civics class takes a hands-on approach, identifying and researching a social problem, locating stakeholders and gauging public opinion, building coalitions,

discovering solutions, engaging the media, and influencing decision-makers in order to develop the skills they need to practice civic leadership in the future. Simply hearing about the steps is not enough."

Outside the classroom, too, she works with the Political Science Club to host Constitution Day, coordinate voter registration drives, and hold candidate debates and other events de-

they figure out the way the world works rather than being told to trust the professor and memorize the answers. I want to believe that what I do here matters for them in their lives," she says. This commitment to active citizenship extends to her research as well. While many political scientists have long believed that one of the best ways to get young college students to

vote is by having their peers encourage them to do so, there was no evidence for this, and the explanations were primarily anecdotal. Rather than taking this belief at face value, Bennion decided to study the phenomenon experimentally. Through her research into actual voting records, she has confirmed that classroom registration drives increase student voter registration and turnout significantly, while email outreach is ineffective. Her follow-up research has revealed that online registration systems, such as the one recently adopted in Indiana, can only marginally increase the effectiveness of email outreach.

Interested in transforming citizens, Bennion aims to disseminate the results of her research to political decision-makers, university campuses, professors, and others—people who can use her findings to transform their own student mobilization efforts.

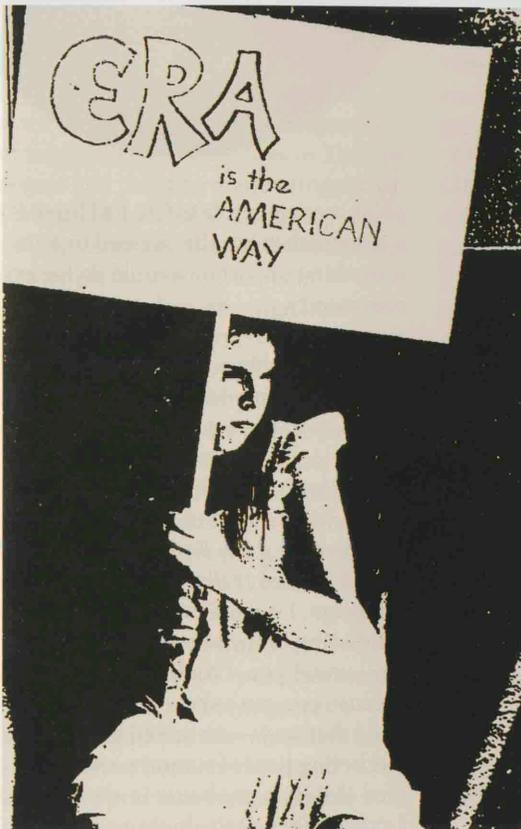
More at Currents.IUSB.edu
See what the American Democracy Project is stirring up on campus and in the community this year.

The American Democracy Project

Bennion also directs the campus's American Democracy Project, extending her role as teacher and learner beyond the confines of her classroom. ADP was created in 2003 by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities working with a team from the *New York Times*. What began as a three-year program continues on more than 200 campuses, cultivating graduates who are committed to meaningful action as citizens of a democracy.

A feature of ADP on our campus is Democracy Plaza, happening in September on Constitution Day, at the start of the academic year. Students, staff, and faculty on our campus mall read from banned books or respond to thought-provoking questions about the Bill of Rights and the U.S. Constitution. The ADP does not stop at the borders of the U.S., however. Through interfaith vigils, table talks, and film screenings, it has connected our campus with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the genocides of Sudan and Rwanda, and the tragedies of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In 2006, ADP's Millennium Campaign series included talks and documentaries about global issues—child mortality, maternal health, gender equality, environmental sustainability, the spread of HIV/AIDS, and the enhancement of a global partnership for development.

The campus's ADP blog (adp.iusb.edu/blog) has received more than four million hits. Moderated by English professor Ken Smith, also a Lundquist Award recipient, it has attracted postings and discussions ranging from "picture IDs as fraud prevention or voter suppression" and "to drone or not to drone," to "the dangers of for-profit colleges." It contains newspaper articles and complete videos of the recent South Bend and Mishawaka mayoral contests and Common Council candidates' discussions.



A worn clipping from 1982 with the caption "Elizabeth Bennion, 9, of New Britain looks solemn Thursday as she holds a sign supporting the failed Equal Rights Amendment." (Judy Griesedieck, Hartford Courant)

signed to educate and engage students and the community. Similarly, model European Union and model United Nations projects deepen students' understanding of comparative politics and international relations. "When the subject lends itself to experimentation," Bennion notes, "students will learn better and more deeply if

En route to a Sagamore

Alumna Cheryl Little transforms herself from housewife to politician and public servant. Interview by Jane Wang

Wang: How did you decide to come back to school at age twenty-eight? With two small children, it must have been tough.

Little: In 1974 my husband lost his eye in an accident at work and had to stay home. We weren't sure how long he would be out, or if he would ever be able to work again. That was really a wake-up call for me. I went back to work for the first time in eight years, and within the first year, I knew it was a priority to go back to school. I needed to be able to support my family and

“Heading back to school was the first step of my transformative process of reserved housewife to community activist. It just gave me the confidence, knowledge, and skills to go forward in life.”

the jobs I was working then weren't going to cut it. I went back to school part-time, worked, and looked after my two small children, but that's the beauty of this campus: it allowed me to maintain my family life and still pursue my education.

Eventually, my husband was able to go back to work but I stuck with

school. It took me a long time to complete my bachelor's degree. But you know, ultimately my education was transformative not just for me, but for my family as well. When I was in school my children used to beat me to the mailbox and check my grades for me. I think my going to school was really good for them because they would see that “Mom's sitting here at night with us studying, and if Mom's doing this, we should do this, too.” By the time I finally graduated, my daughter was in college.

Wang: And then you got into politics. How did that happen?

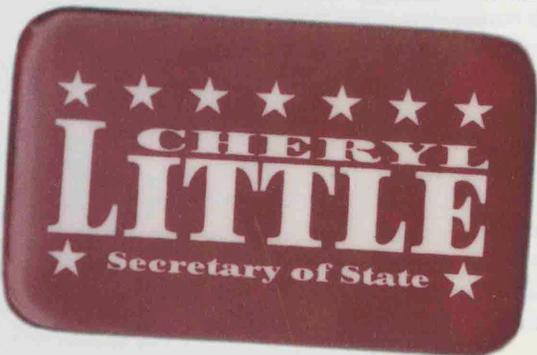
Little: As an undergraduate I majored in political science. When I was a young child my father instilled in me a love of politics. I did not pursue it seriously as an adult—women of my generation were not often encouraged to do that kind of thing. But I always kept up with politics. One Sunday morning in 1995 before the local primary election, I saw in the newspaper that no Democrat had filed to run for city council in my district. I thought, “I know the other party's candidate, and I don't want this person representing me!” I thought maybe it was time I got involved. Up to this



point, my main role in life had been as a homemaker, but this seemed urgent, something important I could do for my community.

Wang: Launching a political campaign for the first time sounds rather daunting. How did you go about this?

Little: I was so naïve at the time. No Democrat had filed to run in my district because it is a Republican stronghold. I worked really hard on this campaign. I started my door-to-door canvassing in the bitter cold of February—mind you, I couldn't wear gloves because you can't shake someone's hand that way—continued through the sweltering heat of summer, and covered almost every house in the district. I experienced all the highs and lows of door-knocking, from people inviting me in for tea to a man throwing my brochures in my face and telling me all Democrats are “lying, cheating scumbags.” It was a very close race, but on Election Day I knew I wasn't going to win. When I stood outside the polling booth shaking hands with voters, too many people couldn't look me in the eye. I lost by 110 votes. But you know, I learned so many things about myself and the world around me from this experience. The best word for it is “transformation.”



More Equity in Western Art

How do we get there?

Wang: Sounds like it was a transformation that opened up new pathways.

Little: Yes, so many things happened to me after I ran for city council. First, Governor Bayh asked me to join the Indiana Commission for Higher Education. I served on the commission for seven years and chaired for my last two years. I believe that my work was critical to the development of the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre degree and the Informatics program at IU South Bend. I also fought for student housing and the Student Activity Center on campus.

I also served as campaign manager for two other candidates in our state, one of whom was Congressman Roemer. This role really expanded my network of people, and as a result, Joe Andrews called in 1998 and asked if I would run for secretary of state. I thought he was joking and laughed, but when he told me the governor was in the office with him, I realized they were serious.

At first I didn't want to run. Indiana is largely a Republican state and I would be running against a female incumbent who already had \$1 million in her war chest, and lastly, the previous campaign had been hard on my marriage. But my husband and children completely supported me: "This is your passion, this is what you have wanted to do all your life." So, I accepted, and campaigned doggedly through all 92 counties of the state. I ended up losing the election, but I did win 23 counties, which was a large feat given my circumstances.

Wang: But the honors kept piling up . . .

Little: In 2000, I was selected to be a delegate to the Democratic National

Convention. In 2003, I won the IU South Bend Chancellor's Medal for service on the higher education commission. I was given the key to the city, I was honored by Ivy Tech, and I was named a "Sagamore of the Wabash" by Governor Frank O'Bannon.

Wang: How has the political experience informed your thoughts on gender?

Little: We still have a long way to go. A lot has changed since 1998 when I last ran for office, but I still remember being interviewed by a journalist in Indianapolis, who later wrote about me as "petite, even with stilettos." First of all, I don't wear stilettos; my heels that day were maybe two and a half inches tall. It just showed that we still pay too much attention to appearance, especially in our female candidates. There is a definite gender disparity in that sense.

Wang: And finally, you returned to IU South Bend for a Master of Liberal Studies degree.

Little: It would be such a shame to waste the minds of strong, smart women by expecting them to stay at home. In this regard, I think men have come a long way. I see younger couples

now where the men stay home or where the responsibilities are shared much more evenly. In a way, I always felt my husband was cheated. He was always at work to provide for the family and even though he loved his work, he missed out on so much in the children's lives. We have come a ways, but we still have so far to go.

More at Currents.IUSB.edu
What is a Sagamore of the Wabash, anyway? And what obstacles do women face running for political office?

On the campaign trail. (Courtesy of Cheryl Little)



Sailing all the way around the world

Four months and fifteen ports of call later, our global adventurer reports in. By Scott Sernau

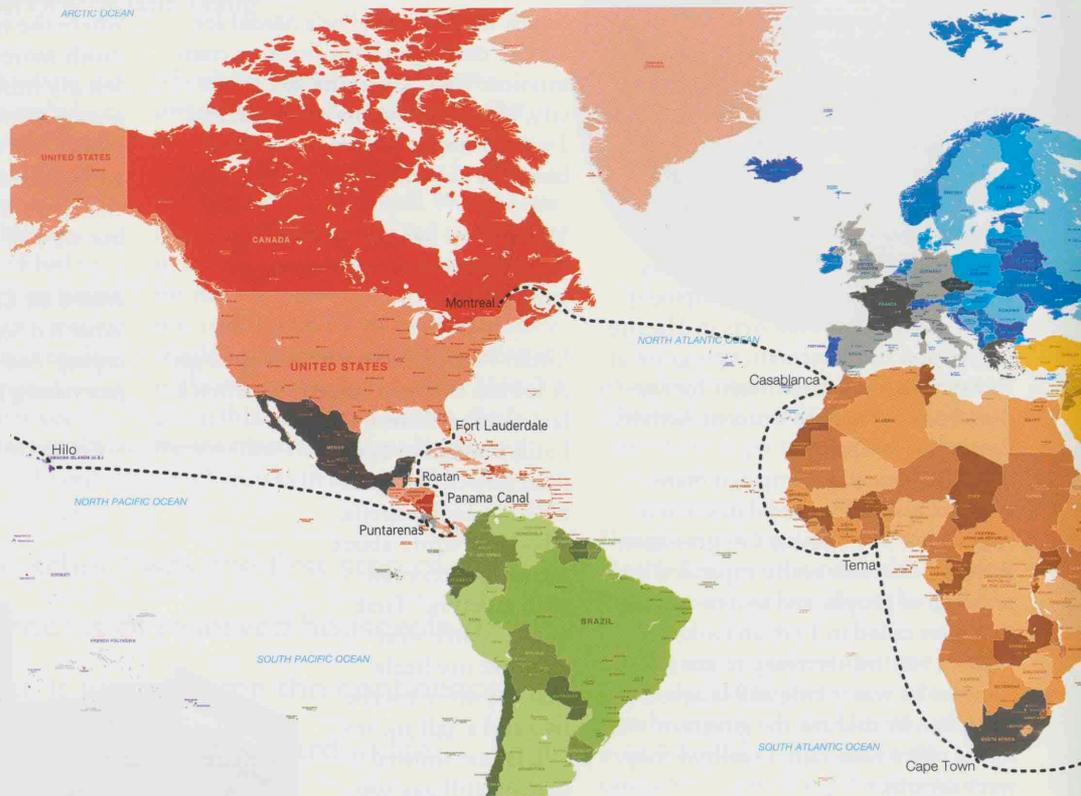
Last fall semester, for a daring change of pace, I taught my global studies course to 455 students, 60 lifelong learners, and other shipmates aboard the 590-foot-long *MV Explorer* as she circumnavigated the world. This Semester at Sea journey, academically sponsored by the University of Virginia, began in Montreal. From there we crossed the Atlantic to Morocco, Ghana, South Africa, and then Mauritius in the Indian Ocean, then onward to India, Malaysia, Vietnam, China, and Japan. The long Pacific crossing was punctuated by stops in Hawaii and western Costa Rica. After passing through the Panama Canal, we visited islands offshore from Honduras and concluded our 110-day exploration in Florida. For all on board—students, faculty, lifelong learners, and children—this was an amazing immersion into the complexity and diversity of a changing world.

It was also sometimes a bewildering onslaught to the senses, like too many snapshots going by too quickly. The oceans were immense, the landscapes both spare and lush, the port cities loud and gregarious, the monuments and temples inspiring, the poverty daunting, the markets thrumming with life, the humanity at once familiar and foreign. Our task from the beginning, and the real challenge, was to bring these snapshots into a coherent whole—to be travelers and

not tourists, to complete a voyage of discovery and not just to take a cruise. Days at sea we devoted to courses ranging from marine biology to international politics, cultural geography, anthropology, and cross-cultural psychology. For my own course, required of all students, I could draw on the expertise of faculty from around the world and interport guests, including the head of Oxfam India, the former chief financial officer of Honda, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. On our days in port we travelled to university campuses and carried out service work in schools and orphanages. We visited controversial factories (if you have followed the Apple/Foxconn controversies over working

conditions) and endangered natural environments, and took in fabulous cultural performances from Chinese acrobats to Japanese Bunraku theater to South African township music. The goal of the program is to build global citizens, but that's a tricky term in a world where people do not all share the same rights. I often preferred the term "globally informed citizenship."

I wanted my students to move beyond the excitement of leaving home to realize that they were exploring their *global* home—not just a global playground, but a home full of both wonder and responsibility. This is the real purpose of travel, and it is a worthy goal for study in the liberal arts and sciences.



Route of Scott Sernau's Semester at Sea journey. Countries that IU South Bend travel abroad programs have recently visited appear in green.



the Spanish language while learning about Mexican film and literature and tromping through the great archeological sites of pre-Colombian civilizations. To prepare for these experiences, they will study history, culture, society, and environmental science right here in South Bend.

Our goal for all our students, whether they carry a well-stamped passport or a brand-new one, or whether they are simply eager to understand the growing diversity and the global economy of Michiana, is to become globally informed citizens. No matter how much we may travel, we can no longer leave home, because the planet itself has become our global home—a place of joys and perils, hopes and needs, and of one very

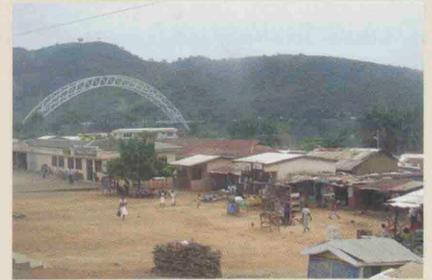
diverse extended human family. Sailing all the way around the world is a wonderful experience; at the end you arrive back where you started geographically, but not emotionally and intellectually. In the words of Missouri-born poet T. S. Eliot:

*We shall not cease from exploration,
and the end of all our exploring
will be to arrive where we started
and know the place for the first
time. ("Four Quartets")*

More at Currents.IUSB.edu
Check out the destinations of IU South Bend and statewide IU study abroad programs as well as Semester at Sea.

In some ways a semester at sea is quite unlike one on campus, but in many ways it was just an extension of all we seek to do here at IU South Bend. In the overseas study programs sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, this year our students will explore sustainable development and work on service projects in Costa Rica. Others will have their own marine biology opportunity at the great, and threatened, coral reef of the Americas off the coast of Belize. Our students will explore Paris and London and study how they became modern political and cultural capitals of a changing world. In beautiful colonial Oaxaca, in southern Mexico, students will immerse themselves in

Shore leave in western Africa



Ghana photographs by Scott Sernau.

For many, our visit to Ghana began with travel to the colonial castles of the coast with their slave dungeons. Our geographer talked about “dark tourism” and the challenges of visiting locations that commemorate but don’t celebrate grim aspects of a country’s past. Our architectural historian spoke movingly of his research in this area, including the disgraceful human realities that were hidden behind the graceful walls. Still nothing could prepare students fully for these dark, solemn chambers where grooves were worn into the floor by the pained shifting of humans in chains.

Modern Ghana remains a work in progress. New buildings soar while roads are choked with gridlock so thick a police escort is needed to move. Ghana is also reportedly one of the world’s most optimistic countries. Smiles are everywhere from children to adults as we travel to villages and consider hair braiding at the Many Miracles Hair Salon, or any of a number of other exuberantly-named businesses. In a conflict-choked region, we can only hope their optimism proves well founded.



The math you need to know

Amanda Serenevy sends math phobias packing. Interview by Jane Wang

Wang: How did you come to IU South Bend as an undergraduate?

Serenevy: After I graduated from high school, I spent a few years traveling. I worked many different jobs in different cities and I finally noticed one thing was always the same: I was always teaching things to people who were willing to listen. I rode my bike to Texas; it took me a month and three days to get there. I got a job working in a daycare and lived with some people who were taking night classes at a local college. I taught them calculus just for fun. They thought calculus was scary and I wanted to show them it wasn't so bad. Actually, they had been blocked from taking certain classes because they hadn't taken calculus. After I taught it to them, they ended up taking a calculus course. It wasn't just academic stuff—I remember teaching beginner piano to a kid, beginner Spanish lessons. I even taught a little kid how to juggle. Once I realized that I was always teaching somebody something, I decided to come back to school and find opportunities to teach formally.

I started school at IU South Bend thinking that I would eventually transfer to a bigger school, but I discovered I had an amazing educational opportunity right here. I was immediately given the opportunity to do research and I got involved in peer mentoring and tutoring. I got a research grant between my freshman and sophomore years and worked with professor Michael Kinyon on a really interesting project on dynamical systems. Actually, my Ph.D. work ended up being a more technical exploration of these systems. I, along with some peers, started the Omega Student Research Club, which today is referred to on campus as the Undergraduate Research Conference and Journal. Getting to work with and hear from professors from all areas of the university was

extremely valuable. These are the kinds of opportunities I wouldn't have had at another university.

These opportunities really rooted me here, so I ended up staying. I've found that IU South Bend professors are really excited about helping students reach deeper into their work. Even the professors I did not have in class were there to help me. They were always willing to collaborate with me on a project, even if it was outside of their field. You can get a world-class education here if you tap into your resources and opportunities.

Wang: What did you do after graduation?

Serenevy: My husband Dean and I moved to Boston, where I pursued my Ph.D. in mathematics, studying the gamma-theta rhythm that occurs in the brain when you are applying a memory to the present moment. The hippocampus, the small part of the brain that processes memory and new information, takes a rest beat eight times per second to switch between the functions of processing memory and processing new sensory input. So suppose you're knitting a scarf. As you do this, you're remembering what you know about knitting as well as responding to the yarn and needles right in front of you. We may think we're doing all of this at once, but the gamma-theta rhythm tells us that we're constantly switching between memory and the here and now.

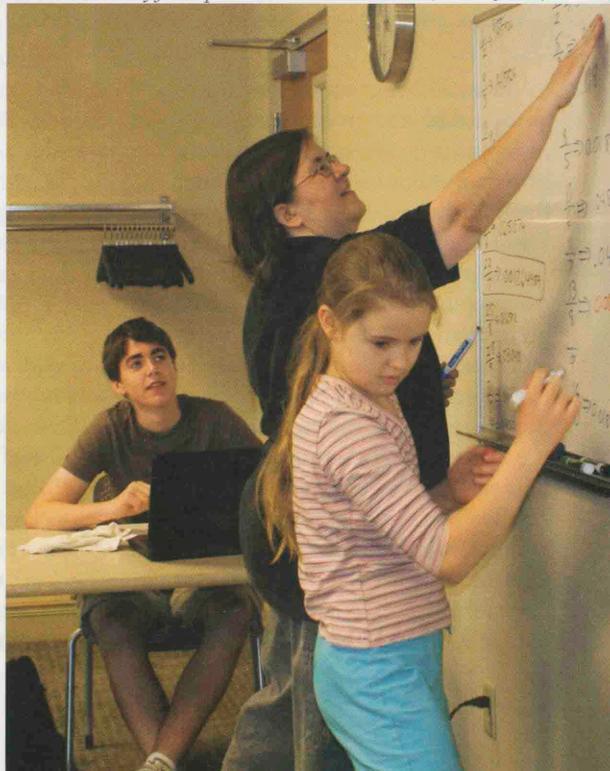
We did a lot of math outreach during that time. In 2006, Dean and I moved

back to South Bend and knew we wanted to continue the math outreach—it's very rewarding work. So that year, we launched the Riverbend Community Math Center.

Wang: Tell me more about the center and the work of math outreach.

Serenevy: Most people in our society are intimidated by basic math, such as fractions and word problems. I don't just mean that people dislike math—most people have a legitimate fear of math because of how they were taught it. It's the way math is traditionally taught, as a set of rules to memorize—you don't know why you have to do it and you never remember which rule to use. It makes people feel like they're missing something. They think they can't make sense of it, but really, what they've been taught can't possibly make sense. There's actually a reason for all these rules and a logic behind them. Once you understand what question

Amanda Serenevy fires up her Math Circle students. (David James)



Amanda Serenevy received the 2011 College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Distinguished Alumnus Award for her outstanding contributions to the Michiana community through math outreach work. She graduated from IU South Bend in 1999 with a B.A. in mathematics. In 2007 she completed a Ph.D. at Boston University with a dissertation on the dynamics of networks of inhibitory neurons in the hippocampus.

workshops at Ivy Tech for middle school math teachers. We teamed up with plumbers and fitters from Local 153 and developed a pipe building lesson plan for middle schoolers. We showed this to teachers in the summer workshop, then dur-

represent a wide range of abilities, from those struggling with their math homework to those bored by math homework and looking for cool, new ways to apply math to technology. Many of our students are learning to program Lego Mind Robots. Using math, they can write commands to make the robot do different things.

you're asking, you can use common sense and figure out which rule and how it applies. You learn to trust your own reasoning. If you've had a traumatizing math education, then it can be extremely hard to work with complicated numbers.

Wang: Yes, I can definitely relate to that! After high school, I never wanted to touch math again.

Serenevy: And many people feel that way. But suppose you want a job as a plumber, electrician, or carpenter. You have to understand fractions. You have to be able to create formulas to solve practical problems. The numbers can get complicated. That's why it is so important to close the gap in math education. We have to help teachers find better ways to teach these skills, ways that students can relate to. During the day, I visit classrooms to help teachers develop creative ways to teach math effectively.

Wang: How do you teach math so kids can relate to it?

Serenevy: For example, in the summers of 2009 and 2010, Riverbend offered professional development

ing the school year we helped them implement it in their classrooms. We brought the plumbers and pipe fitters to the classrooms with us, and the kids loved it! Students got to build pipes using real blueprints that the plumbers and pipefitters used. They had to work with fractions, decimals, and the Pythagorean theorem to do it. It gave students an appreciation for the concepts they were learning. It showed them that math is the kind of thing you need to know if you want to build something. Math requires stamina. You have to be willing to try and fail. And try and fail and try and fail again until you get it. That can be a very difficult thing to learn, but stamina is a major part of what it means to teach kids math. You also have to give them opportunities for some successes along the way so they have the confidence to keep trying, even if it might mean failing.

Wang: What other direct work do you do with students?

Serenevy: I spend the second half of my day at Riverbend's public Math and Technology Academy. It's a free program that offers both tutoring and math enrichment. Our students

Wang: I've heard you also run a Math Circle. What's that?

Serenevy: Generally speaking, Math Circles are about exposing kids to hands-on mathematical thinking. We start each session with a big, conceptual math question to generate a discussion everyone can participate in. People throw out different ideas, things to consider, and then we begin experimenting with the ideas.

Wang: What keeps you committed to this work?

Serenevy: It means a lot to teach students math in a social setting and show them how it can be applied practically. I see a lot of students make huge progress through our program. They're passing their ISTEPs, their grades are jumping. Students find they love math, even if it's a subject they continue to struggle with. They love it for the sheer joy of putting math into motion. Our goal is to show students that math is very relevant. Not tell them, but show them.

More at Currents.IUSB.edu

Where's the math? The Math Circle movement certainly speaks to kids—learn more!



Hurry! Hurry!

This way to the future in China!

Rob Ducoffe, dean of the School of Business and Economics, traveled to China to sign student exchange agreements with Tianjin Polytechnic University. Interview by Elizabeth E. Dunn

Dunn: How was your journey to the Tianjin campus?

Ducoffe: One thing that surprised me was how easy travel was into and out of China—quick, efficient, and friendly. They were happy to have us as visitors, and it was the same thing on the way out. We were in two cities. Tianjin, with

12 million people, is maybe two hours by car from Beijing. Beijing has 20 million people. We spent most of our time in those two cities, and the amount of development, the number of construction cranes, was really notable.

There was traffic but it didn't feel crowded—we didn't get stuck in traffic jams. Everybody observed the speed limit, maybe because there are cameras along the highways.

The campus was a lovely place and interesting as well. Tianjin Polytechnic University has 27,000 students. The impression I got was that they're in a rush to develop buildings. They're in a rush, too, to form relationships with anybody who can help them from anywhere in the world.

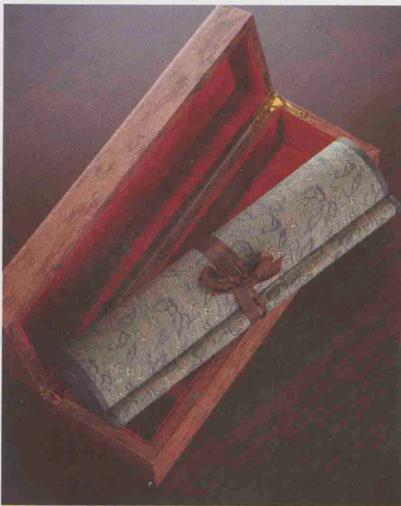
When we were walking around on campus we encountered these large posters of P. N. Saksena, Asghar Sabbaghi, and me that they had blown up from our pictures from our IUSB website, and they had a banner outside of the business school to welcome us as visitors from Indiana University

South Bend. So people knew we were on campus.

Dunn: What did you think when you saw that?

Ducoffe: I felt like there was much ado about something that didn't seem like it warranted that much attention. But everywhere we went there were photographers, so they evidently considered our visit very important. They're trying to internationalize their university and their curriculum, and they make you feel that way, so the campus was great.

Dunn: I think a lot about our recently deceased friend, Dean of Health Sciences Mary Jo Regan-Kubinski, and a philosophy that she expressed to me when I first arrived here. She said, "I don't train nurses, I educate them." After I got to know you, I realized that you endorse that model for business students as well. What approach to learning did you find at Tianjin Polytechnic?



Ducoffe: Students that I met are very curious, and they want to build the best possible lives for themselves and their country. They feel that they can learn from us and that's what they want to do. They are open to learning, and that is certainly a prerequisite to becoming an educated person. It suggests that they are at once humble, because they feel that we can teach them something, but at the same time they're confident in their ability to learn and to master the knowledge that they are seeking.

I'm under no illusions that they're not aware of the distinctions between what they do in China and what we do here, but I don't think they want to duplicate what we're trying to do. They're looking to learn as best they can and to build their society the way that they feel it should be built. In that sense, I think that they're looking to educate themselves, not merely to acquire training, so you know they're smart, hard-working people.

In various places in the business



school and in other buildings of the university they established spaces where students could take the concepts that they learned in class and become more familiar with how they would actually be applied. So, for example, one room was set up to resemble a warehouse, and inventory would move within it so that students could look at how those concepts and processes actually play out. There was clearly an interest not just in the theoretical learning, then, but in application.

I was impressed by what they were trying to do and the effort behind it. I believe there's much we can learn from them as well. Our first Tianjin Polytechnic students should begin to arrive this summer so hopefully that will occur.

More at Currents.IUSB.edu

Take a close-up look at the entire scroll given by Tianjin Polytechnic to our campus and learn more about international programs at IU South Bend.

On their visit to South Bend, Tianjin Polytechnic officials presented Dean Ducoffe with a beautiful illustrated scroll eighteen feet long. (Peter Ringenberg)



CrossCurrents

the unity and diversity of knowledge



The red tree in autumn

Andrew Schnabel

Fraxinus americana (Anne Brown)

Today it was just a dry leaf that told me I should live for love.

—Opening words of “Today a Leaf” by Gerald Stern

A mathematician’s eye

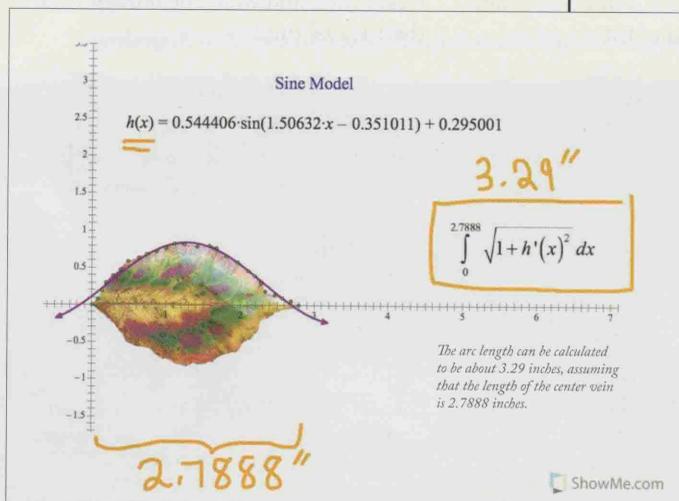
Anne Brown

My mathematical eye influences my photographic composition, seeking structure, balance, and shape. It is entirely intuitive, and not the result of any formal training or even conscious intent. In 2007, two co-workers, marveling at the variegated colors of the leaves in front of Wiekamp Hall, collected a few examples. I arranged them on a table and took several shots with my ever-present compact camera. Next, as is my habit, I used image editing software, replacing the table with black fill and cropping to focus on the most interesting elements. I’m a long-time photographer, but it is only with the advent of digital cameras and editing software that I have become happy with my images. At last I can tweak them into more like what I thought I saw. Mathematicians often talk about the beauty they see in the subject, and we all try to communicate the exquisiteness of mathematics in our teaching. There are many ways to do this. Visual representations of mathematical ideas that take advantage of the aesthetic (appreciation of color, shape, composition, etc.) can improve understanding, so I combine mathematical and image editing software to produce images that enhance classroom learning.

More at Currents.IUSB.edu

See Anne Brown’s video turning the outer curve of a White Ash leaf into three kinds of mathematics.

Why do the leaves of temperate deciduous trees display yellow, orange, and red colors in autumn? Leaves are normally green, because they contain chlorophyll, the most important light-capturing pigment of photosynthesis. Photosynthesis is the process whereby plants capture the sun’s energy to power their growth and reproduction. As a tree prepares for winter, it breaks down its chlorophyll and other components of the photosynthetic apparatus in its leaves in order to capture mineral nutrients for re-use the following spring. This process exposes yellow and orange carotenoids, which serve as accessory light-capturing pigments during the summer. During this process, some species also synthesize red anthocyanin pigments. Evidence suggests that all these pigments protect the biochemical machinery of leaf cells from light damage so that nutrient recovery can be completed efficiently before winter.



This issue is dedicated to Eileen Bender, our Distinguished Hoosier, whose fierce and fearless journey inspired us all. Challenging us to join her in pulling back the curtains that constrain, she cheered us on as we ventured out on the tightrope trajectory of learning, reaching heights which, alone, we would never have dared.

Eileen Bender was a gifted teacher, accomplished scholar, and distinguished administrator, but her best gift to the campus and IU likely was her vision for and leadership of the Faculty Colloquium for Excellence in Teaching, which continues to inspire new generations of IU faculty as teachers.

Contributors

Nancy Botkin's most recent book, *Bent Elbow and Distance*, was published by Finishing Line Press. She is currently working on poems as well as acrylic paintings and collage art.

Anne Brown is a mathematician interested in how people learn mathematics. She enjoys digital photography and the use of visual methods in teaching her courses.

Joseph Chaney writes commentaries for Michiana's National Public Radio affiliate, WVPE. Having retired from backyard football at the age of twelve, he now teaches literature and directs the Master of Liberal Studies program.

Elizabeth E. Dunn is a historian of early America interested in Benjamin Franklin, the origins of paper money, and what makes a university tick. She is dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Jenna Gensic is a freelance writer, editor, and March of Dimes advocate when she isn't catering to the needs of her young kids. She appreciates the potency of the personal essay, teaching literacy to her children, and dinners with plenty of leftovers.

Susan Carol Hauser writes poetry and natural history in northern Minnesota. Her granddaughter lives nearby and they frequently get in trouble for playing outside the box.

Katie Hoffman is an artist living in Denver, Colorado, whose primary focus is oil painting.

Neovi Karakatsanis is a political scientist who studies the quality of democracy in southern Europe. She

will be spending the 2012-13 academic year at home in Greece.

Alan Larkin makes art about people and what unbeknownst to them makes them do the crazy things they do. He also teaches courses in printmaking.

Sara J. Lowe will soon receive her master's degree in Liberal Studies. After eight years of studying civil rights history as a way of understanding society, she plans to build upon this foundation in service to her community.

Gail M. McGuire is a sociologist who studies and teaches about gender and race inequality. Her research focuses on how informal networks make inequality possible in workplace organizations.

Douglas McMillen is a chemist by training, teacher at heart, and administrator in service to the university. He is currently the interim dean of the College of Health Sciences.

Clayton T. Michaels is, but he tries not to think too hard about it.

Jonathan Nashel teaches courses on 20th century American history, the Cold War, and American film. He is currently writing about the various ways Americans have come to think (and worry and fantasize) about the CIA since its founding in 1947.

Kelcey Parker is an English professor and fiction writer, which means she makes things up for a living.

Andrew Schnabel is an evolutionary biologist and chair of the Department of Biological Sciences.

Scott Sernau is a sociologist who studies globalization and international development. He directs the Office of International Programs.

David Sipress is a staff artist for *The New Yorker* magazine.

Hannah Stowe is a student who enjoys writing and is inspired by 18th- and early 19th-century women authors who wrote even when they were not supposed to, about things they were not supposed to mention.

Rebecca Torstrick is a cultural anthropologist who explores identity politics and community building in the Middle East and at home. She is associate dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Tom Vander Ven taught American literature and creative writing in the English Department from 1967 to 2001, and writes creative non-fiction and essays. He and his wife Cyndi travel a lot in Europe, lived last year in Costa Rica, and welcome donations to their travel fund.

Jane L. Wang is assistant to the associate deans of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Formerly a youth organizer in Rhode Island, she has welcomed new opportunities in South Bend, from playing roller derby to planting a backyard garden.

Linda Wingrove, lifelong Midwesterner, lives in South Bend and is doing research for her next book, on the legal and illegal medical marijuana trade here in the Midwest.



We welcome you to any of dozens of free and fascinating public events sponsored by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences during the upcoming year. Here's just a sample.

Philosophy Day
Rain Barrel Auction
Marge Piercy: Kaufman Memorial Lecture
on Women's and Gender Studies
Chemistry is for Everyone
English Department Literary Event
and Awards Ceremony

Trailblazers at the Natatorium
Michiana Monologues and Silent Auction
Constitution Day
Honors Night
Workshop in Sustainability and Innovation:
The Natural Step to Prosperity
Annual New Orleans Crawfish Boil

Check clas.iusb.edu often for new listings.