THE BLAIR REVIEW

THE SIXTIES

Winter 2013
This *Blair Review* is dedicated to
Chan and Monie Hardwick,
whose vision and leadership from 1989-2013
shaped Blair Academy into the fine school it is today.
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Editor’s Note

Following up on the era-based theme of the 2011 Blair Review: Men of WWII, the focus of this Winter 2013 edition is the much-discussed years of the 1960s. Current Blair students invariably view this period as a one dimensional, hedonistic explosion of “sex, drugs and rock and roll.” Well, there is some truth to this simplistic notion, though faculty and alumni Review contributors conjure up a far more complex picture of a tumultuous era. Not surprisingly, Blair community members write about a bewildering array of personal interests, goals and lifestyles; their varied experiences flesh out the 1960s in an instructive manner. They served the nation honorably in military service, challenged this civic duty by protesting the Vietnam War, led alternate lifestyles, and pursued perfectly traditional paths studying diligently at Blair and at the university beyond. Professional careers were built amidst a society torn apart by racial strife, Cold War tensions and an increasingly unpopular war in Asia. Some were insulated from the storms of the 60s; others were buffeted about, willing or unwilling players in this grand drama.

The men of WWII are correctly lauded as the Greatest Generation; while the Baby Boomers of the 60s are often disparaged as narcissistic, entitled whiners, not up to the Depression and military challenges faced by their forbears. How much truth to this assertion? The articles in this issue may have something to say about this. Contributors include: former and current faculty members/spouses Rita Baragona, Peter Hahn, Jim Mell, Elliott Trommald, Peter Amerman, Martin Miller, Micheline Miller and Judith Kahan Kampmann; and alumni David Carrad, dick boak ’68, Jim Bullock’61, Bob Textor’40, Mark Gottesman’62 and Mike Haberman’41.

MARTIN MILLER
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David Clayton Carrad spent three years (1955-58) with the Class of 1961 at Blair. He graduated from Trinity College (Connecticut) in 1965 and the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in 1966. He served in the United States Army in 1966-69, including a year in Vietnam in 1968-69 as a company commander and ARVN (South Vietnamese Army) adviser. He then attended Harvard Law School in 1969-72 and has been an attorney and stock exchange official ever since.

“One of the fundamental truths of the war experience is that the memories of one person will be completely different from others, even those closely involved in the same operations or incidents. One person I interviewed said, ‘I was shocked to see what a difference being just a few feet away could make.’ A bomb blast can singe one person’s eyebrows while dismembering someone just a few feet away. Cannon fire can miss the people being aimed at whilst steel splinters from the ricochets kill and mutilate others close by. And, in any case, people are different and are affected very differently by their experiences. It is the sum total of these very different personal experiences that constitute the reality of military operations, not the regimental histories, medal citations or senior commanders’ memoirs.”

Hugh McManners

Forgotten Voices of the Falklands
Vietnam

Arrival

June 3, 1968. Instead of the usual long, smooth glide down to the runway, our plane flew at 10,000 feet until it was directly over Tan Son Nhut airbase in Saigon, then banked sharply over on its right side. Our stomachs felt the pull of the tight bank and we looked straight down at the ground over the right wing. The plane came down in a controlled spiral to avoid being shot at by the Viet Cong lurking in the jungle at the end of the runway. All 105 of us, fresh from the U.S. and new to the war, stared nervously down at the terrain below: muddy rivers, bright green ricefields, red-roofed huts, palm trees and thick foliage along the riverbank.

Close to the ground, the plane suddenly leveled out and bumped down on the runway. It taxied quickly over to the hangar. (They had warned us on the PA system that the plane would only be on the ground for a few minutes. One had been mortared on arrival last week so we were to deplane as rapidly as possible and get away from the aircraft so it could fill with soldiers finishing their year in Vietnam, turn around and take off without waiting to refuel).

As I walked through the open doorway, I was hit with suffocating blast of humid tropical heat like a hot soaking towel thrown over my face. There was a stench in the air, a combination of jet fuel, human excrement, rotting garbage and something I later came to know as death. Down the stairs we went, half running and half walking toward a shouting sergeant at the entrance to a tin roofed hangar.

I was one of the last soldiers off the plane. To my right was a line of gaunt troops dressed in jungle fatigues who broke into something between a shout and a howl when we cleared the plane. They broke ranks and came running toward the stairs, their war over, on their way home. There was reddish brown dust on their uniforms and in the creases of their faces. They looked like wolves.

A week later, I was the commanding officer (a lieutenant doing a captain’s job) of a Signal Corps radio site on top of a mountain, halfway between Saigon and the Cambodian border, responsible for the lives of 150 men and keeping a critical military communications link open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

I was, God help me, only 24 years old and had been in the Army less than two years.

Beginning

From the January 7, 2012, Republican presidential primary debate:

Representative Ron Paul: “I think people who don’t serve when they could and they get three or four or
even five deferments during the Vietnam War aren’t – they – they have no right to send our kids off to war...I’m trying to stop the wars, but at least, you know, I went when they called me up. I don’t like it when we send our kids off to fight these wars and when those individuals who send them didn’t go to Vietnam themselves, and then come up and when they’re asked they say, ‘Oh, I don’t think one person could have made a difference.’ I have a pet peeve that annoys me to a great deal because when I see these young men coming back, my heart weeps for them.”

Moderator: “Speaker Gingrich?”

Speaker Newt Gingrich: “The fact is I never asked for a deferment, I was married with a child, it was never a question. My father was in fact serving in Vietnam in the Mekong Delta at the time he’s referring to. I think I have a pretty good idea of what it’s like as a family to worry about your family getting killed. And I personally resent the kind of comments and aspersions he routinely makes without accurate information.”

Paul: “I need one quick follow up. When I was drafted, I was married and had two kids. And I went.”

[APPLAUSE]

Gingrich: “I wasn’t eligible for the draft, I wasn’t eligible for the draft!”

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Why—almost 50 years after Vietnam—are Americans still arguing and attacking each other over who did their duty and went to war, who dodged the draft, who was brave and who ran away in the 1960s? The preceding excerpt is revealing—America is confronting a completely different set of more important problems in 2012 than who was a draft dodger and who was a soldier, and yet the men of my generation cannot seem to get beyond the anger and resentment over who did what during Vietnam. And the quote above is not an isolated incident—remember the 2004 election with the endless debate over John Kerry’s wartime service and later antiwar activism and George Bush’s Air National Guard service? Is that what the Presidential elections of 2004 and 2012 should really be about? Don’t we have other, more pressing contemporary problems to consider in our elections?

I finished graduate school in June 1966, at the time America was drafting the highest number of men since World War II. The draft – also known as conscription or compulsory military service – was an accepted fixture in American life from 1940 to 1975 when it was replaced by today’s volunteer military.

During the Vietnam Era (1960 to 1975), 26.8 million men were liable for the draft. Only 3 million of them went to Vietnam—in other words, about 90% never went. In a random pool of 100 draft-eligible men from that era:

- 59 did not serve at all for a variety of reasons, leaving 41;
- Of the 41 who did serve, 30
served elsewhere (Korea, Germany or in the U.S.) and did not go to Vietnam;

• Of the 11 who did go to Vietnam, only 1 served in the infantry or comparably dangerous components of the armed forces. (My experience was typical of the 10 people who did not see daily combat—and you should be very suspicious of anyone who claims to have been Rambo or in constant battle, as there are really not very many of them).

The draft was an awful system; confusing, arbitrary and unfair. Neighbors of the same age were conscripted into the Army—or excused from service—in a random and capricious fashion. You could be excused from service on a bewildering variety of grounds: If you were underweight. If you wet your bed. If you had flat feet, asthma, acne on the back (a law school classmate of mine had this one) or were gay. If you had psychiatric problems. Were a college student. Graduate school also provided deferments for a while, until the manpower needs of the Army grew too large and only ministry students qualified, a policy which immediately swamped divinity schools with a wave of applicants. I have friends whose entire lives were warped out of shape by choices they made to avoid the draft—an East Coast Harvard graduate who ended up in Iowa because it was the only place he could find a draft-deferred teaching job in the 1960s and a college classmate who has spent his entire career in health care administration because he spun out a draft deferment for working in that field for seven years and then found it was too late to go into any other line of work. A minor specialist publishing industry grew up sell-
ing handbooks which told you how to apply for conscientious objector status, printed form letters for your family doctor to copy in describing disqualifying ailments, real or imaginary, in terms the bureaucracy of your draft board would accept, and generally how to appeal and sue and game the system in the hope that the war would be over by the time your applications for an exemption had run out. The books sold as fast as they could be printed and many of us spent hours poring over their fine print more intensely than anything we had ever studied in school and weighing our options.

I struggled with the decision myself. I heard the constant siren song of my beautiful girlfriend who hated the war and the Army and who begged me, very seductively, to find some way to stay home with her. There was a rumor of a draft-deferred civilian job with the federal government, but it didn’t pan out. A college classmate was in the National Guard (which was never called to active service in Vietnam) and thought there might be a vacancy in his unit, but it turned out to be just a rumor. I had an easy, foolproof escape available to me: Although I had been born in America and spent almost all my life here, my father was English and I have had dual U.K./U.S. citizenship since birth. On any day in 1966 I could have gotten on a plane to England with my U.K. passport at any time and surrendered my U.S. citizenship at the U.S. Embassy in London and that would have been the end of my draft problem. But I wasn’t prepared to renounce my country and give up the possibility of ever returning to America.

The random lottery wheel spun and my number came up. When life hands you a lemon, you make lemonade, or so I had been taught, and I thank God that at 22 I had enough sense to listen to that advice. I resigned myself to the fact that I had to serve, packed my bag and, in September 1966, reported for induction into the Army. I signed up for Officer Candidate School (OCS), where in six months they turned me into a lieutenant.

Vietnam

I was assigned to command a radio site on Nui Phu Tho Hoa. It was nowhere near as difficult as being in the infantry, dropped by helicopter out in the countryside, hunting down Viet Cong and NVA troops and trying to kill them in firefights every day. Only 10% of the troops in Vietnam had this kind of job. My company stayed put in one place, keeping the radios working. We had wooden barracks to sleep in instead of tents, hot chow instead of K rations, hot water for showers and fairly regular mail and supply drops. We owned the top of the mountain and surrounded our site with barbed wire. Occasionally, the VC would pass through our area.
and occupy the lower slopes of the mountain for a few weeks. At night, the ground would shake from the B-52 bombing runs near the Cambodian border and we would look out and watch the distant flashes of light that came with the explosions. We would receive sporadic mortar fire or 122 mm rocket attacks and they would probe our defensive positions at night, but fortunately we never suffered a full-scale assault. Our site was one of about 20 in Vietnam. The next mountaintop site in the radio network about 20 miles northwest of us was on Nui Ba Den mountain, near Tay Ninh, and it had been overrun three weeks before I arrived in Vietnam with 22 U.S. casualties, including Tom Teague, an OCS classmate of mine.

Even though we were not an infantry unit out running patrols, the biggest disadvantage we had was that we were in a very visible fixed location, which made an easy target for the mortars and rockets. The radio relay antennas were huge, steel frames shaped like curved billboards about the size of the side of Timken Library. For technical reasons, all our operators and equipment had to be within 50 feet of the antennas to connect the radios to them and the entire base was in an area smaller than a football field, scraped clean of all vegetation on the mountaintop, which combined to make us a compact and very visible target, unable to camouflage ourselves. I had very little to do with what went on inside the radio huts. I had technical sergeants with years of experience to keep the radios on the air. My job was to keep the site secure and on the air and the soldiers under my command safe.

The site had been constructed a few years before I arrived and it was surrounded by several concentric rings of barbed wire. We had five guardposts at the corners of the site, which were manned day and night. The greatest temptation was to stay huddled inside the wire, hoping no attacks would come, for the next 364 days until my tour ended and I could go home. But as we had learned in OCS, this was an invitation to disaster. The best defense for sites like ours required periodic day and night patrols outside the barbed wire to sweep keep the area surrounding our site clean of VC.

When you are an officer, you don’t ask your men to do anything you wouldn’t do yourself or you will rapidly lose their confidence and your ability to lead them will be destroyed. I didn’t go out on every patrol, but I had to go out on enough of them to keep unit morale up and I had to make up patrol rosters for all of them. Making up a roster sounds like a simple task. In civilian life, it is, and the consequences of getting it wrong are not a matter of life and death the way they are in the Army. I would sit down with my First Sergeant (a crusty veteran who
had over 20 years of experience in the Army to my two and was on his second tour of duty in Vietnam) and some junior NCOs (sergeants) who would serve as squad leaders. We would review what we knew about recent enemy activity. The intelligence briefings we got from Saigon were a joke, but the inhabitants of the village at the foot of the mountain were very good to us. We had helped build a school in the village, pulled some strings to get them rice and supplies and cleaned up some of their wells. In return, they would sometimes pull me aside when I was in the village. “VC come tonight,” they would whisper quietly, looking over their shoulders to see who was looking, and they were never wrong.

Planning a patrol. Ammunition supplies and distribution. Flares. Communication frequencies for the little radios we carried with us for calling in artillery fire and air support. Passwords. Where to set up our Claymore (above-ground) mines. All the technical things that go into making up a patrol and then came the hard part.

I wanted experienced soldiers out on the patrols because they knew what they were doing. But we had to include a certain percentage of new troops to train them. (Everyone in Vietnam was there for 365 days so we were constantly losing our most experienced troops and having to train new, inexperienced ones). We had an unwritten rule that no one within 30 days of going home could be sent out on patrol lest their luck run out. (Soldiers in Vietnam were incredibly superstitions about being killed or wounded in their last 30 days and we honored that). One
soldier with a young wife and child had just gotten a “Dear John” letter and was in no condition to focus. We left him off the roster and asked one of the junior sergeants to stay behind and try to counsel him and get him back to being fit for duty. A few soldiers were genuinely sick and in no condition to go out on patrol. Several others were malingerers and hypochondriacs, and I had to learn how to tell the difference between them and the truly sick without accusing anyone of being a liar. Two soldiers hated each other’s guts for reasons no one could ever figure out so could never be sent on patrol together. I wanted one soldier as my RTO (radio operator) but the First Sergeant reminded me that he had been on patrol three times running and I could not in good conscience ask him again tonight. We sorted out those who had just pulled double shifts in the communications center so they could catch up on their sleep. I listened to my sergeants’ advice and many times they saved me from mistakes—I shudder to think what would have happened without their advice—but the final responsibility was mine. All I had to do was do this right, without any fatal mistakes, about once a week for a whole year, knowing that the consequences of making a bad decision could be the death of one of my soldiers or my own. So, no pressure.

By some miracle, it all worked. We had a few firefightsvvery few— and a few of my people were slightly wounded, but no one under my command was killed. We killed three enemy soldiers during my year. I had, in the end, what was a very average year there. Others had it easier than I did, but many more had it worse.

Composing and sometimes leading the patrols were the most difficult and serious things I did that year, but I had a hundred other duties to perform to keep the site operational and my men safe. Somehow, with the help of my sergeants and the fine soldiers in my unit, we all made it through and kept things running. No one of the 150 men on the site, except for a very few career soldiers, wanted to be in Vietnam. No one had volunteered for this duty. Yet everyone buckled down and did his job, honorably and diligently, and I am incredibly glad to have had the opportunity to have served with them.

After

“And one of the most painful chapters in our history was Vietnam—most particularly, how we treated our troops who served there. You were often blamed for a war you didn’t start, when you should have been commended for serving your country with valor. (Applause.) You were sometimes blamed for misdeeds of a few, when the honorable service of the many should have been praised. You came home and sometimes were denigrated, when you should have been celebrated. It was a
national shame, a disgrace that should have never happened. And that’s why here today we resolve that it will not happen again. (Applause.)”

President Barack H. Obama, speaking at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall, Memorial Day, 2012.

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May 27, 1969. I waited in line at Tan Son Nhut airport—the other line I had seen a year ago, the one with the veterans on their way home—and was overjoyed to see the jet spiraling down in the sunlight over the end of the runway. I confess to cheering when the new troops taking our place came down the ramp, emptying our plane so we could clamber aboard and go home.

I came home and was discharged. I came very, very close to staying in the Army and making a career out of it, and sometimes wish I had. No one wants a war or enjoys being in one, but I had found out that this was something I could do reasonably well and which I had come to feel was important and valuable. A few of my sergeants had encouraged me to stay in. But I had an acceptance letter from Harvard Law School in my pocket and felt that that was too good an opportunity to turn down. What I expected was that I would take off my uniform, let my hair grow back out, resume being a student and, in general, just pick up the strands of my life where I had left them three years earlier. I had lost a lot of weight and gotten down to 125 pounds from the endless heat, bad food and some common tropical diseases, but recovered from that within a few months. I had trouble sleeping...
for a week or two after I got back because I had no weapon within easy reach and I knew there was no barbed wire around my house and no manned guardposts to keep me safe, but those feelings soon passed and have never returned. I didn't particularly want a parade or anything other than to blend quietly back into civilian society as I had seen the World War II veterans of my parents’ generation do.

This was not going to happen in the 1960s and 1970s. Three months after I came back, in September 1969, I walked into an antiwar demonstration in Harvard Square. Some students were waving blue flags with white doves carrying olive branches (the symbol adopted by the peace movement). But several angry students were waving red, blue and yellow Viet Cong (also known as the National Liberation Front or “NLF”) flags and chanting, “Ho! Ho! Ho Chi Minh!/The NLF is going to win!”

I was stunned. I had never done anything dishonorable in Vietnam and never seen any of my men do anything that we would not be glad to see published on the front page of The New York Times. I was still writing to friends I had left behind in Phu Tho Hoa who were being shot at by the Viet Cong. How was I supposed to react to a crowd of American students waving a VC flag and cheering for their victory? You would have to imagine large demonstrations on American campuses and streets filled with students cheering for an Al Qaeda victory today to understand how it felt. I was completely outnumbered and had no choice but to quietly walk away, seething with anger but unable to express it in the midst of the demonstration. I have spent the nearly 50 years since then trying to understand the demonstrators’ anger at their own country and those of us who served there. I have read every book I could get my hands on about the war in an effort to understand why it has been so divisive even down to the present day.

Vietnam veterans were—and still are, in some quarters—regarded as suckers who went off to fight a war they could have avoided, or psychotic war criminals, or a combination of both. B.J. Burkett’s wonderful book, Stolen Valor, explores this phenomenon in several hundred pages in more detail than I have room for here. It is a mystery why American veterans of our war should be held in such scorn when we were no different from the American soldiers who fought in World War II or those who fight today in Afghanistan and Iraq. We come from the same families, have the same values, live the same lives as those who are honored for their service in the armies that preceded us and followed us.

I experienced some of this discrimination in my own life. For
many years, I never identified myself as a Vietnam veteran except when pressed to explain the three-year gap in my resume. I was hissed and booed on a few occasions at law school along with the few other veterans in my class for our insistence that the school remain open and classes be taught when others wanted to close it down to protest the war. I had one corporate client tell me he was concerned that one of his employees might fly off the handle “because he’s a Vietnam veteran and you know how crazy those guys are.” (I am ashamed to admit that I handled this very poorly by slamming down the phone on him because I was too choked up to form a better response). And on several occasions when it has come up in conversation that I served in Vietnam with people whom I had known for a long time, their instinctive response has been, “But you seem so normal!” I still haven’t figured out a good response to that statement. Others have suffered far worse discrimination than I have—having a Harvard law degree helps keep you from suffering too much—but to this day, there is an enmity and a lot of bitter, hard feelings between those who went and those who did not. You can’t discuss the 1960s without recognizing and exploring the huge gulf between the veterans and the protestors and the myths that have grown up around Vietnam service:

**Myth:** Soldiers in Vietnam smoked pot and shot up with heroin to dull the horrors of combat.

**Reality:** In 1967, the drug use rate of .25 per 1,000 troops in Vietnam was lower than the Army-wide rate of .30 per 1,000 troops. Except for the last couple of years of the war, drug usage among American troops in Vietnam was lower than for American troops stationed anywhere else in the world, including the United States. Even when drug use started to rise in 1971 and 1972, almost 90 percent of the men who had ever served in Vietnam had already come and gone. America had virtually thrown in the towel; idleness and the declining troop morale led to escalating drug use that reached crisis proportions. A study after the war by the Veteran’s Administration (VA) showed drug usage of veterans and non-veterans of the Vietnam age group was about the same. Another study, the “Vietnam-Era Research Project,” concluded that drug use was more common among non-veterans than Vietnam-era veterans.

**Myth:** American soldiers deserted rather than fight the “immoral” war.

**Reality:** In World War II, the Army’s overall desertion rate was 55 percent higher than during Vietnam. Of those troops who deserted during the Vietnam era, only five percent did so while attached to units in Vietnam. Only 24 deserters attributed their action
to the desire to “avoid hazardous duty.” Of AWOLs, only 10 percent were related to opposition to the war. About 3,000 Americans fled to Canada to avoid the draft, but about 30,000 Canadians voluntarily enlisted in the U.S. Army during Vietnam.

**Myth:** Vietnam vets have high rates of incarceration.

**Reality:** In every major study of Vietnam veterans where the military records were pulled from the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis and the veterans then located for interviews, an insignificant number have been found in prisons.

**Myth:** Substantial numbers of Vietnam veterans are unemployed.

**Reality:** Vietnam veterans are no more likely to be unemployed than men who did not serve in Vietnam and, in fact, have a lower unemployment rate than those who didn’t serve. Figures from 1994 showed that the unemployment rate for U.S. males 18 and older was 6 percent. The unemployment rate for all male veterans was 4.9 percent. Among Vietnam-era veterans who served outside the Vietnam theater, it was 5 percent. For Vietnam veterans, the rate went down to 3.9 percent.

In every category for which there are statistics, Vietnam veterans were as successful or more successful than men their age who did not go to Vietnam. A *Washington Post*/ABC News survey released in April 1985 on the tenth anniversary of the fall of Saigon reinforced the findings of the earlier Harris study.
The Post/ABC survey randomly polled 811 veterans who served in Vietnam and Southeast Asia and 438 Vietnam-era veterans who served elsewhere. The poll revealed that only nine percent of Vietnam veterans had never graduated from high school, compared to 23 percent of their peers. A Vietnam veteran was more likely to have gone to college than a man of his age not in the service; nearly 30 percent of Vietnam vets had some college education, versus 24 percent of the U.S. population. That educational edge translated to employment rates similar to non-veterans of the war. Seventy-eight percent were homeowners, paying mortgages on traditional, single-family homes—and more likely to own a home than their peers who did not go to Vietnam. Eight of every 10 surveyed were married and 90 percent had children. Strikingly, the Washington Post survey indicated that, despite the negative attitudes of the public, Vietnam veterans had positive feelings about their experience:

• Seventy-four percent said they “enjoyed their time in service.”
• Eighty percent disagreed with the statement “the United States took unfair advantage of me.”
• Fifty-six percent of Vietnam veterans said they benefited in the long run by going to Vietnam. Only 29 percent said they were set back.
• Ninety-one percent of those who served in Vietnam were “glad they served their country.”

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At the very end of Ken Burns’ wonderful documentary on the Civil War, there is a series of scratchy black and white films and photographs of old men, soldiers from both sides, in their 60s and 70s, some still bearing serious wounds, including a man with one arm. The narration:

“In 1913, the government held a 50th anniversary reunion of the Battle of Gettysburg. It lasted three days. Thousands of survivors bivouacked on the old battlefield, swapping stories, looking up old comrades. The climax was to be a reenactment of Pickett’s Charge. As the rebel yell rang out and the old Confederates started forward again across the field, a gigantic gasp of disbelief, rose from the Union men on Cemetery Ridge. ‘It was then,’ one onlooker said, ‘that the Yankees, unable to restrain themselves longer, burst from behind the stone walls and flung themselves upon their former enemies, not in mortal combat, but embracing them in brotherly love and affection.’

Hearing this while watching the actual film and hearing the mournful musical background in Ken Burns’ original documentary is even more moving than just reading these words in print. I have come to doubt that 50 years after Viet-
Vietnam

There will ever be anything like this reconciliation between the two parts into which my generation was divided by that war. It may be that the Civil War veterans on both sides had been soldiers. Each of them knew what military service was like and each of them could respect the other’s service. And it may be, sadly, that the divisions of Vietnam will always divide America until my entire generation passes away.

**Personal lessons learned since 1966**

1. Democracies are not good at fighting long, sustained, unpopular wars.

2. The outcome of any war you fight in will be determined in Washington, D.C.; in the mainstream media and on college campuses, and not by how well you do your job on the battlefield.

3. If you serve in the military, you will grow up very fast. You will laugh again, but you will never be young again. (This is based on a conversation on November 22, 1963, when John Kennedy was assassinated. *Washington Post* columnist Mary McGrory said to Daniel Patrick Moynihan, “We’ll never laugh again.” Moynihan, who later became a U.S. senator, replied, “Mary, we’ll laugh again, but we’ll never be young again.”)

4. History is written by the victors.

5. You do not get to choose when you are born or which war will occur during your lifetime (Those of us who served in Vietnam have a profound case of World War II envy).

6. Try very hard not to do anything in your twenties that you will regret in your forties, fifties or sixties. Think long and hard about the key decisions. Ask for advice from many sources, particularly when the safe, selfish option seems to be the most attractive one.

7. History written about the recent past (that is, about periods when the historians were alive and participated in the events they are discussing) will never be as reliable as history written about the more distant past. I personally think we will start getting objective Vietnam history around 2050. In 1995, when asked what he thought the significance of the French Revolution was, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai famously said in reply, “It’s too soon to tell.”

8. Who should fight America’s wars? How should our soldiers be selected? Is an all-volunteer army the right choice for a democracy, or should there be compulsory military service (conscription)? If the draft is reinstated, what changes should be made to the system used in 1940-1975?
dick boak ’68 graduated from Blair and returned in 1973-1974 to teach art. His daughter Emily will graduate from Blair in 2013. Prior to and during the course of his 37-year career with C. F. Martin & Co., dick boak (small letters!) has been a vagabond, communal architect, illustrator, hippie, art teacher, geodesic dome builder, lathe turner, luthier, draftsman, poet, guitarist, wood expert, author, desktop publisher, singer/songwriter, Apple computer geek, archivist and publisher. By the time you finish reading this paragraph, he will most likely have morphed into something else. Visit his website at: www.dickboak.com.

*During his 37-year career with C. F. Martin & Co., boak has traveled, promoting the guitar and collaborating with the greatest musicians of our time.*
When approached to write an article about the 60s, I was immediately honored and horrified, but after some contemplation, I realized that I am perhaps uniquely qualified to discuss the subject. After all, in many ways, I exemplify that era, but before getting too deeply into it, I need to set the stage.

I was born in 1949 and grew up in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, the son of a steel company sales manager. With two older brothers that excelled in sports, I tried to compete, but eventually turned to writing, art and music—areas in which I could flourish without comparison or rivalry. Our family was very much like The Cleavers on TV’s “Leave It To Beaver”—I being an odd blend of The Beav and Eddie Haskell. At the local high school, I started to stray from the straight and narrow. I spent too much time at the pool hall and my grades started to suffer. Like many of the budding Mick Jaggers of my generation, I was extricated to Blair Academy. At first, I missed my hometown compatriots, but soon began to see the greater benefits of private school. I was greatly challenged by the curriculum—in particular Bob Atkinson who taught old-school mechanical drawing. He recognized my love of drawing and intimidated me toward perfection.

On the literary front, I was responding well to accelerated academics, immersing myself in Salinger’s *Catcher in the Rye*, the biting British satire of Evelyn Waugh, the beat poetry of Allen Ginsburg and Laurence Ferlinghetti, and the pre-counterculture LPs of the Beatles and Bob Dylan.

Like my classmates, my formative musical tastes were a mix of doo-wop, folk and surfer tunes, but the reality of fallout shelters, racial injustice, feminist inequality and anti-war sentiment congealed with my post-Kennedy compassion for the poor. My closest hometown friend was a Hungarian soccer-playing refugee who was tremendously influential in showing me the other side of the tracks. To my conservative parents’ dismay, I started spouting controversial arguments at the dinner table during breaks from school. This was tolerated, albeit with some confusion, in the spirit of intellectual pursuit.

Gradually, I envisioned a career as a writer and persuaded my English and journalism teacher Tony Cassen, to allow me to skip sports for a semester to write and self-publish a book of poetry. Meanwhile, I found further inspiration in the progressive writings of Richard Brautigan, Hermann Hesse and Kurt Vonnegut and, accordingly,
my poems seemed to fixate upon shocking my readership with tragic societal vignettes.

I graduated from Blair in 1968 in good class standing, but a disappointing SAT score in English (of all things) secured my acceptance at Gettysburg College. This was not my first choice of colleges, but nine of my Blair classmates were in a similar boat and headed there, too. We were all ready to spread our wings!

During the summer between Blair and Gettysburg, my father helped me secure a job in the steel mill. My longer hair and bell-bottom jeans weren’t well received on my first day of work and, in hindsight, it was perhaps a mistake to express my conscientious objector sentiments to my fellow steel workers. Nor was it popular to actually sweep with the broom I was issued, as this irritated the workers to no end. After a small scuffle wherein Frank the redneck union foreman nearly pushed me to my death from the third story fire escape into a semi-molten ingot, I was transferred to Central Tool, where the metal lathes were spinning out beautifully crafted shells for the Vietnam War effort. I was quite conflicted about this.

One day, one of the many metal lathes jammed up and needed to be rebuilt. There were an assortment of gears strewn across the shop that day and one of them found its way into my lunch pail in the name of the peace movement. Of course, they machined a new gear and had it all polished up by the end of the next day, but that was a full day’s worth of bombs that didn’t get made, and the gear made a handsome ashtray. I had no sense of what I was doing. I certainly had no idea that my immature actions might negatively impact America’s war effort or the fate of my compatriots that had enlisted, or been drafted into military service.

Upon my arrival at Gettysburg College, I was met by a small band of gypsy hippies. The counterculture movement was in full swing in urban areas, but had arrived a bit late to the rural towns. I fell in naturally with this smaller group, made up primarily of artists, musicians and peace activists. It’s difficult to explain this time period given today’s culture. It was a very different time and there was a sense of exploring uncharted territory. The ultimate impact of my transformation was that I made a rather dramatic shift from English to art, immersing myself in sculpture and illustration to the detriment of my other courses and distribution requirements.

We should not discount the impact that our generation’s music was having upon us. We watched and listened with fascination as The Beatles evolved from Liverpoolian moptops into scruffy bohemians. We evolved with them. Dylan’s ear-
ly nod to Woody Guthrie morphed into full protest songs that thumbed their nose at conformity and injustice. During the summer of 1969, I was trapped inside the family station wagon on route to two weeks of vacation in Ontario. As we passed the clogged Route 17 exit for Woodstock, I pleaded with my uncompromising parents to let me out of the car so that I could join with my half million like-minded longhairs for a weekend of music and mud wallowing. It happened without me, but I was there in spirit. The music provided the script for our generation, but it was more than that. It was part of a tremendous cultural shift, conceived and led by youth, and every sector of the society was bowled over by the wave.

As the Vietnam war trudged on, the draft lottery was implemented and tens of thousands marched on Washington to voice their objection. An arrogant president plotted Watergate in his oval office as Joan Baez's nightingale voice echoed across the National Mall. My personal protest took shape in my environmental sculpture class. Spurred on by Franz Kafka's short story “The Hunger Artist,” I constructed a convincing cage of 2 x 4s and electrical conduit—installing it (and myself) in the dead of night in front of the college dining hall across from the Student Union building. At the administration's dismay, my three-day living sculpture became the epicenter of unrest on the campus. On the second day, a local television station came by to cover the odd story. The newspapers came too—the headline exclaiming boldly: “Student Puts Self Behind Bars.”

“The Cage” didn’t survive the final night. The campus jocks just couldn’t take it anymore. They worked themselves into quite a frenzy, egged on with several gallons of beer. With their confidence bol-
stered, they paid my structure a visit and with a remarkable display of aggression, patriotism and testosterone, they rendered my living sculpture into a twisted heap of lumber and galvanized steel. Though my pride was bruised, I remained unscathed.

“The Cage” was my final act at Gettysburg. I salvaged the mangled cage bars and with Buckminster Fuller’s book “I Seem To Be A Verb” in hand, I cut the poles into precise geodesic lengths. I trucked the pieces out to a utopian communal farm dubbed “The Final Frontier” on the outskirts of town where my tube-frame dome quickly rose a half mile into the deep woods to the tune of Jefferson Airplane’s “Crown of Creation” on a battery-powered tape player.

I felt free, as if I had crossed an invisible threshold, and I delved into an intensely prolific period of illustration, writing, music and the keeping of journals that would last for many years. The Whole Earth Catalog was our bible. Euell Gibbons’ books taught us how to source natural foods in the forest. We were intensely committed to do-it-yourself creativity and self-sustenance. One of the enlightened women had planted a fantastic organic garden and was exploring vegetarianism and macrobiotics. It was a fantastic vision, but as the summer came to a

Self-imprisoned for Gettysburg Parents’ Weekend, Homecoming and May Day in his Kafka-esque three-day living sculpture, “The Cage.”
close, the hippie numbers were expanding and patience was replaced with a thicker tension in the air.

To top it off, rumors about my dome-home spread and I returned one afternoon to find a note from the state police. It turned out that I had chosen a spot off the farm property. I was forced to disassemble the dome and vacate the premises, after which I made plans to head north to Vermont. There, a few expatriate college friends had settled into a small boarding house.

During this time, people were incredibly open to spontaneity. I met a local art teacher who had lived in an old cider mill and he offered the ground floor for free in exchange for my offer to help renovate his building. I was also able to contribute communal cash through a series of short-lived minimum wage jobs that included the incontinent laundry room of a local state hospital, the night-shift security post at the Connecticut River Hydro-Electric Authority and an esteemed position as assistant cook at the Brattleboro Howard Johnsons. These three jobs were in definite competition for Worst Job Ever, but the dollars earned were soon exchanged for a beat-up Dodge van.

Lured by a cover of *Life* magazine about the communes of California, I departed Vermont with four like-minded scruffians, their associated belongings, a Coleman stove and two cats. We camped at some beautiful spots along the southeastern coast, then cut across Interstate 10 toward Mobile. Our universal bearing failed in southwestern Alabama, where rednecks cut hippies into tiny pieces, chew them up and spit them out. We found a truck stop that miraculously replaced the axle parts for next to nothing before anyone got the notion that there was a band of longhairs in the parking lot. We followed Interstate 10 through the draped moss of Louisiana, then on through the endless armadillo-strewn monotony of Texas.

When we arrived in Phoenix, my friends bailed to seek gainful employment at a local steel mill. After dispelling the notion of joining Paoli Soleri’s architectural City of the Future called Arcosanti, I ventured westward chasing the Cali-
ifornia dream. After several comfortable weeks at an artist friend’s bungalow in Hollywood, I headed northward. Through a series of calamities and good fortunes and with $15 left to my name, my hopeless vehicle limped at midnight onto Lou Gottlieb’s famous hippie commune Morningstar Ranch. (Lou achieved considerable fame and fortune as the jocular string bass player and vocalist for the 50s musical group The Limeliters.) I awoke to Lou, dressed in a white Buddhist robe, singing Hare Krishna outside the van. I asked him politely whether it would be all right if I remained on the property. He pointed to the sky and suggested with dry humor: “You’ll have to ask the landlord!”

In reaction to somewhat disgruntled conservative neighbors and with the help of his ACLU lawyer and famous friend William Kunstler, Lou had successfully sold his forty acre parcel for one dollar and transferred the deed into the name of “GOD.” This action of course confused the legal system and initiated a seven-year battle that ended up in the California Supreme Court. Ironically, at the end of all this, “GOD” was found to be incompetent as a landowner.

But during those final two-and-a-half years of Morningstar, I assumed the role of energetic architect, constructing hand-hewn geodesic domes out of eucalyptus, eye-hooks, burlap and tree bark. With salvaged chicken coops, I built two sturdy cabins with roofs that doubled as observation decks, up in the trees. For a while, communal life with the forty-five others on the property seemed remarkably viable.

Water, however, was somewhat of a problem. There was plenty of fog, but it didn’t rain very much. We were all in constant need of a bath. We devised ingenious solar showers by hoisting water jugs up into the trees, but the jugs were arduous to carry and too quickly emptied. There was a tiny stream that ran through the property, but it was just a trickle. There was plenty of water at the bottom of the hill, but it was simply too far away. We had visions of lush vegetable gardens, but not without some form of irrigation. I had a brilliant idea. I decided to dig for water.

I picked a nice spot on the waning edge of the orchard and broke ground. I dug all day and only got about six feet deep. There was no sign of any moisture. The next day I dug some more—ten feet and still not a drop. There was a mountain of dirt around the hole as tall as the hole was deep. The third day, I was twelve feet down in my hole, struggling to get the dirt out, when Lou Gottlieb came over to see what all the commotion was. “What’re you doing down there?” he queried.

“Digging for water,” I replied with stoicism.

“You know how far you’ll have
During his Kerouacian journeys, boak created several hundred intricate ink illustrations, such as this impossible Tree From Griffith Park near Hollywood, 1973.
to dig?” he asked.

“I hope not too much deeper.” I was getting worried about the direction this conversation was taking.

“As far as I can tell, you’re going to have to dig about two or three hundred feet deeper.” He informed me of this with no malice or sarcasm, just the simple facts.

I stopped digging and crawled dejectedly out, covered in dirt and sweat. Now there was a giant and dangerous hole in the middle of the orchard with no apparent purpose.

After considerable thought, I decided that the hole would make a rather deluxe and much-needed commode. I built a simple grid of 2’ x 4’s across the expanse and covered that with plywood flooring. I constructed a small yet proportionate geodesic bubble out of eucalyptus and sheathed it with canvas sides and clear Mylar that made a perfect pentagonal skylight. My orchard oasis was open for business and was certainly well used!

My varied development projects on the land led to eventual legal scrutiny for violations of the building codes and sanitation ordinances. These were relatively minor offenses though, and I successfully vacated the state before karma caught up to me.

After the courts had made their final decision about God’s unsuitability as a landlord, I retreated first to a small dormant vacation park in nearby Monte Rio, then to a flood-ed riverside campground in Guerneville, then to co-op apartment in Berkeley. Finally, I retraced my steps back to the warmth of southern California.

With my friends in Hollywood, I traded housecleaning and dishwashing consideration for a bed and the right to immerse myself in conceptual illustration and music. This peaceful and productive time was a far cry from the struggles of living more or less outdoors on the commune, without money—effectively off the grid.

Throughout this entire era, there were a variety of alternative spiritual pursuits: Tai Chi, Transcendental Meditation, Yoga, Zen, Tarot, I Ching, Primal Scream. I delved in all of them, but avoided joining too deeply in any for fear of being swallow up in cults. With the tragic deaths of two Kennedys and Dr. Martin Luther King, plus the untimely loss of our musical heroes Jimi Hendrix, Jim Morrison, Janis Joplin and, later, John Lennon, it seemed the dream of back-to-the-earth communal living and brotherhood was coming to a close. The generational unity of Woodstock was counteracted with the ugly turn of events at Altamont. That was the icing on the cake.

I packed up my Autoharp and journals and hitchhiked across the country, back to the east and the comfort of home, where I rejoined my family and the American society that I had shunned. I certainly do
not wish to glamorize the excesses of the period or coax today’s youth into repeating our odd experiences and indiscretions, but the great reward of the 60s and early 70s for those who were able to survive intact was that life was lived to the fullest, with great idealism and creativity. We own our experiences and our stories. They are infused in our personal histories and in our ongoing cultures.

While many have shed the idealism of their youth, retreating to extremism, greed or intolerance, some have held on to the best lessons of the era—to follow their dreams and chase their passions, to be constructive by being additive instead of subtractive, to compromise slightly for the sake of reality and day-to-day practicality, but not too much!

Now, I am involved with the making of fine guitars that become the musical tools of the current and coming generations. My good fortune has been that I have been able to blend my need for creativity with what I do for a living. I wish that for all of you. I owe a good bit of that to perseverance, experience, timing and good luck, and of course for the great education I received at Blair. By the way, thanks for that!

Boak taught art at Blair in 1973–4 and shared his love of geodesic domes with Blair students at the edge of the bowl.
Peter Hahn was born in 1938, the year Benny Goodman played “Sing Sing Sing” in Carnegie Hall. Raised primarily on the New Jersey shore, he graduated from Hobart College in Geneva, New York with a BA in English in 1961. Commissioned as an officer in the United States Naval Reserve, Peter served as a communications officer on USS Algol AKA 54 and a staff operations officer on Comphibron 10, both ported in Norfolk, Virginia. In 1965, he returned to his alma mater, first on the admission staff at Hobart, and later, as director of admission at William Smith. After five years, Peter joined the faculty at Blair Academy, where he remained for 24 years. He served as director of admission, college counselor, teacher of history and English, 9th grade class monitor and advisor. In 1990, as the recipient of the first James R. Kelley Sabbatical, he earned a master of philosophy mode B in medieval history from St. Andrews University in Scotland with no significant improvement in his golf score. In 1994, Peter joined the faculty in Taipei American School Taiwan as a college and guidance counselor retiring to Austin, Texas in 2000. He is currently an administrative assistant with St. David’s Episcopal Church in downtown Austin. With good memories of Blair, he returns to the campus frequently on Alumni Weekends.

Peter Hahn and Mom in 1962.
The Education of a 50’s Kid

In the winter of 1960, I was sitting in front of a gentle grate fire at the Belhurst enjoying a whiskey neat with the mayor of New York, Robert Wagner. I was 22. A few weeks prior, the governor of New York, Nelson Rockefeller, bought me a beer at the Seneca Hotel Grill in Geneva, New York. In case you haven’t guessed, it was an election year and I was a very inexperienced news reporter for WGVA, the local 500-watt radio station, AM in those days. It was heady stuff and my only regret in retrospect was that I missed Bobby Kennedy’s swing through town campaigning for his brother. I was still in college at Hobart carrying a full academic program, as well as a 37 hour-a-week shift on the radio…top 40, news, weather and sports. While I am afraid the latter got more attention, all of a sudden in June 1961, I graduated fully intent on making broadcasting a career because I thought I was really good.

Life and the government intervened in the form of a notice to report to the armory in Newark, N.J. for a draft physical. I had been stalling on this issue, hoping it would vanish miraculously, but all I got was a postponement for a few months as I was living in upstate New York and the New Jersey Selective Service system was overworked. I needed to do something because even I, with my developed tendency toward avoidance, knew that I would be putting on a uniform of one kind or another for an undetermined length of time. The choice was Fort Dix and the army for two years or a commission, which would extend my service to three-and-a-half years. I applied to Navy OCS in Newport, R.I., for a reserve commission. It was the tradition among the male members of my family to go to sea. With the military looming, I was given the pink slip at WGVA, ending forever my career as a broadcaster, one of my first lessons about realities versus self perception.

The country had a royal family in those days that took its court from Washington to Hyannis to Palm Beach. There was no war, although the “cold” variety trudged on with frequent “saber rattlings” between the Russians and everybody else. The Cuban Missile Crisis would come later. Meanwhile, I was proud of our young president and his family. I laughed when that old geezer Charles DeGaulle turned into a worshipping teenager in Jackie’s presence and her husband announced to the French, “I am the man who accompanied Jacqueline Kennedy to Paris and I have enjoyed it.” It didn’t matter to me that Kennedy had very little sup-
port for his programs in Congress or that a large segment of the financial community distrusted him. His response was: “Let us not seek the Democratic answer or the Republican answer, but the right answer. Let us not seek to fix the blame for the past. Let us accept our own responsibility for the future.” While it annoyed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Kennedy’s “Ich bin ein Berliner” speech was simply thrilling. As a young newly commissioned naval officer, I was in awe of my Commander-in-Chief and would have leaped from the nearest cliff for him. In a sense, I was a personable embodiment of the optimism and naiveté of the times. After all, it was the era of “Leave it to Beaver” and “The Beverly Hillbillies.”

There was no war and Americans in Vietnam were “advisors.” An ominous sign, naval officer volunteers were sought to command patrol craft on the Mekong River. Many adventurous types followed the calling, but I seemed permanently assigned to a ship and later, a squadron staff, which would make frequent trips to the Caribbean with detachments of marines. Castro and his relationship with the Soviet Union, along with our naval station in Guantanamo Bay, were of constant concern. “GTMO” was many things, but to us, it was a training station and the home of the infamous 15-cent “Rum Goodies” at the Officer’s Club. If you were winning at “Liars Dice,” you might have as many as six of them lined up in front of you at one time. The Bay of Pigs failure had come and gone and then, in October of 1962, the Cuban Missile Crises loomed. Our ship, the USS Algol, AKA 54, was loaded with ammunition and Marine gear and sent to a position off the coast of Florida to wait for an impending invasion.

Interested in what my role would have been should we send Marines into Cuba, I learned I would be directing traffic from a small boat, 1000 yards from the landing beach. Strangely, I was nervous and excited at the same time. All I could think of was that I might escape the tedium of shipboard watches and administrative work to “get into the fight.” The crew of the “Aggie” was at a heightened level of expectation, as day after long day dragged on with nothing happening while we were at anchor. We heard about ship movements and Air Force Readiness alerts. We had one encounter with a Polish freighter in the middle of the night that sped away into the dark before we could determine if it had missiles aboard or not. Then it was over, the Soviets backed down, and the military was faced with the task of getting supplies and personnel back to their bases. In an extraordinary act of efficiency, the Navy simply activated the invasion operation order, chang-
ing the beachhead from Cuba to one near Camp LeJeune, N.C., and took the marines and their gear home. I was in that traffic control boat for 12 hours suffering from seasickness brought on by diesel fumes and long rolling waves. But I had done my bit. And we had beaten the Russians!

In November 1963, Algol was undergoing training at Guantana-mo Bay Naval Station. In the afternoon of November 22nd, I stood on the bridge watching the flags on the beach being lowered to half staff. We got underway for Norfolk, our home port, and hugging the coast, were able to pick up bits of television reports of the events in Dallas and Washington. There wasn’t a lot of conversation in the officer’s wardroom. We went about our duties and watch assignments on our trip north “on automatic.” Our royal family was gone to be replaced by a bourbon-swalling, chain-smoking Texas politician. We didn’t know Mr. Johnson or Ladybird and had no way of telling what a colossal program of social reform he would enact a few short years hence. We only knew that a very happy time had come to a ter-

Despite an offer to “augment” into the regular navy from the reserves, I decided that military life was not for me. So, in April of 1965, following operations in Panama and Europe, I packed my bags and left our shared officers “snake ranch” home in Virginia Beach and headed north to an uncertain future. I was 27 and had no job, career goals or place to live. My military experience counted for little in the employment search and I had no clear idea what I was looking for. After living with my family on Long Island for a short time, I headed back to upstate New York to start looking. By chance, I heard of an entry-level position in the Hobart College admission office and the chance to work with its director, John Witte, a friend from my undergraduate days. I had loved my days as a student at Hobart. The situation was ideal. The second half of the decade was spent doing admissions work for Hobart and William Smith Colleges and adjusting to something new in student attitudes. Hobart was not Berkeley or Columbia, but some unhappiness was
fomenting in the relatively conservative pre-professional group that had not been seen before.

The early stages of student activism at Hobart took issue with housing and other aspects of campus lifestyle. Some attention had been paid to the segregation issues in the south, but in 1965, the students had not embraced these issues as their own. While alcohol had been the main mood-altering substance at that point, other drugs were coming in and to a young alumnus just out of the service, all this activity was very strange and just plain wrong. The college I wanted to promote was the one I graduated from four years before, but this one was hostile to us administrators and very hard to understand.

It didn’t happen right away. The colleges built a new dormitory complex later dubbed by the students as “Super Dorm” with the idea of bringing in off-campus dwellers. They did not want to be brought in. Second, existing male dormitory dwellers demanded the right to have women and alcohol in their rooms. This issue became known as “Booze and Broads” long before the term “PC” was thought of. There were pickets in front of the administration building and unkind words thrown in the direction of the president’s office. In retrospect, one might criticize these “causes” as being self-serving when students should be supporting the efforts of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., or the free speech movement. The point is that it was a complete departure from the “mild-mannered” and apathetic nature of the students at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. The initial reaction of the administration and board of the colleges was surprise and resistance.

Not surprisingly, initially, I did not support the students. I was the product of a different era. I saw no merit in either the Super Dorm or Booze and Broads issues. We joked about how students wanted everything we, as students, did earlier to be legal. What was the sport in that? While the underlying motives lay in student rights, we asserted that the only rights the students had was the right to be on campus under administrative “in-locus-pa-rentis” style regulation. The concept of coed dorms would come later to be met once again with administrative horror. Again, in terms of human rights, these issues appeared to be “small potatoes.” To the students, however, they were determining factors of their freedoms of action and expression.

As the war in Vietnam grew in intensity and American involvement, so did the reaction of youth against it. Selective Service had switched to the lottery system and if your number came up, you were most certainly going for a one-year tour in Vietnam. Television shows such as The Smothers Brothers
Comedy Hour and Laugh-In took pot shots at the government and popular music called for peace and love and drugs. (What was “Puff the Magic Dragon” all about anyway?) Folk singers chanted “Blowin’ in the Wind” and “Give Peace a Chance.” In 1968, the Beatles moved into a more activist mode with Sgt. Pepper and we were shocked and saddened by the deaths of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy.

In the four years since the Gulf of Tonkin incident, the details of which were in dispute, President Johnson took attacks on his war policy from all sides. His successful social programs notwithstanding, Johnson decided to leave office at the end of his term. Vietnam and his own fear of being the first president to lose a war had defeated him. 1968 was a pivotal year.

I joined the college students in a mournful March through Geneva upon the death of Dr. King. While I never embraced the radical student movements of the 1960s, I had determined that the war was wrong and that civil rights in this country needed work. I became a supporter of Eugene McCarthy and convinced my conservative father to do the same. I was appalled by the police brutality in Chicago in 1968 but not impressed by the likes of Bobby Seale and the rest of the Chicago 7. The Black Panthers and Malcolm X scared me to the point of almost withdrawing my focus from civil rights. While I didn’t agree with Barry Goldwater, I respected him and wish his conservative leadership was with us today. In short, in three years, I had given in to my conscience and developed a healthier social awareness.

At Hobart and William Smith, 1968 brought activity to a frenetic level. There were rumors of Students for a Democratic Society activity and a mysterious figure known as Tommy the Traveler arrived on campus. Tommy Tongyai went from campus to campus promoting the use of violence among students. Referred to by Walter Cronkite as a “provocateur,” Tommy may actually have been an undercover agent for the FBI. Two things are certain: he taught two freshmen men how to make incendiary devices later thrown into the Air Force ROTC offices in the basement of a sleeping dormitory late at night and he led police on a drug raid which resulted in the police cars being trapped and attacked by angry students. Tommy was later arrested and disappeared. Esquire magazine wrote an article about him in 1971 and his shadowy activity is subject of many current blogs. The FBI, however, has sealed his file.

The shock of the Kent State shootings in 1970 changed everything. As my sister, an undergraduate at the time pointed out, all of a sudden, it was real. Students were being killed. It was no longer
“Peace, Drugs and Rock and Roll.” It was death. It seemed like we all paused to consider what we were doing. While social consciousness may have remained, radicalism lost its unbridled forward motion. It wasn’t the end but the beginning of a more considerate approach to dealing with our nation’s problems.

With the passage of such legislation as the Privacy Act, students were required to take on more responsibility for their lives. Many universities and colleges across the country dropped their “in-loco-parentis” social codes. In short, if you got in trouble with the local police, no college dean was going to get up in the middle of the night and bail you out of jail. Coed living situations are now the norm in most colleges and alcohol and drug policies are based on local laws. There are few colleges that have curfews. Some would argue that our 18-year-olds are not adults and need supervision. But it is what it is. And we must remember that in most medieval universities in Europe, students had the power to fire their professors. Tenure was way in the future.

In 1970, a few months after the Kent State shootings, I left Hobart and William Smith Colleges to join the faculty at Blair Academy as the director of admissions. The events of the 60s would have profound effects on educational philosophies and institutions at all levels. Private day and boarding schools suffered enrollment problems for a variety of reasons but chiefly because universities began seeking more diversified student bodies and increased their representation from public high schools in their student bodies.

The public soon learned that going to a fine private school was not a necessary prerequisite to an Ivy League education. Weaker schools failed, many single sex-schools went coed, and each school looked at its curriculum and social codes. Every school needed to react to an enrollment issue. That challenge became
my (and Blair’s) preoccupation for several years.

In the midst of dramatic changes going on in education and throughout the fabric of our country, I was developing a personal philosophy relating to community responsibility. Thoroughly shaken by the events of the 1960s, I needed to take what I had learned and let it guide me. Radicalism for me just didn’t work. I came to detest violence. I learned the importance of studying government actions and expressing disagreement with my elected representatives. I came to believe that our society works better when people volunteer their time and talents to worthwhile causes. I determined that the government of the United States and its people need to take responsibility for those who cannot care for themselves. War is a failure; there is no glory in it. There are other more effective solutions to global friction. Social justice as embodied in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights made sense to me and still does.

The 50’s kid endured a painful transformation from being clueless to paying attention; from blind trust to questioning; from resignation to action; and, with new information, from apathy to a reinforced belief in the United States and its important role in the world.
Martin Miller joined Blair’s history department in 1980. In addition to teaching history and economic theory classes, he directs the Society of Skeptics program, serves as head cross country coach, edits the Blair Review and runs the Model United Nations Program. He completed his undergraduate work at Syracuse University in New York in 1966 and earned his PhD in comparative politics from the City University of New York (CUNY) in 1982. Before coming to Blair, he taught at Stockton State College in New Jersey and CUNY in New York. Marty lives on campus at Steckel House with his wife, Micheline, with whom he has three children: Julian, David ‘88 and Colin ‘00.
Some Thoughts About the Vietnam War Era

from a Chapel Speech given May 2001

The recent “atrocity” accusations made against former Nebraska governor (1983-87), senator (D-Nebraska (1981-2001), and presidential candidate Bob Kerrey (1992) brought the Vietnam years back into the national consciousness as a page-one news story. The best version has Bob Kerrey killing any number of Vietnamese woman and kids in the midst of a chaotic firefight, a tragedy of warfare. A darker storyline has Kerrey executing Vietnamese in brutal fashion to cover the escape of his Navy Seal team. One thing is certain, though: his life and the lives of some Vietnamese villagers were changed forever in the Mekong Delta of 1969, 42 years ago. Here is the extreme case: a Congressional Medal of Honor winner, a brilliant and handsome politician confronting the demons of the past. Far less newsworthy is the everyday stories of my generation, those men and women shaped by the Vietnam War years—certainly not all heroes or villains; rather, they were regular individuals with ever so human weaknesses. Over the years, various voices from the Vietnam years have been heard at Blair, those of guest lecturers, parents, alumni and teachers. The Kerrey affair has reminded me of these thoughtful individuals, each with different stories. It also reminded me of the evocative tales of various Society of Skeptics speakers and, alas, my own tale.

“Rambo is bullshit! Rambo is plain bullshit!” So raged Blair parent Bob Doran at the outset of a cathartic Skeptics talk in Cowan Auditorium on a memorable evening some years ago. The Vietnam experience was nothing like a Hollywood movie, nothing like what he had expected. Bob Doran was a young Bates College graduate, a newly minted 2nd lieutenant heading off to a tour of Vietnam with no real understanding of what might lie ahead. His life changed in a hurry in the field. Day one of his first patrol: incoming machine gun fire blew off the arm of a young platoon member and a stunned Bob Doran realized two things: he must get HIS boys, HIS platoon back in one piece as best he could; he must survive and return home. That was the extent of his war goals, plain and simple—Bob Doran’s private war. Leave the grand strategy to those above him…just survive. “Did you kill people?” Blair students asked in deferential, inquisitive tones. The ambiguous nod and tears welling up
perhaps said it all. How does one heal after such a nightmare? Simple, said Bob, pointing to his wife in the audience. “I fell in love with that women and haven’t spoken about Vietnam since.”

Blair parent Tom Meyer volunteered for service, even though he had grave doubts about the war. Why should he avoid the danger if the next fellow must go? Why should a relatively affluent college student stay home, when high percentages of working class kids and minorities were drafted? And wasn’t it possible that his moral behavior and thoughtful actions might make the difference in a life and death situation, a situation like the one faced by Bob Kerrey in 1969? Tom always noted the costs of war, which included not just 58,000 Americans deaths, but also perhaps two million Vietnamese killed. He always underscored the enemy loses, if they were indeed the enemy. He remains to this day a critic of the war.

Colonel Beatty was West Pointer, a Blair grad who had a long, distinguished career in the Army, serving in Vietnam and returning home to build the family business in Hope, New Jersey, just down the road, The First Hope Bank—the ATM machine in Clinton Hall is well known!—and became a pillar of the community. He is duly proud of his service, proud of the men under his command and proud of the armed forces that did the best they could facing severe political constraints. He is not impressed by an anti-war movement that undermined the military, not impressed by the failure to serve one’s country.

Bob Smith’s leg was blown off in Vietnam. He recovered, married, raised his kids and remained a part of his beloved Army Ranger family. Days were spent visiting amputees in veterans’ hospitals, always making sure his wife and children came along. The logic was elegantly simple: when you lose a limb, it is reassuring to meet a fellow disabled soldier who was able to find a mate, have kids and build a life. Bob Smith knew the fear that gripped each disabled soldier, the fear of abnormality and marginality. Bob’s son followed in his footsteps, joining the elite Rangers. Young Smith was sent to Mogadishu, Somalia, where he attempted to guard a helicopter downed by the local warlord’s guerrilla fighters. On TV news and later on the Hollywood movie screen (Blackhawk Down) seen around the world, this son of a disabled Vietnam vet was killed by withering crossfire. The national media folks were at Bob’s New Jersey home within hours, asking his opinion about an ostensibly misguided Somalia mission. “How could I be critical of the Rangers’ mission when I didn’t have all the
facts?” he said. “I grieved for my son, but I wasn’t ready to question my country.” Bob Smith, minus a leg and minus a son, had non-military dreams for his remaining boy. Last I heard, the surviving Smith boy planned to join the Rangers, just like dad and his brother. And, yes, Bob Smith still makes the rounds at VA hospitals.

Mr. Schmalenberg [former Blair faculty member], our own bonsai expert, told of his odyssey to attain conscientious-objector status and avoid the draft. He was not a Quaker or Jehovah’s Witness nor a religious zealot of any type, though deeply held convictions against killing and the immorality of this particular war drove him toward pacifism. The trick was to convince the draft board of your sincerity. Students asked, “Why should others serve in your place? Would you have served in WWII? Why run down American policy? What if the Russians invaded during the Cold War, what would you do? Would you have fought the Nazis?” Not easy questions to answer. In passionate tones, he allowed the students to see a sensitive, personal side of a teacher. They glimpsed a representative of a small but important minority of 1960s war resisters that challenged the law of the land head on, a struggle that consumed and defined them for years. They didn’t flee or conjure up phony ailments, just gambled on strongly held beliefs and won….and served in alternative hospital work.

Ed Satkowki, Blair student body president lived in Belvidere all his life. His father, Big Ed Satkowski, who weighed about 300 pounds, sauntered into a Skeptics forum dressed in camouflage uniform and armed with an M-14 rifle (these were pre-Columbine days!) and told a Vietnam tale of crouching alone out on the point—the first line of defense for the platoon. “It was the loneliest damn place in the world.” he said. What the hell was a nice kid from Warren County doing there? The sounds and smells of battle couldn’t be recreated for the audience; he didn’t feel comfortable even talking about the experience of combat. But talk he did. He fulfilled his duty, came home and sold auto parts and never wanted to think of those horrendous days again. He offered his thoughts at Skeptics as a way of telling young Eddie how lucky he was, informing the audi-
ence of its good fortune.

The voices are many; we all have a story. I have one.

It was 1963 when I joined the Marines Corps. There would be basic training during college summers and, eventually, Officer Candidate School after college graduation. Life was relatively simple: Everyone was drafted into the armed forces in those days. Marines were the best, and they had a fine track and cross country program to boot. My father’s generation supported WWII and the Korean involvement; among his construction worker friends, service in the military was a required rite of passage, an absolute duty. And I actually looked forward to 5:00 AM forced marches and runs in field gear; just my kind of activity. At Quantico Marine base in Virginia, Sergeant McHale was our leader, dictator, savior, God on earth. In his inimitable style, he would scream, “Your ass belongs to me.” And he meant it. Tattoos on his arm read Tarawa and Guadalcanal, the WWII island battles of Marine Corps legend; his language included the “F” word interspersed and intertwined in every word and phrase. “F-ing this and Unf’ingbelievable that.” McHale seemed particularly animated one day, raging at our platoon about a little war heating up over in Asia, a place where Marines could prove themselves, once again. We didn’t know much about far-off Vietnam, except that communists were threatening our friends over there and President Kennedy had directed my generation to ask what we could do for our country. Perhaps we could roll back the communists. Sergeant McHale led us on night maneuvers, psyched us up to charge positions, to fire under pressure, to cover your brother Marine’s butt at all costs, perhaps even to do things in battle like Bob Kerrey did. I’ll never know.

Now listen closely: your generation has a far more sophisticated understanding of current events and politics; you are better prepared to question the policies of this nation. We were generally naïve, at least in my circle of friends, living in a bubble of a rich, confident America of the early 1960s. The anti-war movement hadn’t crept into our lives and campuses (at least east of Berkeley), we were generally focused on football Saturdays, frat parties and the pursuit of the good life. But there was that little war in Asia that grew into a monster that couldn’t be denied. It transformed our lives, infused our thinking and challenged our assumptions.

When graduation came around, I decided to reject the commissioned lieutenant route and simply took my chances with the draft. Marine officers had a short life expectancy and by ’66, I had learned enough about Asian politics to at least question
American foreign policy. You’ve heard a great deal about those fleeing to Canada or Sweden, but most college kids either entered the draft or sought deferment by attending grad school, getting married, having kids or pulling some strings. And there was always the Reserves, the route chosen by our president, George W. Bush. Educated, middle class kids had options. I repeat: educated, middle class kids had options. Something like one in 50 among the middle class served as battlefield soldiers.

So I wound up at Whitehall Street in Manhattan answering a draft notice. What a scene: hundreds of unhappy kids of all sizes shapes and colors, not one wanting to be there. Pages upon pages of “no shows” were listed on the wall; many were Hispanic fellows from tough areas in the South Bronx. My gut feeling was the FBI wouldn’t bother them, wouldn’t snoop around 138th St., day or night. Suddenly, the main door was thrown open and a long-haired hippy, apparently drugged out of his mind, was deposited in the doorway by some tie-dyed buddies. He could hardly stand. A wobble or two later and he fell flat on his face. No one laughed. Some sergeant yelled “Another “f”ing dingaling. Get him out of here.” No one laughed. The sergeant taunted
an overweight draftee standing in his underwear, for our sake...no one laughed. Like sheep, we all headed through the process, perhaps the first halting steps toward Vietnam. Some along the way convinced the “shrinks” they are gay—just playing homosexuality may prove your unfitness—others ingested all sorts of drugs to fail the physical. There are various scams too numerous to count, including self-inflicted wounds. Most simply followed orders. I did. Endless orders, directives and forms to be filled out. At the final examination point, at the end of a harrowing day, I was categorized 1Y, a medical deferment, unfit for duty. How could this be? I just finished a collegiate track season in top shape; I had passed Marines Corps basic training with flying colors; I wasn’t trying to beat the draft; I was actually resigned to being shipped off to Vietnam. What was going on? It seems a broken elbow of my youth didn’t heal well and the Army, in its infinite wisdom, rejected my service. End of story. I was out, sprung free. Stunning.

I could travel, head off to school, get married, raise kids and live a normal life. I could avoid getting blown away, avoid Bob Kerrey-like situations, and avoid veterans’ hospitals. Fate had intervened to add years of freedom to my life, allowing me the privilege of choosing a destiny, allowing me the privilege of teaching the next generation or two at this fine institution, and allowing me to watch my kids thrive. I was free. But how did my circle of friends make out?

One went off to Canada and never returned, never wrote and apparently never looked back. I dropped him off at La Guardia Airport, a businessman dressed in a suit and tie, clutching a black attaché case. What I thought was a job opportunity in Toronto turned out to be permanent exile.

An outstanding high hurdler was killed in Vietnam and I look for his name on the Wall—The Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C.—when visiting.

A running partner, son of a Tonawanda, New York steel worker, was shot out of the sky twice, helicopter burning. He survived and is a successful dentist in Buffalo.

My roommate was married just after graduation, had a kid and attended NYU Business School. By the age of 32, he was the enormously successful treasurer of a major corporation. He now lives in Mission Viejo, California, with an ever-growing financial portfolio. When we occasionally speak, he mentions choices made in 1966: the instant marriage and family. An embarrassing silence usually ensues.
A friend’s girlfriend had a brother who came back from Vietnam without arms or legs. She committed suicide. My buddy became a heroin addict and was eventually cured.

One friend hustled the psychiatrists with a loony gay routine and beat the draft, but the 4F category of deferment limited his job opportunities. Most employers don’t hire people who are mentally unbalanced. He committed suicide at 32.

And so it went. I don’t know how to make sense out of these stories, except to say that the war years changed our world irrevocably. I know there but for the grace of God go I; there but for the grace of God I’m standing in a Vietnamese village in the middle of hell—like Bob Kerrey. No doubt, many of your loved ones have fortuitously missed a confrontation with Mekong Delta villagers.

This student generation has the wonderful privilege of proceeding with careers and relationships without the Vietnam monster on their backs. That is just fine with me. But please, once in awhile, give some thought to a 1960s generation that embodied more than long hair, sex, drugs and rock and roll. Men served honorably, and some sacrificed everything. And remember that a certain fear, indeed dread, ruled the land in those days. May it never be so again.
Rita Baragona begins her story: I came of age in the 60s, a time of cultural change and turbulence. I graduated from high school in 1963, college in 1967 and went to graduate school between 1967 and 1971 in New York City, studying art. As you would suspect, I looked like an artist-hippie type. Although I looked the part, my lifestyle was focused on my interests in art and philosophy. It was difficult for me to live through the counterculture emphasis on drugs and free love. I was caught up in my youthful desire to make a difference: politically, socially and morally. I felt strongly that the 50's were a time of many double standards that had to be exposed and reformed for our society to be true to itself. Starting in my senior year of high school, I was interested in the Civil Rights Movement, later participating in non-violent anti-war demonstrations, and finally the women's rights movement. I will recount some of my personal experiences during the 60s, through the time's colored glasses.

Rita is an artist who lives in the Blairstown area with her husband and teaches in the Blair Academy Art Department. Her work is often featured in The Romano Gallery, in various campus buildings and in her gallery in New York City, Bowery Gallery. Jed Perl wrote in Art in America: “What a nature painter must do is to impose some human logic or private poetry on the natural world. By this measure, Baragona is a very interesting painter.”
An Artist Comes of Age

The 50s suburban community in Morris Plains, New Jersey, where I grew up had strict rules of social order that were often filled with inequality, hypocrisy and segregation. Father knew best, earning the living, and most women were housewives and mothers. Girls were taught not to be too smart if they wanted to “catch” a husband. Few mothers had gone to college. Ethnic identity was not celebrated as it is now. As an interior decorator/furniture salesman, my dad changed his Italian name to Barry, for business purposes. Although I was young, I felt it, but not until my 20th-high-school reunion were these feelings confirmed as fact. It turned out that Italians and Jews were only allowed to live in a certain part of town, which was close to the tracks, in this all-white commuter town.

Mother, Rosalie Baragona, was an exception. While she brought us up, she worked as director/teacher of the Morris Plains Cooperative Play School and was the only woman on the school board. In 1964, after years of part-time education, she graduated with her doctorate and became a child psychologist. It is important to mention that she could not have done all this without my dad’s support. He helped clean the house and care for us children (unheard of jobs for a man in those days). As a supportive husband, he was the prototype of today’s more involved family man.

When I went to the regional high school, I became friends with African-Americans, who lived in Morristown, a larger town (where now, I might note, the Hispanic population resides). In high school, there was only one African-American boy in the college preparatory courses. My group, labeled the brainy nerds, worked hard to elect him to the senior student council. It was a big deal when he won. Equal rights awareness was just beginning. At the same time, the school hired its first African American teacher, Mr. Butler, my art teacher. I am still in touch with him. As I grew up, I became aware of class and ethnic differences both on a personal and then on a broader political level.

In high school, I fell in love with the arts, music and painting. Until then, I was studying to be a scientist. I wanted to understand how the physical world worked. For me, music and painting strove for a deeper kind of meaning that touched my soul. I realized objective understanding told only part of the story. Also, I wanted to fulfill my mom and dad’s dreams, left behind for the sake of upward mobility after the depression and WWII. My dream was to participate in a lifelong search for heartfelt under-
standing through the arts that went beyond my self.

Most importantly, I loved to paint more than anything else. When I was 16 years old, I experienced a sublime moment of losing all sense of time, while painting. The furry kitten painted itself and the world opened up past my ego. My father kept this painting hanging in his room until he died.

When I went to Carnegie University, I was quickly introduced into the 60’s hippie lifestyle. Girls swore, everyone drank, artists took drugs and free love was the expected norm. I abandoned the pleated wool skirts, which my grandmother had made so I could fit in. However, it became evident by my sophomore year that dress alone was not enough. I was quiet and studious and wanted to become an artist. It was a time when everyone read Allen Ginsberg and Timothy Leary; rock songs had lyrics such as everyone must get stoned. Our painting teacher promoted taking drugs to open your creative mind and encouraged everyone to experiment with their sexuality. To him, teaching art was teaching lifestyle and students used his teaching to throw wild parties. I will not go into too many details, but my best friend became hooked on speed. My roommate in my senior year sold LSD. Interestingly, her boyfriend, who was drafted to go to Vietnam, bequeathed her the business. I saw that drug-taking only tricked you into thinking you were making good art. Contrary to common opinion, I believed that the hippie lifestyle kept one from
finding time to paint. By the middle of my senior year, I stopped going to painting classes in protest. I painted at home. Socially, I survived college by getting a job on Friday and Saturday nights and becoming friends with the more moderate-living architecture and music majors.

Kennedy was shot while I was in drawing class at Carnegie Mellon. My class was released and I remember walking the streets, looking at the homes where people I did not know led their lives. Like most, I remember the surreal quality of the day. The sunny weather was incongruous with the event. I could not believe it could be real. Then, the assassinations continued with Dr. Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy. Perhaps these awful events help galvanize my generation into action.

In college and in New York City, like most of my friends, I protested the Vietnamese war. I believed and still do that war is not the answer to solving conflicts. In California, I briefly worked for an underground newspaper protesting the war, selling newspapers at rallies for 10 cents a copy. We marched, chanted and sang such songs as “Where Have All the Flowers Gone” and Woody Guthrie’s “This Land is Your Land.” In New York City the protests were huge and addressed not only the war, but also civil rights. In the 1960s, we were taken seriously and felt we could make a difference. It was exhilarating!

My way of getting through national and personal events became more and more grounded in making art. In college, when I was devastated by a breakup with my boyfriend, I painted an almost-dead tree struggling for existence on a rocky cliff overlooking a foggy sea. That painting became a metaphor for my college years, which were very lonely. I think it represented my journey from childhood to adulthood in the 60s. At that point in life, I knew that I could get through anything if I painted. Through the personal turmoil of adolescence, painting became a place of refuge, as well as a way to find meaning in the world and purpose in my life.

In the late 1960s, I was happy to find my way to the New York Studio School of Painting and Sculpture, where I did my graduate studies. It was founded by Mercedes Matter and a group of serious art students
who rebelled against art education in colleges. It was a place where one painted and drew for eight hours a day, learning aesthetic structure by painting directly from nature. It was a perfect fit: the teachers there were dedicated, well-known painters interested in helping art students find their own way. I was in heaven. I finally was in a place among teachers and students who cared about art the way I did. Mercedes Matter was a dynamic teacher and a woman full of soul, who taught me passion. Phillip Guston gave me advice one day, which lead me to become a landscape painter in the country. Esteban Vicenti and Leland Bell were my mentors at the Studio School. Bell’s wife, Louisa Mathiesdotter (Ulla), became my role model for being a dedicated painter and mother. Temma, their daughter and my life-long friend, talked me into joining the Bowery Gallery, where I still show my work.

At the Studio School, like elsewhere, it was still believed by most of the students that men were better artists then women. And even if they weren’t, women were considered less dedicated and unlikely to continue past motherhood. St. Clair, my future husband, jokingly made fun of women’s inequality by saying that all I was good for was darning his socks. Although it was meant as a joke, I have yet to sew the holes in his socks. To his credit, he helped raise our children and our marriage is built on mutual respect and equality.

In the 60s, growing research into women’s medical issues led to the “pill” and an understanding of the psychological effects of a woman’s cycle like PMS (finally), for example. Women were set free from their bodies as never before. There was a popular book at the time called Our Bodies Ourselves, which helped women understand the new research and gain respect for themselves, as they were given explanations and ways to cope with previously unexplained female biological responses.

Also, the women’s movement gained momentum. We all began to question the male-dominated status quo. For example, art history books like Gardner’s Art Through the Ages
left women artists of the past out of the story. Only Mary Cassatt was mentioned in a footnote in relationship to the work of Degas and Manet. All of us started reading Simone de Beauvoir and Virginia Woolf and realized that women were still treated as second-class citizens.

Marjorie Kramer, with her friends Patricia Manardi, Lucia Vernarelli and Bette Lang, formed a women artist’s group, which I attended. We met at Irene Peslikis’ loft on East Broadway under the Manhattan Bridge. Marjorie reminisces, “There were some famous artists who attended, but most of us were just starting out and very young. My favorite thing about that group was that we alternated meetings, talking about art and then the next week talking about feminist politics. We talked about our painting and also talked about how other issues, such as getting to decide when and if to have children, housework, marriage, sex, making abortion legal and getting paid for our work. Some were non-art world issues but, perhaps, they were even more important. Few of us had children yet (those who did did not have time to go to weekly meetings) and, for that reason, the lesbian contingent sort of dominated the women’s movement.”

Marjorie and Pat coordinated many women’s shows done with an open inclusive spirit all over the city. They worked to help women have the same rights and recognition as men both in the art world and in the world at large. They finally gave our group a name, The Redstocking Artists (to echo the sentiments of the leftist radical feminist group Redstockings of the Women’s Liberation Movement) when the Brooklyn Museum had an exhibit called “The Women’s Show” in the late sixties, which consisted of images of women created by men instead of featuring art by women. The men who curated it had no clue why we were irate. Some marched up there to complain and demand a real women’s show. Marjorie went with representatives from five or six other groups, including one headed by Faith Ringgold, and met with
the director. The meeting was big enough to make the papers. Eventually, in 1971, *Women and Art*, a quarterly newspaper filled with statistics about the lack of female representation in museum and gallery art as well as support and celebration of Alice Neel and other women artists, began to be published.

In those days, between 1967 and 1971, there were many groups meeting each week. WAR (Women Artists in Revolution), Art Workers Coalition, The Redstockings, The Restocking Artists, New York Radical Women, Greenwich Village Peace Center, Lucy Lippard’s groups, all the Black Liberation Groups and lots more. In a way, starting the NYSS was part of the same rejection of an unsatisfactory status quo. Marjorie remembers thinking that the “sixties” finally happened in the early seventies.

Today, Marjorie is a painter who lives in Vermont with her husband, painter Sam Thurston, and shows at the Blue Mt. Gallery in New York. Because of her efforts in the sixties, her daughter has many more rights and possibilities. Pat Manardi is a published art historian and professor at Harvard. The path was paved for women like me to raise a family, paint and teach. We no longer have to piggyback on our husband’s name as many women artists of the 50s and 60s did. I, personally, have kept my parents’ name to maintain my ethnic identity and honor my parents. Also, my subject matter is flowers, a traditionally feminine one, partly to identify with traditional femininity rather than the new femininity brought to the fore in the 60s.

One other defiance of social norms which affected my life was the change in attitude toward sex before marriage. Now it is accepted, but in the 60s it was hard on my parent’s generation. St. Clair and I took a trip to Mexico together before we were married. When we were returning, we were photographed as the first people to enter the U.S. through metal detector gates. (Surveillance of this kind is another change we do not associate with the 60s). Our picture was published in newspapers across the country. My parents, who had accepted our relationship, were mortified, telling friends that we were part of a class trip. When we started the sexual revolution, we thought that covert sex of the 50s was a hypocritical leftover from the Victorian era. The slogan “Make Love not War” was
part of our peace movement. Today, the pressure placed on younger and younger girls and boys to have sex is not healthy either. Perhaps the pendulum has swung too far and a balance needs to be struck.

The 60s were a time of great hope in the power of youth to change the world for the better. Perhaps we made mistakes, overdid it in places. Yet, in retrospect, there have been great social changes in civil rights for African-Americans, women's and gay rights. Women take their rights for granted. Although we have a long way to go in terms of racial prejudice, minorities have many more opportunities. We have an African-American president, Obama. Nations still solve their differences with war. At the start of the Iraqi war, we participat-ed again in the worldwide protest, marching in New York City.

It was discouraging to see the numbers unfairly reported in the press, and have our president say that he did not listen to focus groups. More and more groups are protesting injustice again. I still hope that one day humanity will learn to settle conflicts in a better way. Although Einstein died in 1955, his words describe my feelings then and now:

A human being is a part of the whole called by us “the universe,” a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feeling as something separate from the rest—a kind of optical delusion of consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and affection for a few persons...
nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening the circle of understanding and compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

The art-path I took in the 60s has developed into a life-long passion. Throughout all these years, art sustains me as a way of participating in humanity’s ongoing quest to make sense of the world around us. My visual ideas come out of my interest in the implications of modern physics, fractal math and neurobiology. Adding subjective intuition to objective thought, I look for moments of connection. I open up to the experience of seeing energy and movement in mass and space. I paint the color sensations of pure spectral light, creating luminous color. I love to paint organic ever-changing structures in space and in full sunlight.

I paint primarily flowers, gardens, landscapes, oceans and streams. As I look at nature, I become aware of underlying structure based on aspects of natural structures, color vibrations and rhythmic forces. Fractal order crumples space ever so small or fills it up. Flowers unfold slowly, so slowly that, as I look at them, time expands. I have to be very quiet to see the intertwined interior petals at the heart grow as the petals on the edges dance.

Water, on the other hand, moves dynamically. The energy is over-
whelming, repetitive and in constant flux. The variations are infinite and self-similar. Change convolutes time and space. The effort often opens into a dance of participation in life as I feel nature flow through me. Perhaps the viewer will see the relationship of energy to matter or the luminance in the color. My sense of the spiritual timelessness dancing in the flux of matter and flow of light is at the heart of my paintings.

I believe I am painting what I see, but what do things really look like? As I ask that question, my connection with nature is fed, fueling further visual sensing, loving and understanding. I have the same experience of losing myself as I work as I did when I painted the cat so many years ago. It is a joy for me to be fully present, painting from nature.

But it also became more. I realized that making art for me was a way to participate in the discovery and wonder that sets humankind above mere survival. I appreciate the beauty in the world, and like Dillard's description of Giacometti's Man Walking, my soul touches the outer world around me. Today, I paint every morning before I come to school as a way to maintain my center. It is a kind of meditation. As time passes in my life, I keep reaffirming the importance of art to me personally. I teach, partly because I want to share my love of art and the joy it brings me with teenagers who feel as I did back then.

History, politics and social change are temporal. I feel that painting gives me a sense of the universal. Painting doesn’t affect political/social/environmental issues directly. Yet, I believe it holds us to-
gether. I feel more than ever that it is a way of making sense of it all. I believe, as I did when I was 18 years old, that art is what makes us human. The pursuit of it can unify us, no matter our nationality, socioeconomic status or beliefs. Right now, we are in a fractious political time, our national government is divided. Across the world, we are still fighting wars to solve our differences. The environment is on the brink of disaster, and not enough minds are taking this threat seriously. I hope the youth of today can find their collective voice as we once found ours, singing:

> Where have all the flowers gone?  
> Long time passing…  
> Where have all the young men gone?  
> Gone to soldiers every one.  
> When will we ever learn?  
> When will we ever learn?

It is idealistic, but I have faith that we can turn things around. For me, I hang part of our possibility for unity as a species on art. This quote by a Lebanese-born French writer says it very nicely:

If we are to restore some hope to our disoriented humanity, we must go beyond a mere dialogue of cultures and beliefs towards a dialogue of souls… The diverse does not have to be a prelude to the adversarial; our cultures are not enclosed behind impenetrable barriers; our world is not doomed to interminable rifts; it can still be saved…After all, hasn’t that, since the dawn of the human adventure, been the overriding purpose of art?

-Amin Maalouf

An Artist Comes of Age
Mark Gottesman ’62 arrived at Blair in September of 1958 from Roxbury Township School, and Blair was never the same. All four years, he was the number-one student in his class academically. Socially, however, is another story. Following is a quote from his advisor, Mr. Usatorres: “In his first year at Blair, Mark had some trouble. In his freshman year he was… very much in trouble for mischievous misdemeanors.”

Throughout his Blair career, he participated in all the School had to offer. His sport of choice was tennis, and extracurricular activities included president of the Dramatics Club, president of the Academy Players, vice-president of the International Society, co-sports-editor of the Breeze and the Cum Laude Society. He received the Franklin and Marshall Alumni Prize, the Latin II Prize, the Spanish I and II Prizes, the Biology Prize, and the Math 2A and 3A Prizes. Mark was valedictorian of our class.

Mark graduated from Amherst College in 1966 with a BA in English and went on to MIT graduating in City Planning with an MCP in 1970. He served his country by joining the New Jersey National Guard (ala Dan Quayle!) and married his lovely wife of twenty-nine years, Janet E. Rosen. They have two children—Amy and Michael.

After becoming established in the Boston area in 1974 Mark became a successful real estate developer and urban planner. He is currently Senior Vice President of Hunneman Commercial Company, a real estate commercial brokerage and investment concern.

Mark maintained his dedication to Blair by serving on the Alumni Association Board of Governors and by becoming the best Class Representative this side of the Arch!

Mark, you have shown great inspiration, dedication, loyalty, and good humor through your letters to the Class of 1962. Blair Academy is a better place because of the leadership and support given by people such as you. In deep appreciation for all of your work and superior commitment to the task of writing class letters twice each year on behalf of the entire class, I present you with this bound edition of the Gottesman Chronicles, reflecting all of your years of hard work from 1960–1996.

Dennis W. Peachey ’62
A Student Takes Chapel

“T

There is a time in the life of every boy when he for the first times takes a backward view of life. Perhaps that is the moment when he crosses the line into manhood. The boy is walking through the street of his town. He is thinking of the future and of the figure he will cut in the world. Ambitions and regrets awake within him. Suddenly, something happens; he stops under a tree and waits as for a voice calling his name. Ghosts of old things creep into his consciousness; the voices outside of himself whisper a message concerning the limitations of life. From being quite sure of himself and his future he becomes not at all sure. If he be an imaginative boy a door is torn open and for the first time he looks out upon the world, seeing, as though they marched in procession before him, the countless figures of men who before his time have come out of nothingness into the world, lived their lives and again disappeared into nothingness. The sadness of sophistication has come to the boy. With a little gasp he sees himself as merely a leaf blown by the wind through the streets of his village. He knows that in spite of all the stout talk of his fellows he must live and die in uncertainty, a thing blown by the winds, a thing destined like corn to wilt in the sun. He shivers and looks eagerly about. The eighteen years he has lived seem but a moment, a breathing space in the long march of humanity.”

We, it seems, are in much the same position as the boy, George Willard, who is spoken of here in Sherwood Anderson’s Winesburg, Ohio. How many times has success been mentioned in speeches in chapel this year? We think of that road toward success and are convinced that we will make the correct decisions and turns along that road. Of course, there are some hard knocks in life to which our fathers and grandfathers always refer. But we, this new and promising generation, will forge onward and cut an impressive figure in the world about us just as George Willard planned to do. Tomorrow, we will be the leaders of America. But, as George came to recognize, we might also be one of those “countless figures of men who before our time have come out of nothingness into the world, lived their lives, and again disappeared into nothingness.”

Emptiness and Anxiety

In senior religion this year, emptiness and anxiety were mentioned time and again. And yet, I feel, they are presently far away and truly incomprehensible by most of us here. We may often feel anxiety about the grades we are getting or the all-important athletic contest next week. But these are transitory feelings and a faint curve in our road to success.
We, on the whole, have not yet recognized the limitations of life as George Willard seems to have done. Our purpose is to go on to college, a speedy turnpike to the successful world eagerly awaiting us, in much the same way as George went to the bristling city to make his mark on the world around him. He had been a significant person in his small hometown of Winesburg, Ohio, and felt secure in his day-to-day existence there. But as he grew older he felt he had to move on to the city in order to make a name for himself and look forward to a promising future. However, once there, George Willard would become one of those nameless faces in the crowd of humanity, uncertain and anxious about his life in general. Thus, as he prepared to leave Winesburg, he sensed all this and suddenly was not at all sure of himself and his future as “voices outside of himself whispered a message concerning the limitations of life.” Perhaps we will, or already have, encountered similar feelings as we leave prep school and go on to college. Here amidst a small community, we too stand out as individuals and are confident about our future. But once in college, we essentially leave our past records behind. We must strike out anew as we will do after college on the mystical path to success in the world of business. Perhaps it is at these transitional stages in our lives that we really encounter anxiety and emptiness and recognize the limitations of our lives. Indeed, we begin to wonder where our lives are leading us, and we insecurely search for some fundamental purpose in our existence. It is at such junctures, it seems, and through maturity, that God becomes meaningful to us.

Our Idea of God

When I began to consider possible subjects for this speech, religion and God were immediately eliminated from my mind. Indeed, particularly in the past few years, I, and I assume many others here at Blair, have shied away from or outwardly rejected any association with this subject. God of the Judaic-Christian concept is a crutch for older people who have drifted toward the meaningless and conventionality of religion. Right now, we are bright intellectuals, or like
to think ourselves so, who need no such crutch to reach our goals in life, whatever they may be. We have still not experienced real anxiety about our lives in general. When a friend noticed I had intended to use the senior religion book as a reference for my chapel speech, he let out a disappointing groan and exclaimed that religion was for old ladies and nothing more. In fact, he threatened to sleep through this “sermon” as a consequence. He, like many others, claimed to be an agnostic or atheist; for what use or purpose had God in our lives? Our success rests in our own hands, and we do not need moral support form an incomprehensible spiritual being. But as we pass through the stage and sadness of sophistication as George Willard has done, I think we can see why religion is necessary and why, as we mature, it becomes a meaningful part of our lives.

In conclusion, I would like to read a short message by R. Niebuhr, taken from the senior religion book, which deals with the ideas of maturity, the recognition of one’s limitation and the necessity of faith in God. “In becoming aware of his limitations even of his purely theoretical and intellectual understanding, man recognizes the true nature of his existence, which everywhere impinges upon impassable boundaries. If man accepts these limitations as part of his own existence—in constantly contending with them he grows and matures, and thus becomes a true personality. In this way, he understands the full import of the fact that we are dependent on an objective power by which our whole existence is related, and through which we are what we are. This spontaneous feeling that our existence has its center not in itself, is precisely what in religion is called faith. A genuine faith resolves the mystery of life by the mystery of God. It recognizes that no aspect of life or existence explains itself, even after all known causes and consequences have been traced. All known existence points beyond itself. To realize that it points beyond itself to God is to assert that the mystery of life does not dissolve life into anxiety and meaninglessness.”
November 3, 1969

Oh Fellow Classmate,

Having failed with irony and obviously feeble attempts at wit, I plead the straight line.

Have you seen the "new" senior dormitories, so appealing that Mr. Doan was enticed to give up his home for dorm life? Blair is planning a new swimming pool. No more 20 yard laps. "Fellow classmates" would you believe that Blair is very likely to enroll 25 to 30 girls as day students next year? Can you imagine the potential impact? What will freshmen English classes come to?

Surely our class cannot be so callous and hardhearted or apathetic and indifferent as to pass over such accomplishments and progress without paying some note.

Quite seriously, very substantial changes have continued to occur at Blair, not only in the physical plant but in the quality of education in the classroom as well. Such achievements are, in part, dependent upon alumni support. And in my own opinion, for whatever it may be worth, they are deserving of our support. Surely, some small part of our own personal achievements and pleasures can be traced to our times at Blair and to the education and experiences of varying dimensions that we found here. It is surprising that no memory is strong enough to prompt more of a response from members of our class than has thus far been elicited. Perhaps we're not yet old enough to afford to show our sentimentality or nostalgia, assuming that for some that does exist.

Finally, if the Mets can win the pennant, the class of '62 can contribute to Blair. Your gifts will be well used and much appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Mark Gottesman '62
Class Representative
Dear Classmate:

Back again for my third year as Class Representative. Sometimes ~ in moments of self-pity ~ the going seems pretty tough.

But now, I speak with renewed vigor and confidence. First of all, it was encouraging to see Dennis’ success at communication. Witness the wealth of class news, gossip, and intimate tidbits in the Bulletin.

Moreover, the related quest for money has been bolstered by a recently published, top secret document “The responsibilities of a Blair Academy Class Representative.” Armed with the suggestions and insight, I can’t help but be more effective. If you’ve been reluctant to contribute to dear ole Blair in the past... Beware! I have been armed with new, more powerful methods of persuasion. And more subtle too.

For example, I now have a list of all members of the class who are likely prospects for leadership gifts ~ $150 or more. If you think you may be on that list and want to get off it, just contribute less.

In addition, I also learned that if you contribute now, you don’t receive a second letter from your Class Representative. Not bad, eh? Surely you can see the new, devious techniques for bringing in BREAD for BLAIR. Convinced?

If you need additional incentives, I can remind you of some present activities at Blair. By mid-January the new pool should be completed. Perhaps of greater significance, 26 girls have entered Blair this fall. And finally, Dennis reminds me to remind you that Homecoming for Peddie Day is November 21st. We hope you can make it.

Sincerely yours,

Mark Gottesman ’62
Class Representative
Micheline Miller attended University of Paris (Sorbonne) in the 1960s and completed a degree in fine arts at Southern Connecticut State College in the 1970s. She is currently a faculty spouse and resides with her husband, Martin, on the beautiful Blair campus. Her memoir originally appeared in the Winter 1997 Blair Review, but it is too good to pass up for this timely edition.
With considerable rumbling and backfiring, bus number 139 lurched toward the edge of the curb. I grabbed the railing on top of the outdoor platform and eased myself in with the help of the conductor. This commuter trapeze act was to be repeated many times over several years, but on this particular day, September 15, 1957, I was to enter eighth grade at the Honoré de Balzac Lycée, a high school on the outskirts of Paris, and I could not stop worrying.

I was not worried about the impending return of Charles de Gaulle, called back to power when France was on the verge of civil war over the fate of Algeria. I didn’t care about the Cold War, our new friendship with the new Germany, or the Coal-Steel Pool. Equally unimportant to me were the respective views of Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, and the musical achievements of Jacques Brel and Charles Aznavour. I was worried about my legs. There was an unwritten rule that around age thirteen a girl had to stop wearing socks and flat shoes, unless she was retarded or possibly an American exchange student. With great trepidation I had, therefore, bought the stockings and the required pair of high heel shoes: faux-crocodile pumps with two-inch stacked wooden heels. The stockings were held by a garter belt (invented by the engineer Gustave Eiffel—he of the famous tower). Heels and stockings meant a real woman outfit was de rigueur, so I wore a tight bouclé wool skirt with a kick pleat in the back. Underneath, I wore a full slip. A blouse completed the outfit. On top of all this, despite the warm weather, I wore a button-down wool coat with a velvet collar, to better hide my “fully-formed” figure. I looked at my reflection in one of the windows: my fine, limp hair had been teased into a beehive hairdo, but I wore no make-up. I had been told that rouge and lipstick would send out the message that I was the “wrong type of girl.” The right type of girl would blend in and get an education.

Of course it was only partially true: consider the fate of the writer Colette, that “magnificent ruin,” as a writer had called her. All was forgiven, her dropping out of school, her dance-hall days, her many husbands and lovers, and the score of unaltered cats roaming her Palais Royal apartment. And what about Edith Piaf, the great singer with the seedy past, who had just taken up with a young hairdresser, all the while dying slowly of drug abuse? However, obscure young schoolgirls didn’t deserve, hadn’t earned, such adulation and indulgence.

The bus lumbered on its journey through the suburbs—which were not green, open spaces, but simply a continuation of the working-class...
neighborhoods ringing Paris. It crossed one arm of the Seine, which had long since stopped looking like an Impressionist paradise: its banks were lined with sand piles, coal depots, cement factories, all sorts of things inimical to picnics and straw hats. Working barges plied the dirty waters, laundry snapping in the wind across their decks. On a tiny island was my hometown's most salient feature: the Asniéres' dog cemetery with a huge concrete statue of a St. Bernard named Barry, complete with liquor barrel and slobbering jaw, rescuing little children from an avalanche. This startling piece of canine kitsch reminded me daily that bad taste and crude sentimentality can thrive anywhere, even near the City of Light. The bus crossed the Seine again and entered Clchy, another drab and non-descript suburb replete with the requisite number of must-have stores: lingerie shops with wares hanging in the windows, perfume stores, bakeries and charcuteries. The inhabitants may not have had cars or decent indoor plumbing, but they certainly had Hermès scarves, Chanel No. 5, and foie gras.

I bent over the railing to escape the clouds of smoke coming from my traveling companions, mostly elderly men who gathered on the platform to smoke. One of them thoughtfully crushed his half-finished Gauloise and stored it behind his ear. These men were a constant reminder of The Great War, which had killed a million and a half of them and crippled an even greater number. I saw them everywhere, blind, on crutches, in wheelchairs, selling lottery tickets or sunning themselves on public benches with war medals and ribbons on their jackets. There were so many war widows—my grandmother was one of them—that entire job categories had been reserved for them: telephone ladies and pay toilet assistants, among others.

They were the remnants of a glorious past. I was the new generation. The bus arrived at the final stop, a few hundred yards away from the high school, and I could tell the Republic had done all right by us: Here was a brand-new building, a mock Le Corbusier sort of affair, with curtain walls of glass and concrete slightly arched in front of a vast pea-graveled courtyard (the French don't believe in too many lawns). A few slender Italian poplars had been stuck in the corner as a concession to greenery, and the whole perimeter was surrounded by a concrete fence topped by wrought iron spikes. For good measure, a tall, bristly row of privet lined the inside of the yard. Escape was unlikely, I mused, picking up my high-heeled feet carefully around cobblestones and tree grate and trying to mingle with the crowd gathered in front of the gate. From a nearby subway stop, large groups of girls darted
across the boulevard. Others were coming from the bus terminal. The young sixth- and seventh-graders still had pageboy haircuts or braids. The seniors carried pocketbooks and three-ring binders; they wore suits and make-up.

I glanced at the bas-relief profile of Honoré de Balzac adorning the wall: not the disheveled, bloated, insomniac genius portrayed by Rodin, but a streamlined, well-coiffed famous author, suitable for a young women’s learning establishment housing two thousand girls.

At 7:45 a.m. the only male presence at the school shuffled towards the gate, a Gitane cigarette moving rhythmically on his lower lip as he mumbled under his breath. He was a small, evil-looking man who had “lost his health in Indochina.” He lived inside the gate in a little stone house. His official job was to open and close the gate at set times. His unofficial job was to make life as unpleasant as possible.

We all surged inside to be greeted by our educators, who stood in front of the buildings, whistles and clipboards in hand. The teachers were mostly middle-aged women who all had master’s degrees in their fieldsman and enough seniority to have been assigned to this choice location, Paris. Younger teachers were usually sent to some backwater schools. Naturally, these veterans were irritated at having to perform this vulgar herding.

“Eighth-grade classics over here!” I trudged toward that voice. “Classics” were students who already had two years of Latin.

“Are you taking up Greek?” I asked a small freckled girl with horn-rimmed glasses.

“Latin, Greek, German, so I can unearth the City of Troy,” she answered, clowning around and dropping her school bag. I had just met Christiane Luc, who would be my best friend for the next five years. We would share every single class, except language, when I had English and she had German. In fact, the entire class would remain together for five years, because we were the “classics” studying humanities, French, Latin, Greek, one living language, history, and a smaller load of math and science. Other girls had been tracked toward math and science and were called “the moderns.” We rarely associated with them.

“Mademoiselle Luc,” said a voice above us, “I hope you will seize upon this occasion to reform your appalling behavior and to stop making a spectacle of yourself.”

“Yes, ma’am,” answered Christiane, gazing at the ground as we had been trained to do since childhood. To look a grownup in the eye was considered most impudent.

“Old cow,” she whispered, as soon as the teacher was out of earshot. “That’s Madame Martin and she has the butt of a cavalry mare.” Our class started up the stairs, all
thirty-eight of us filing past a small gray-haired woman sporting a blunt haircut and a mannish-looking suit. “That’s the principal, said Christiane. “She’s a communist so she’s a real stickler about the lab coats.”

Like God in the Old Testament, the principal’s name was never uttered. The fact that she was a communist didn’t surprise or trouble us much: the education field was rumored to be “red on the edge.” To us, the Communists were people who put a lot of posters on the walls denouncing Yankee Imperialism and announcing the imminent triumph of the working class. Lately, they were having hissy fits about DeGaulle’s return, because he had kicked them out of the coalition government after the war. But our principal was not about to mention that, or agonize about the invasion of Hungary, or even make us read The Communist Manifesto. Political or religious proselytizing was strictly forbidden in school. All this party hack could do was to make us wear those drab human slipcovers: off-white lab coats with our name and class number embroidered on the left side. The intended goal was to “eradicate all feelings of inferiority due to social and economic inequalities.”

What preoccupied us most was our level of chest development. Christiane despaired at her breadboard physique. I felt over endowed. We didn’t really care about what Marx would have thought about this unequal distribution. Most of us were relieved, after all, because the lab coats hid our figures and the fact that we only had a couple of outfits to wear.

“I demand complete silence or I am going to take down names!”

We paused in mid-stairs. It was not the message that stunned us as much as the medium. Madame Pianet stood in her strategic spot at the top of the stairs. She was an ideal target for student amusement: short and barrel-like, she wore tight, black dresses that bounced with every step. The hair on her legs was wavy like seaweed under her seamed stockings. Her dyed black hair was gathered in a bun, and her ruddy complexion didn’t quite hide her abundant facial hair. A heavy southern accent made her sound like an actress in a comic-opera. Madame Pianet was the Dean of Students and a disciplinarian. She was always screaming, but because her hostility was constant and diffuse, we didn’t take it personally. She patrolled the halls, stiletto heels beating a tattoo on the parquet floor.

“She’s fit to be tied,” whispered Christiane. “Imagine, she followed me into the john, accused me of misusing the toilet tissue. Someone had ratted on me about unrolling it into the hall.”

I cast an appreciative glance at the gleaming bathrooms. Most of us had been to old elementary schools
with privies in the courtyard. Most infamous were the “Turkish toilets,” which had a habit of unleashing a tidal wave around the ankle of unwary users. My relatives in the countryside all had outhouses with giant spiders and creaky floorboards. This, I thought, was the true sign of France’s renewal, better than DeGaulle’s force de frappe (independent nuclear force), real flush toilets with seats!

We hung our coats in some built-in wardrobes. There were no individual lockers. Madame Martin wrote her name on the board and announced her intention to drag us down the path of enlightenment. She didn’t have much leeway: the curriculum was set by The Academy of Paris, under the aegis of the Ministry of Education. Textbooks were standardized and could be bought at any neighborhood bookstore anywhere in France. Work started immediately. There were no handouts, so everything was written on the blackboard, copied or memorized. We soon grew to detest Madame Martin. She was a handsome woman “of a certain age” with many traits guaranteed to alienate students: she belittled our humble social origins, telling us about her own children who were far more accomplished and deserving than we were. She had a small coterie of flunkies who were entrusted to take notes to the office, clean the blackboard, and hand out papers. She made shy, withdrawn Monique LeBlanc recite out loud the famous poem by Lamartine “The Lake” and when the poor, befuddled creature blurted out, “O lake suspend thy flight!” (instead of, “O time suspend they flight!”), she sent poor blubbering Monique out in the hall. Once, after a particularly disappointing translation of Seneca, she flung her fur coat on a chair and wagged a well-manicured finger toward the class.

“Some of you,” she said sneeringly, “are just good enough to peel potatoes or become hairdressers.” These were serious threats, indeed, considering the French disdain for the manual professions.

The ordeal went on for two years, during which we had Madame Martin for three subjects. There was no use complaining, as the teacher was always right. Parents were neither asked nor welcome to the school, and it was a dire sign indeed if they were ever summoned to have a chat with the principal. There was a Rules and Discipline Committee which functioned like a Stalinist trial: one was informed of the charge, found guilty, and sentenced all at once.

In retrospect, I see Madame Martin as a burned-out and hormonally-challenged woman of limited vision, but back then I had dreams of that snobby petite bourgeoise hanging from a lamppost or pinned to a barn door by angry peasants with pitchforks.
She took a particular dislike to me, identifying me as a sullen, gifted underachiever who was “helping” my friend with her homework. This was true, of course, but she didn’t seem to realize that cheating and “sharing” homework had reached epidemic proportions. It was third-world bartering at its best, and it could help us out of tricky situations.

“I found one—I found one who does not know what a square root is!” Madame Roux, the math teacher, was an old woman with pastel suits and hair that peculiar shade of orange favored by French women. As she spoke, she did a little Sioux dance on and off the podium while brandishing my paper in the air. I was, and still am, living proof that single-sex math classes are not necessarily better for girls.

No one held a grudge against Madame Roux’s lackluster teaching and cranky disposition: she had a series of numbers tattooed on her forearm, so it was not surprising she preferred the abstract realm of mathematics to human interaction. Everyone in class had read The Diary of Anne Frank, which focused conveniently on the Nazi’s beastliness towards the Jews of Holland, far away from France. With the self-centeredness of youth, I agonized more about my lack of math ability than about history’s tragic course.

“My neighbor downstairs can do math in his head,” said Christiane, a consummate survivor and charming underdog. “I’ll get the math homework if you do the geography maps.”

It was a fair deal. Christiane was perceptually challenged and never seemed to remember that the Seine ran east-west and the Rhone went north-south. She broke into a sweat at the thought of the tributaries of the Rhine, while I could draw the map of France from memory. Christiane had a lot of nerve and talent for finding shortcuts to homework. Instead of poring over Latin and Greek texts with dictionary and grammar book at hand, she devised a scheme to check the already translated works out of her public library (our texts wisely omitted all coordinates, except for the author’s name). Christiane checked out the complete works of Latin poets from a myopic librarian, and while looking for Ovid, we leafed through the uncensored works of Catullus, who had his poetic mind in the gutter. As that old Supreme Court justice said, we knew pornography when we saw it. Those Romans were not so dull after all! We had a similar adventure when Christiane checked out a book by famous Greek playwrights. Right past the miseries of the house of Atreus, we stumbled upon the comedies of Aristophanes, with many ribald passages and even a sex strike by women to force men to make peace.

Our descent into vice contin-
ued unabated. Since I looked older, I was delegated to go to a Left Bank bookstore and procure a copy of Lady Chatterley’s Lover by D.H. Lawrence. We were puzzled by the plot. Would a member of the aristocracy really fall for a gamekeeper? In France, gamekeepers tended to be paunchy civil servants who teetered on old bicycles in their dark green uniforms, hardly something to inspire lust. We decided it was a peculiar brand of British perversion. We preferred Bonjour Tristesse, a semi-autobiographical novel by Françoise Sagan in which the heroine takes a blasé look at her youth filled with drinking, smoking, and drugs. She does unspeakable things with older men in the back of convertible cars on the Cote d’Azur, and lives to write about it. Christiane and I read it during study hall, the book hidden in a volume of Marcus Aurelius’ philosophical thoughts. We also acquired a copy of Lolita by Vladimir Nabokov. France was scoffing at the idea of America getting all heated up about this book. What seemed strange to us was the intellectual dithering over Humbert Humbert, the fictional character, lusting after his thirteen year old stepdaughter, while at the very same time, a real, live pervert was plying his trade at the gate of the lycée. He had approached several younger girls, promising them unforgettable sights if they followed him home. One of the girls told her older sister, who reported the man to the gatekeeper. He shuffled off, still mulling over the fall of Dien-Bien-Phu and muttering about how this was not part of his work contract. When he threatened the pervert with the police, we knew they would never come. The police only moved for bank robberies or student demonstrations.

We also knew it was not an isolated incident. In the anonymity of a large city filled with unaccomplished school children lay a paradise for mass transit molesters. The Metro was even worse than the buses.

“What a day,” said Christiane, arriving more out of breath and disheveled than usual. “First, my fountain pen leaked all over my stuff. Then I was late and I had to change at the Chatelet station, you know, where the corridors are two kilometers long…”

We nodded in agreement. Chatelet was the worst station.

“…then,” she continued, “I notice this guy is following me. I go faster, he goes faster. You know the kind, rat-faced with Perrier bottle shoulders…”

We shook our heads. Perverts never looked like Jean-Paul Belmondo or James Dean.

“…Anyway, I can’t shake him and he manages to get into the same car and we are all squished together and it never misses, he starts to feel me up! Fortunately, I am wearing my

Fast Times at Balzac High
new panty girdle, so he can hardly get a grip... But I am real mad, and so I pick up his hand and yell out loud, 'Whose hand is that?...”

We looked at her with admiration. Most of us were mortified and speechless in such circumstances. We had been warned by well-meaning relatives about strangers who offered candy and men who worked for the white-slave trade. None of us had ever been offered candy or ended up doing the belly dance in Beirut, but we could all spot a flasher a mile away, a well-dressed, middle-aged man with shifty eyes and a half-buttoned raincoat.

The subway was not the only troublesome spot. Outdoor cafés exposed us to constant harassment, ranging from mild to insulting.

“Hé, mademoiselle, how about a little smile for me before I die for the fatherland...” a group of young conscripts were gathered outside, drinking cheap red wine early in the morning.

“...Oh la la! What a snob, she thinks she is Brigitte Bardot, but she is built like a packing crate...”

In the suburbs, a group to avoid was the “blousons noirs,” a Gallic version of the Marlon Brando wild ones, sporting cheap black vinyl jackets and noisy mopeds.

How could school expect us to concentrate on the Age of Periclé when such low-lives abounded? There seemed to be very little interest in gender issues, and feminism was a very dirty word indeed, a combination of blue stocking and wet blanket. A mild form of misogyny pervaded the land.

“It’s the women who elected him; they are eating out of his hand since he gave them the vote in 1944,” said my Uncle André when DeGaulle was elected.

The women, it seems, were responsible for most of the ills that plagued France, including the most worrisome; the aging population. By refusing to reproduce, they were condemning us to a nation of walkers and wheelchairs and costly nursing homes. Immigrant laborers had to be imported, who cooked strange foods and eyed the native womenfolk.

This dismal state of affairs offered sharp contrast with most women’s lives, which were plagued by the constant fear of pregnancy. Mere information about birth control was punishable by law. There were whispered conversations about “finding someone who can help,” or “going to Switzerland,” all euphemisms for illegal abortions. There were sudden weddings where the brides wore Empire-style dresses, followed by eight-pound “premature” infants six months later. There were even worse outcomes, which came to light in somewhat grotesque fashion: the weekly Paris-Match had a front-page cover “Miracle on The Eiffel Tower!” A young woman had thrown herself
off the second floor of the famous landmark. Buffeted by strong winds, she was trapped in the metal structure and alpine rescuers rappelled down to free her. One of her legs had to be amputated. The paper said she had been driven to despair by "sentimental disappointment." We scoffed at that notion. I was burning with unrequited love for Charlton Heston, Paul Newman, and a boy I saw on the bus every day, yet I had no desire to fling myself from a public building. Six months later, Paris-Match offered another "miracle," tucked in the last pages between Princess Margaret's heartbreak and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor's winter vacation: the one-legged survivor just had a hefty baby boy. Disappointed in love, indeed! The literary pundits had even stopped jabbering about the eternal feminine and gotten into the fray: Francois Mauriac, the famous Catholic writer had called Simone de Beauvoir "The Great Aborter" after she signed a petition supporting reproductive rights.

The medical profession was doing its bit to encourage women to produce more cannon fodder: Dr. Lamaze was bamboozling women into thinking that childbirth didn't hurt, when we had heard from our relatives that it hurt more than amputation without anesthetic in an open field.

Naturally, we could only follow these debates from afar, in the newspapers and our parents' conversations, because to evince even the mildest curiosity about these lower-body subjects would brand us as "nymphomaniacs." Better we should focus on the two hours of homework awaiting us every night, or the many chores that our parents didn't have time to do when they came home to their cramped dwellings.

The Fifth Republic, we were told, was the return of reason, sanity, and even grandeur. Then DeGaulle's presidential Citroen was peppered by machinegun fire from disgruntled rebels.

"These old leather pants can't hit a moving car, because all they ever did in the colonies is drink and shoot sleeping camels," said Uncle André.

Even worse than the political unrest were the changes in fashion: they were turning over faster than cabinets during the Fourth Republic. There were constant arguments over fishnet stockings, push-up bras, miniskirts, and that wonderful invention from the U.S., pantyhose. Hairspray was out; long hair was in. We painted our eyelids when the movie Cleopatra was shown and one of the hottest items during grooming sessions in the lavatory was Max Factor's pancake make-up.

The Cold War was coming to an end and Mr. Krushschev hinted not all had been ideal in the worker's paradise. In school, things improved
with the disappearance of Madame Martin. Her successor, Madame Bonneau, was a tall, stringy woman who wore Chanel suits and took a sincere interest in her students, not a mean feat since there were thirty-eight of us. She would never write, “Your prose is banal and your ideas commonplace,” unlike her predecessor, so we made a serious effort to study. Once in a display of emotion unusual for a teacher, she surveyed the class and declared she was concerned about some of us. A wind of panic went through us. No matter what forms of dysfunction plagued our personal lives, we were not willing to share them with this well-meaning stranger. Madame Bonneau’s anxiety was well-founded since two girls committed suicide in tenth and eleventh grade.

Early one morning, while the physics teacher was trying to initiate us to the mysteries of electromagnetism, the principal barged in without knocking. We immediately rose to our feet with a sense of dread. “Sit down,” she said irritably and went to whisper in the teacher’s ear. She stood before us, and peering over her half-glasses read from some index cards. “Your comrade, Viviane Leguet, has passed away from the results of a malfunctioning hot water heater. I have given orders to have all of you properly instructed in the safe use of household appliances. Carry on with your lessons.” She folded her glasses, put away her cards, and left.

We sat there stunned and relieved that she had provided an official version of this awful event. “She turned on the gas,” said Chantal, a girl who knew everything, “but they had to say it was an accident so she could have a proper burial mass.”

We had one more warning with the other girl: she was extremely gaunt and spoke only in a hoarse whisper. Her yellow fingers betrayed a serious nicotine habit, and soon we noticed round cigarette burns on the back of her hands. We were nonplussed. Why would a girl who got excellent grades do such sick things? Chantal, the busybody, told us something was going on with her older brother. He was mistreating her. We shrugged. Most girls with older brothers had pitched battles over whose turn it was to take the trash out. Christiane herself had threatened to kill her stepbrother if he touched her transistor radio. We were relieved when Helène became too weak to attend school and went into a hospital for the sleep sure. There, she hoarded her pills and died of an overdose.

Since she had the good sense to kill herself in the summer, we were spared another lecture from the principal on the dangers of self-administered medication.

In our senior year, we studied philosophy from a delicate little woman named Madame Eugrand. I cannot remember much about
it. I do recall posing in my bikini bathing suit that summer, in a dry river bed in the south of France. (My parents were fond of remote areas). I was reading Nietzsche, or pretending to, since I found him an incomprehensible, insufferable bore. While shifting uncomfortably on the sharp rocks, I kept hoping that some handsome existentialist young man would materialize and spirit me away.

The day after I finished my baccalaureate exam, I went to the flea market on the outskirts of Paris and bought myself a new wardrobe: Wrangler jeans, black turtleneck, and Clark’s desert boots. I had found my style at last. But on that fall day in 1957, I knew none of these things. At four-thirty the gates opened and I had a bag full of assignments: algebra problems, Julius Caesar’s “World of the Gauls”—Gaul is divided into three parts, the entire Greek alphabet including capital letters, and in French, a letter from that consummate co-dependent, Madame de Sévigné, who wrote to her daughter every day.

I ran to the bus, clutching my student fare card, resigned to the fact there would not be any free seat left. When you counted all the war veterans, elderly people, women with small children, and transit employees, in short, all the people with priority cards, it was surprising there was any room at all for even one schoolgirl. I stood on the platform with the tired old fellows who smoked. Their expression said plainly but not unkindly, “You’ve never worked a day in your life.” Or as Euripides said in his more inspired moment, “Knowledge is not wisdom.”
Jim Bullock ’61 tells the story of the Bullock boys of Blair Academy. They are: Michael E. Bullock ’59, James H. Bullock ’61 and Bruce L. Bullock ’66.

The Bullock boys of Blair Academy were on campus from the fall of 1956 through the spring of 1966, except for the school year of 1961-1962. Mike was a three-year student from 1966-1959; I followed right behind him with two years, 1959-1961; and Bruce was a four-year man at Blair, 1962-1966.

Our family originated in the Chatham and Summit area of New Jersey, and eventually moved to Lake Hopatcong. We had an older brother, John, who graduated from Summit High School and Duke University. Our father was in the restaurant business, and owned and managed the two “Sip and Sup” restaurants, one in Springfield, New Jersey, and the more well-known restaurant located on the corner of Routes 10 and 202 in Morris Plains/Parsippany. That location was popular for Blair families traveling to and from campus. All of us brothers worked at both restaurants during our school breaks and vacations.

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Christmas 1959: St. Petersburg Beach, Florida. Front row L-R: Joey (sister-in-law), Bruce, Mom (Marion Bullock), Dad (John Bullock, Sr.) and back row L-R: John Bullock, Jr., Mike Bullock (with Blair shirt) and Jim Bullock (junior year).
The Bullock Boys

Michael Bullock (Mike) ’59
Growing up in a big family of four boys, each individual child may not be aware of what’s going on with a brother, and the decisions our parents were dealing with. This is where Mike comes up, and the decision to send him to a boarding prep school. Instead of following John through Summit High School, Mike entered Blair as a sophomore, and repeated his sophomore year. My recollection is that Mike was having too much fun and not hitting the books enough.

Mike was a very good student at Blair, and, for his three years, he worked in the Dining Hall as a waiter, assistant head waiter, and head waiter in three consecutive years.

Mike was an outstanding athlete, with football, winter track and spring track. He was strong and fast, but not heavy, playing the offensive line and linebacker at 160 pounds. In track, Mike was a hurdler, sprinter and relay man. He captained the football and winter track teams his senior year.

Mike’s nickname at Blair was “Bull,” short for Bullock, and when I showed up on campus the next fall, football players started calling me “Little Bull,” and asking me if I was going to play football, too. Well, I was 120 pounds soaking wet then and going to run cross country.

Following Mike’s graduation from Blair, he completed his two-year associates degree in hotel-restaurant management at Farleigh Dickenson University, with the goal of following in my dad’s footsteps in the restaurant business. His goals and future changed with the Vietnam War looming and the possibility of being drafted. Mike attended Marine Corp Flight School and flew fighter jets, but thank goodness he didn’t see any action with the war. My brother went on to a long career as a commercial airlines pilot, flying domestic and international. Tragically, Mike died at the age of 57 in 1998 due to an accidental private plane crash with another Marine Corp pilot buddy.

Mike lived in Ridgefield, Connecticut, and Cape Cod, Massachusetts with his wife and three children.
Bruce Bullock '66

With all of the positives garnered by my parents from the success at Blair with Mike and I, there was no doubt where Bruce was going to high school. After having two Bullocks for five consecutive years, Blair welcomed my brother, Bruce, with a one-year break, for four years.

Bruce followed a long line of Bullock athletes. My oldest brother, John started the trend at Summit High School, playing soccer, basketball and baseball.

At Blair Academy, Bruce played football, wrestling and baseball. His senior year, he was the starting quarterback in football, and pitcher in baseball. During those years when Bruce was at Blair, my father’s business was running well with general managers, and that allowed Mom and Dad to see many of Bruce’s games, and to be able to support Bruce and Blair athletics. This was also a time that I was not able to see or visit Bruce at Blair due to being at college in Massachusetts.

Upon graduation from Blair, Bruce followed in my footsteps and went to Springfield College and majored in physical education. Bruce was a physical education and health teacher at Saranac Lake High School in upstate New York. He also coached football and track and field, specializing with the throwers and jumpers. One year, when Bruce was the football head coach, he took his football team from Saranac Lake to the Small School Division New York State Championship Game. His kids played in the Syracuse University Carrier Dome and came in second in the state.
Bruce and his wife, Gail, began getting ill with cancer in the early 1990s, Bruce with melanoma and Gail with breast cancer. They both tragically passed away, Bruce in 1995, Gail in 1996. They have two daughters.

With me struggling to keep up with the academic load and homework, and being down about the running and not competing with my team, I went home for Thanksgiving break and announced to my parents that I wanted to withdraw from Blair. My parents agreed and we registered at the local high school in Sparta. We called Blair over the holiday, to announce our decision, and Mr. Ferd Marcial spoke to my mom, and we set up a meeting for the next day. Ferd Marcial was so kind, nice and understanding. He did not focus on the negatives, but only the positives: cross country and track in the future, singing with the Tweeds and the Blair Chorus, friends and South Cottage, being a waiter for Mr. Jones’ table, etc. By the end of the meeting, I was ready

James Bullock (Jim) ’61
The fall of 1959 term was tough for me getting through the transition from public school to the high expectations of Blair Academy’s academic standards. All of my instructors were nice and fair; however, I couldn’t keep up with the work. I lived in the South Cottage with Mr. Boardman; he and the other students were great.

I went out for cross country and was doing well until I became injured, and that essentially ended the season for me.
to return after the break. Ferd Marcial was the best and most understanding administrator!

The Tweeds: it was an honor to sing under the direction of Mr. Rouse and in such a prestigious group of singers my first year at Blair, and the first time ever singing at that level. All of the guys were super and we were all best friends. It was cool when we would go off campus to perform at various girls’ prep schools, but too bad I had no moves with the ladies, like my senior buddies had!

Moving in with David Garcia in South Cottage after the Christmas break my first year was also a major turning point. He also ran cross country and track. We became best friends, and still are after all of these years.

After that transition during the fall of 1959, things went very well for me through my senior year.

Being Mr. Jones’ waiter my junior year was a lot of fun. He was a great man and a friend of all the other students. I remember him having to talk to me at his table confidentially about sleeping in his math class; “why are you so tired Jim?” So I had to explain to him that I was staying up late studying, and tired with our track workouts.

Another time in Mr. DuBous senior English class, I had my head down, but was not sleeping; I was reading. Then I heard my name being called on to answer a question which I didn’t know, so I faked sleeping and kept my head down, and he moved on to another student. After class, we had a talk.

As mentioned previously, the academic pressures were severe for me at Blair. I did not get impressive grades. But I learned how to study and use my time wisely, and that helped me in college, where I did very well academically.

By the winter term my junior year, my running injury from the fall was gone with no side effects. Running “real” winter track outdoors on the banked 220-yard wooden track was a blast. And in the dead of winter, prior to toeing the line, we would hear the dreaded command, “Sweats off!” And we are stripping
down to thin singlets and shorts in sub-freezing weather. When one of the wooden boards on the track was cracked or rotting out, and needing to be replaced, Mr. Sweet (Spanish teacher and shot put coach) would drop a shot put in the bad board to the point of going through the track in order to force the maintenance men to repair the track. In those days, the only prep school which held winter track meets indoors was Lawrenceville—and did we envy them, and love to run there, too.

My running continued to improve throughout the spring. We had great running coaches year-round: Mr. Boardman and Mr. Pender. Our track teams were well balanced with track and field athletes.

One of the highlights and honors for my senior year was being asked by the Headmaster to be his waiter for the year. Mr. and Mrs. Howard were wonderful people and hosts for all of the Blair students that ate with them. Back then, the new students would rotate in and out of the Headmaster's table, weekly I think, so that Mr. and Mrs. Howard could get to know the new students and visa-versa. One of great stories I can remember while working at the Headmaster's table was when I broke tradition and managed to sit at the opposite end of the table. What was customary at the Headmaster’s table was that I sat next to Mr. Howard and across from Mrs. Howard at the head of the table, and that was not always fun, with them and the new students. At the opposite end of the table sat our class president, Bob Frank (who sadly passed away too early, amongst others in our class). And he’s not having fun with the younger students either. So Bob and I come up with a plan to propose to Mr. Howard: that I can shift down to Bob’s end of the table, and we can engage in “senior talk.” Mr. Howard thinks it over and gives us the green light, and things are going well. I am still keeping track of meals, drinks, second servings, deserts and clearing the table. But one day, Mr. Howard senses that Bob and I are having too much fun at the end of the table and the gig was up. Back to the head of the table for Jimbo, as Garcia would call me. A huge benefit of being the Headmaster's waiter for the whole table, including me, was that I always lined up first, ahead of all the other waiters, getting the meals first, going to the front for seconds and for dessert.

For my senior year, academics were still tough, but I was making it. With all of the seniors in the Senior House, it was a fun atmosphere and everyone got to know each other. For me, doing well with my cross country and track for three seasons, and being healthy was a positive that kept me going into graduation. I am thankful for our special coaches and dedicated teammates for their...
work ethic in practice and competition. We had many talented athletes during my time at Blair and we competed well with our opponents. I was co-captain with Fred Everett in cross county and the same with Brian Jones in winter track during our senior year.

Three significant events occurred during my senior year with cross country and spring track that are permanently burned into my memory bank.

The scene: Competing against Newark Academy, always known for their distance runners, at home on our cinder track, I am in the 880 (1/2 mile). On the gun, I immediately take the lead and set the pace and come through the quarter in under 60 seconds. The rule on the track is not to look back, but I knew my opponents were riding on my pace. I run the second quarter while still leading, and not knowing where my competition is; close, but how close? I come off the final curve with 50 yards to the finish line, and here they come; two Newark Academy runners pass me in a three-man sprint to the finish line, with a third opponent right behind me. I can remember yelling “shit” very loudly, I was so mad about going from first to third. However, when I heard my time of 2:01.9, I was very happy with my PR, and that time held up through college also. Later that day, a Blair friend who was playing baseball that afternoon about 150 yards from the finish line tells me that everyone heard me yell, and they knew it was Bullock.

Another special event that took place my senior year was when Coach Pender took our 4 x 440 mile
relay team to the Penn Relays. I recall our team finishing close to the front in our heat. It was very exciting how they ran off all of the high school heats so fast with such good organization. As one heat finished, the next heat’s lead-off runners and second legs were on the track for the gun. Prior to running our event, Coach Pender, who had connections with one of the college trainers, got us all thorough massages with hot liniment and stretching.

The third event that is closest to my heart was the sweep over Peddie in cross country on Peddie Day at Blair in 1960. Our seven varsity runners, after realizing we would sweep, all coordinated their finish position by linking hands, seven across the finish line. And, to top that, 50 years later on Peddie Day at Blair in 2010, all seven of our varsity team members reunited on campus to celebrate that event, and do a reenactment on the track in front hundreds of students, faculty and family members. Those seven runners, who showed Blair Academy great character 50 years ago, returned to campus, many from afar, to demonstrate that character again! They are: Juniors Peter Humphrey, John Simmons and Edgar Mason; and Seniors Dick Bostwick, Dave Garcia, Fred Everett and Jim Bullock.

I began teaching physical education in 1965 in the Guilderland School District, outside of Albany, New York. Moving back to New Jersey, I taught physical education and coached various sports, including cross country and track. In addition to a master's degree in physical education, I also became certified in special education and school administration. My career spanned 44 years.

And, yes, I am still running, training and competing at 69 years old.

The Bullock Boys

The finish against Peddie—Seven Blair men tie for first. Left to right—Pete Humphrey ’62, John Simmons ’62, Fred Everett ’61, Ed Mason ’62, Jim Bullock ’61, Dick Bostwick ’61, and Dave Garcia ’61.
Dr. Robert Textor ’40 served as president of the International Society in his senior year at Blair and somehow managed to win letters in soccer and hockey. A volunteer in WWII, he was trained in Infantry Heavy Weapons and ended up in the Military Intelligence Japanese Language School. He served in Japan as a civilian official in military government where he was second in charge of administering General MacArthur’s policies on education and the media for one-third of Japan. Bob earned his doctorate in cultural anthropology at Cornell in 1960 (with a dissertation on Thai religion) and, after appointments at Yale and Harvard, joined the faculty at Stanford, taking early retirement in 1990. He has lived and worked for nine years in Asia and two in Europe and studied four Asian languages. In 1961, he was one of the founders of the Peace Corps, which celebrated its golden anniversary. Bob’s current scholarship focuses on developing a method he invented called Ethnographic Futures Research, which helps individuals visualize alternative mid-range futures for themselves or their society. In 2006, he edited and provided an introduction and commentary to a volume on Margaret Mead entitled The World Ahead: An Anthropologist Anticipates the Future. Bob participated in the Alumni Weekend panel in June 2010 on American Foreign Policy Challenge: The War in Afghanistan. He headed a Portland, Oregon, weekly intellectual forum called the Thirsters. Sadly, he passed away on January 3, 2013, preparing for the next Thirsters presentation.
Peace Corps
There at the Creation

On Sunday, June 10, 1940, at the First Presbyterian Church in Blairstown, the Blair Class of that year, exactly 100 in number, celebrated Commencement. For many of us, it was the first time to wear the cap and gown. We celebrated, along with scores of moms, pops, sister Sues, brother Joes and all the others.

Four days later, Paris fell to the Germans and France descended into darkness.

I was the valedictorian that year, and in my valedictory, I stated solemnly that, in the event of a threat to our country, “not one able-bodied person among us shall fail to answer the call to colors!” Tragically, within the following five years, at least four men of our class were dead: Don Schnabel, fullback on our soccer team where I was halfback; Danny Danielson, forward on our hockey team where I was defenseman; Creighton Bickley, from my German class; and Arch Williams, who died in a plane-to-plane collision over England.

I was an isolationist at that point in my 17-plus years. But the moment the Japanese struck at Pearl Harbor, I supported the war in every possible way. I was then a sophomore at Antioch College in Ohio, and in the summer of 1942, I initiated and organized a “Pre-Induction Military Training Program,” by means of which I managed to secure some military training experience for myself and about 15 of my male classmates, by enrolling us all in the Ohio State Guard. The training we received had its faults and limitations, but it did help prepare us for military service. As far as I know, all but one of us made it through the war. That one was my friend John Downs, killed in the American-French invasion of southern France that was launched in August 1944.

I also enthusiastically joined a seminar on “Post-War Reconstruction,” taught by a highly capable political scientist, Dr. J. Donald Kingsley. I wrote a 38-page term paper for Dr. Kingsley, for which I received a grade of “Honors.” My paper, entitled “What I Would Do With Central Europe,” provided a comprehensive vision for the post-war promotion of democratic structures in that area. It assumed that Americans would have some kind of influence in Central Europe after the war—which, of course, did not happen, courtesy of the Russians and the Iron Curtain.

Participating in this seminar, I became deeply committed to becoming part of an overall effort to implement American war aims, to promote democracy because democracies don’t make war against each other and, in general, to build a new and better world out of the
debris of World War II. In short: “Win the war, yes, but win the peace as well.”

**Texas**

In 1942, I joined the Army’s Enlisted Reserve Corps, which committed me to enter active service as soon as the Army had the capability to train me. This arrangement gave me the status of a volunteer rather than a draftee, which was important to me. In April 1943, just after my twentieth birthday, I was called up. Ten days later I found myself at the Infantry Replacement Training Center at Camp Wolters, Texas, where I volunteered for training in heavy weapons (30-caliber machine gun and 81-millimeter mortar).

During 17 weeks of surprisingly good training, it became increasingly clear to me that I really had to get a commission. “Dog-face” infantry privates, I discovered, did not do well with the ladies. Besides, my older brother was already an officer in the Navy, and my family had served, often as officers, in the Revolutionary, 1812 and Civil (northern side) Wars, as well as World War I—that is, in all of our “justifiable” wars and none of the others.

My application for Infantry Officer Candidate School got nowhere. Openings had by then practically dried up. So I applied instead for the Army Specialized Training Program, which looked like it might lead to an opportunity to get a commission later. I did quite well on the entrance test for engineering (which I would have hated) and apparently did okay in the language aptitude test. However, alas, I also had to pass a language achievement test in German, the only foreign language I had ever studied. To my amazement, I made it—though one of the enlisted men who administered the test later slipped me the news that I had passed only by the skin of my teeth. All this was thanks to the late Eugene F. Hogenauer. “Hogie” was my Blair German teacher for two years, was advisor to the International Society (of which I was president), was my hockey coach and my friend. If I had not passed that test, my future would have been very different. Thanks, Hogie!

**Ann Arbor**

Days later, I found myself with 260 other enlisted men, debouching from a troop train at Ann Arbor, Michigan, under gray 6:00 AM skies, groggy from no coffee, to be greeted by our new company commander, who pronounced our collective fate with seven well-chosen words: “You men are going to study JAPANESE.”

At that precise moment, my life changed forever. Instead of becoming an attorney and Democratic politician somewhere in the midwest, I would end up as a specialist in the study of various cultures and in the promotion of programs for culturally sound, democratic, humane development, especially in
less developed nations.

What followed was a year studying at the University of Michigan’s Army Specialized Training Program’s Japanese Language and Area program. The emphasis was on spoken Japanese (which I liked), and Japanese and Asian Area Studies. This was followed by eight months of waiting around in various military assignments, then back to Michigan for a second year, this time in the Military Intelligence Japanese Language School. This was a pre-Officers Training School course designed to lead us to a commission in military intelligence in February 1947. The course consisted mainly of studying the Japanese writing system (which I hated, because of the implied necessity of memorizing up to 2,000 or more characters). Like many of my colleagues, my gift, if any, was with the oral language, not with a writing system that required a kind of “photographic memory,” mental equipment that I simply did not have.

 Barely had our contingent gotten back to Ann Arbor, however, than the war in Europe was over. And three months later, to our immense surprise, the war in the Pacific came to a sudden end, because of the atomic bomb.

 The Japanese Emperor surrendered on behalf of his people on August 15. By August 31, as I recall, I organized a seminar on “Political Problems of the Occupation of Japan,” and invited all of the 200 or so men in my company to attend. This event was a big departure from the ordinary routine of the Military Intelligence Japanese Language School and required prior permission of my company commander—who was not enthusiastic, but, to his credit, did allow me to conduct this seminar for a single meeting. Many of my fellow GIs attended, and we had an excellent discussion. It should have continued, perhaps once a week. It could have been helpful in getting us all thinking creatively about what the U.S. should do in occupying a nation that had never before been occupied, and in finding creative ways to help that nation recover and, hopefully, become a democracy. But that was not to be.

 The announcement for that seminar was posted on our company bulletin board:

Peace Corps
ORIENTATION SUBJECT

POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF THE OCCUPATION OF JAPAN

What are the minimum conditions that must be achieved before we withdraw from Japan?

Meting out of Justice to war criminals. Often it is hard to tell whether a war crime is mainly the fault of a particular individual or of another who influenced him.

Who should be punished?

Those who committed atrocities, Army and Navy officers, Zaibatsu, Emperor

What kind of punishment?

Death, Imprisonment, Exile, Loss of property, Loss of political and civil rights

The domestic political situation when we withdraw from Japan will presumably show some democratic tendencies. What should our minimum standards be with regard to:

- The office and power of the emperor
- The power of the people’s elected representatives
- The political influence of the present zaibatsu
- The political maturity of the voters

To what extent should the occupiers interfere in the school system?

What extent interfere in press, radio, etc.?

With what individuals or groups can the occupiers co-operate to get desirable political leadership?

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What kind of agency should make the important political decisions necessary in “cleansing” Japan?

Military

American or Inter-Allied

Civilian

American or Inter-Allied
Like millions of other GIs, I could hardly wait to get out of the service. In early 1946, I actually managed to report to the separation center a few days early. I took the train to Washington as quickly as I could, and decided to accept almost any civil service job on offer—just to get myself to Japan, where, scuttlebutt had it, I could then shop around for a really useful assignment in the occupation, a job where I would be able to put into practice many of the ideas I had developed at Antioch.

**Japan**

The scuttlebutt turned out to be correct. I arrived in Japan on April 23, 1946, as a CAF level 5 translator (simulated rank: tech sergeant), and, within just a few weeks, found myself serving as a level 9 educational administrator in military government (simulated rank: first lieutenant or captain). This new assignment was just what I wanted, far from Tokyo and out in the prefectures, using my skills and communicating in Japanese on a daily basis with change-oriented Japanese officials and local leaders. I became one of the first professional-level civilian officials hired by military government, and was posted to headquarters First Corps in Kyoto, where I became No. 2 administrator for carrying out General MacArthur’s policies in twenty prefectures (embracing one-third the population of Japan, or about 25 million people) in the areas of education, the media, religion, and arts and monuments. All of this at age 23, not because of anything special about me, but because of the severe personnel shortage.

In the summer 2010 issue of *The Blair Review* I reported on my work in Japan. This article makes clear my belief that the Allied occupation of Japan, for all its faults, is one that the U.S. can truly be proud of. Indeed, it stands as one of the few truly successful occupations in modern history.

I remained in the occupation until mid-1948. Suffice here to say that these two-plus years of work in the occupation, with some success, some failure and plenty of instructive stumbles, convinced me that I needed doctoral-level education in cultural anthropology.

**Ithaca**

During the fall of 1948, I visited several major universities that were widely respected for their excellent programs in general anthropology, but I discovered that few of them also offered much in applied anthropology—a sub-field that I felt would best equip me to become an effective specialist in programs of planned culture change. (One or two of these universities, reflecting a certain elitist bias, actually seemed to pride themselves in not offering applied courses.) Finally, I visited Cornell, where I found excellence in both general and applied anthropol-
ogy. So, I chose Cornell, and have never regretted the choice.

I should mention in passing that this wonderful educational opportunity that I enjoyed would not have been possible without financial support from the 1944 G.I. Bill of Rights, which I regard as one of the truly great acts of American legislative history—along with the Morrill Act creating land-grant universities, which was signed by President Lincoln in 1862. Interestingly, the Anthropology Department at Cornell was located in Morrill Hall.

**Thailand**

I spent 1949-52 doing course work at Cornell, and then five-plus years doing field work in Thailand, the culture I had finally chosen to be my primary specialty. The Thai language is perhaps a bit harder to learn to speak well than Japanese—but its writing system is alphabetic, not character-based.

I chose aspects of Thai Buddhism and spirit worship as a topic for my dissertation and did my fieldwork in the “Cornell village,” 25 miles east of Bangkok. There, I did endless interviewing, and even spent six months as a Buddhist monk—not something I had originally envisioned, but something that was urged upon me by my friends in the village. (In central Thailand, it is the cultural expectation that every Thai male become a monk for at least three or four months, usually before marriage. Some then decide to stay a few years, some a lifetime.) So, after careful preparation, I was ordained a monk, had my head shaved and donned the golden robe. My experience during the months that followed deeply enriched my respect for Thai culture, and my understanding of the numerous ways in which Buddhism stands at the core of that culture. When I left the order, I was free, as the Lord Buddha taught, to believe in whatever religion made sense to me, or no religion. (In this respect, Buddhism is fundamentally different from Christianity or Islam, and much friendlier to modern science.)

In addition to this “non-applied” research, I also cut my teeth doing applied research for Cornell, for UNESCO, and for USAID, our American aid agency. This last assignment came near the end of my five-plus years in Thailand, by which time I had made lots of transcultural and translilingual mistakes, and hopefully learned from them. I had also improved my language proficiency to the point where, on the telephone, Thais usually mistook me for a Thai. At last, I felt completely confident in working as a consultant to development programs, and in helping those programs manage the cultural problems that inevitably arise.

In the USAID project, my Thai and American colleagues and I worked together so well that we
went far beyond our original US-AID assignment, and actually prepared a “Manual for the Rural Community Health Worker in Thailand,” which was published by the Ministry of Public Health, in separate Thai and English editions. This was the first-ever “how to do it and why” handbook for people wishing to do practical upcountry fieldwork in that country.

**New Haven and Cambridge**

In 1958, I returned to Cornell, and received my doctorate in June 1960. Meanwhile, I had received a post-doctoral appointment at Yale, where I did my first college teaching (of disappointing quality). Then, in 1961, came a second post-doctoral appointment, this time at Harvard. I arrived in Cambridge in June 1961 and moved into a residential community, the Center for the Study of World Religions. This was a friendly, welcoming place in the School of Divinity, where I could work full-time on the manuscript for “The Golden Robe,” my projected book on Buddhism in a central Thai village.

Alas, it was not to be. I had been at Harvard perhaps a week, when one evening I came back from dinner around 10 PM to find a note waiting for me: “Phone Jake Smith (a pseudonym) at Peace Corps Washington.”

I immediately dialed Jake’s number and was impressed by the fact that he was still at his desk at that late hour. Jake explained that he had heard about my Thailand expertise from various sources, and asked if I could come to Washington for “a few days” to help design a Peace Corps program for Thailand.

**Washington**

I was in Washington the following morning. It turned out that the kind of expertise they wanted was exactly the kind that I believed I possessed. Jake’s “A few days” morphed into seven months. I became the first full-time cultural anthropological consultant at the Peace Corps headquarters, where I served from June 1961 to January 1962. There were no other anthropologists in headquarters; my efforts to get two more hired ended in failure. I was given a wide variety of duties, involving program planning, training and the “talent search” for qualified overseas staff.

**The Kennedy Vision: Peace Corps**

Let us momentarily glance back to November 2, 1960. It was just six days before one of the closest elections in American history, when John Fitzgerald Kennedy gave a major address at the Cow Palace in San Francisco, promising that if elected he would change the shape and spirit of the American presence overseas: “I come here tonight and I ask your support in picking this country up and moving it forward…. Our
successful policy abroad will depend on the men and women [who] conduct that policy.” He then delivered a litany of complaints: “[Last year] seventy percent of all new Foreign Service officers had no language skill at all…. We cannot understand what is in the minds of other people if we cannot even speak to them. That is why we are given tongues.”

The young senator laid out a vision, proposing: “a peace corps of talented young men and women, willing and able to serve their country for three years, … well qualified through rigorous standards, well trained in the languages, skills, and customs they will need to know.”

JFK’s decision to come out publicly for a Peace Corps was a gutsy one, and some people feared that it risked having Richard Nixon, Kennedy’s opponent, berate the idea; which he did, calling it the “Kennedy Kiddie Korps.” Worse than that, the popular and respected President Eisenhower, two days before the election, publicly derided the Peace Corps idea as “immature.”

However, other observers took a different position. Some even believed, after the fact that coming out publicly for a Peace Corps was what actually tipped the delicate balance between victory and defeat. Of course, we will never know for sure.

In any case, Kennedy did win, and in his inaugural address on January 20, 1961 he further rallied the nation with the memorable slogan, “Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.” Within days thereafter, the young President began pushing for the creation of a Peace Corps, appointing his brother-in-law, the charismatic and indefatigable Robert Sargent “Sarge” Shriver, Jr., to take charge. Mr. Kennedy was unwilling to wait for Congressional action and, instead, on March 1, 1961, established the Peace Corps by executive order, financed by discretionary funds. By early summer, the PC headquarters, across Lafayette Park from the White House, was deluged with thousands of applications from Americans excited about becoming part of this great new experiment.

The Peace Corps’ Basic Dilemma

In the beginning, the Peace Corps headquarters faced a huge dilemma, namely that the staff officials charged with producing linguistically and culturally competent Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) were themselves (with notable exceptions) lacking in such competence. While they brought with them many other needed skills, high motivation and an admirable altruistic orientation, many of them had never set foot in a “developing nation.” Others may have done so, but only as casual tourists. Still others had served in the developing nations with USAID, but had lived mostly in large cities, where they enjoyed a
good salary and luxurious amenities and comforts—and often socialized primarily with other Americans, or else with English-speaking members of the local elite.

But that was not all. A factor further complicating efforts to resolve this dilemma was the “numbers game.” Not only did Shriver want high-quality training, but he wanted it right away, at breakneck speed, for political reasons. His strategy (developed with his deputy, the Congressionally knowledgeable 27-year-old Bill Moyers) was to get several contingents of PCVs into their host countries before Congress voted “yes” or “no” on whether to create and fund this new organization—thus presenting Congress with a fait accompli and making it hard to vote “no.” By the time Congress was ready to vote, some 200 volunteers were already in the field in four host countries, with many more in the pipeline. On September 22, 1961, Congress passed the Peace Corps Act, giving Shriver legitimacy and a $30 million budget.

There is no doubt that this was an adroit tactic politically, but it imposed an added burden on those entrusted with developing training programs that would actually produce PCVs with the skills that the President—and all of us—wanted. Not only must we do a good job of training, but we needed to put training programs together with a speed that practically invited errors.

What saved the situation was that fortunately many PC officials, especially in the Training Division, to their eternal credit, recognized their shortcomings, knew that they needed help, and were prepared to work patiently with qualified outside consultants, day by day, as decisions were made and actions taken.

**Ann Arbor, Again**

In those early days, virtually all of the training was done stateside (rather than overseas, as later, fortunately, became the standard). My Peace Corps boss asked me to examine the qualifications of various available American universities that offered Thailand programs, and tell him which university we should invite to train “Thailand One.” This I did, as thoroughly and fairly as I could. I decided that the University of Michigan was clearly the best qualified among those available. My recommendation was accepted. We approached Michigan. They accepted immediately, and with great enthusiasm, due in part to the fact that JFK had given a historic speech at 2:00 AM on October 14, 1960, on the steps of the Michigan Union, to a crown of hundreds of Michigan students, in which he publicly mentioned a Peace Corps (or something like it) for the first time.

Then came the negotiations—with Michigan and with Peace Corps officials as well. When my PC boss and I “demanded” 15 weeks
of training, the PC finance officers pushed back hard, pointing out that no program up to that point had ever been given more than eight weeks. After considerable advocacy and bureaucratic footwork, we settled on 13 weeks. My PC and Michigan colleagues and I then designed a rigorous program that included 210 hours of language training, supervised by Michigan’s renowned linguistics professor and Thailand specialist William J. Gedney, plus a rigorous Thai culture program. I participated actively in the instructional program, as did a number of Thailand-specialized anthropologists and other social scientists. By every measure, the program was hugely successful.

During all those months of working to ensure the best possible program for Thailand One, I could not help but reflecting on the notion developed in my Antioch seminar: “Win the war, yes, but win the peace, too.” My first experience at Ann Arbor had been dedicated to winning the war – and now came this second experience, dedicated to “winning the peace”—which was much more satisfying.

Fast forward to January 1962, when 40-odd Peace Corps volunteers arrived at the Bangkok Airport, in the middle of the night, in a driving rainstorm, tingling with excitement. Upon landing, they greeted their new hosts in Thai—halting, hesitant Thai, yes, but intelligible Thai. Local dignitaries on hand to greet the volunteers—including the Prime Minister—were stunned and overjoyed. This “new kind of American who can speak Thai” became a media sensation—in Thailand and throughout the world. Never before in history had such a large contingent of foreigners ever arrived in Thailand en masse, with basic language skills already solidly learned.

In the 50 years since that watershed event, more than 5,000 Americans have served in a wide variety of Peace Corps programs in Thailand, after which many have gone on to productive careers involving intercultural service of one kind or another. Indeed, some four decades later, one “returned” volunteer, Darryl Johnson, became American Ambassador to Thailand.

In 1962, in its first Annual Report to Congress, Peace Corps / Washington singled out the Michigan program as a model to serve as a general guide for language and culture training in PC programs in other countries. In its first five years, Peace Corps offered training in 49 languages, from Spanish and French (often required to deal with former colonial bureaucracies and educational institutions) to, among others, Amharic, Baoule, Ewe, Hiligaynon, Kannada, Njanka, Pashto, Quechua, Twi, Wolof and Yoruba.

Fast forward to 2010, and the number of languages that had been taught at least once by the Peace
Corps had grown to over 400, according to a statement made by director Aaron Williams at a Golden Anniversary celebration. This is an amazing number of languages. Even if we were arbitrarily to cut this number in half, it would mean, as far as I know, that the Peace Corps has offered instruction in more languages than any other organization, program or entity—in the entire span of world history!

President Kennedy would be pleased.

The Peace Corps’ “Three Subcultures” Problem

From the very beginning, it was obvious that a unique Peace Corps organizational culture was rapidly evolving. Sargent Shriver was no ordinary leader. In the early years, he wielded virtually dictatorial power, made all the key decisions, and approved or disapproved all suggestions for change. Each decision he made and each precedent he set was helping to give shape to an emerging Peace Corps organizational culture.

The new culture would center on the fulfillment of the “three goals” established in the Peace Corps Act:

* Helping the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women;
* Helping promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served; and
* Helping promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

This new Peace Corps culture would place great value on the effective training and fielding of PCVs in a large number of developing nations, who would function at a low economic level (by American standards), hold a middle-level “doer” job assignment, and perform at a high level of cultural and linguistic proficiency.

From the beginning, it was obvious that this overall PC culture would soon become bifurcated into two basic subcultures, with a third subculture poised precariously in between.

* The first subculture was that of the administrative staff. People in this subculture tended to be in their thirties or forties. They performed headquarters functions, and oriented primarily to stateside entities such as the federal bureaucracy, Congress, universities, non-profit organizations, etc. They received attractive federal salaries, and did not need to deny themselves any of the amenities and comforts of American life.

* The second subculture was that of the PCVs, who tended to be in their twenties, were paid a living allowance keyed to the locality where they were assigned (plus $75 per month accruing until receivable upon leaving the organization). They had little or no involvement with administrative decisions, bud-
Their challenge was to relate effectively with local people, understand local needs and problems, and try to be helpful. They had to obey local authorities, not just government officials but also the respected elders of the community. They were challenged to respect local customs and eat the local cuisine regardless of their comfort level with these unfamiliar foods.

* There was also a third subculture that was intermediate between the first two, namely that of the overseas country directors. People in this subculture oriented both to Peace Corps/Washington and to the host country—a fact that was bound to engender problems. The country directors received a federal salary and enjoyed access to numerous privileges and amenities that were not available to the PCVs. At the same time, they had to find ways to relate effectively to the latter. Ideally, they needed to be sophisticated in administration, but also competent culturally. Their jobs were crucial to the success of a program in Country X—yet, too often, in the early days and even now, these posts have been given to political appointees and others who knew little or nothing about the PCVs, or about Country X.

**In-Up-Out**

After I had spent several months watching the Peace Corps/Washington culture evolve, I became convinced that it was time for the organization to take definitive proactive steps to create a structure that would preserve and strengthen the best parts of this culture, and to avert cultural inertia and decay. I decided that I would do what I could to promote the institutionalization of a new personnel system for the PC staff—one that in the future would include more and more carefully selected returned volunteers (RPCVs), whose very presence and competence would, through time, change the organizational culture in ways that I considered desirable. In hopes of creating such a new personnel system, I wrote a memo on the subject of “In-Up-Out,” intended for Sargent Shriver. Since I had never had a substantive conversation with “Sarge,” I decided to address my memo to one of my bosses, a charismatic attorney named Franklin Williams, who was well acquainted with Sarge, and
December 11, 1961
To: Franklin H. Williams
    Talent Search Panel

From: Robert B. Textor, PDO/FE

Subject: A Plan to Keep the Peace Corps Permanently Young, Creative and Dynamic

1. Recommendations for Immediate Implementation:

   a. Recommend that each new appointee to an overseas Representative job be told that the Peace Corps is not a life-long career; that he will have to move on after a few years, to make room for a deserving PCV alumnus.

   b. Recommend [members of the Planning and Evaluation staff] be asked to keep their eyes open on field trips for promising qualified PCVs who might be promoted to Associate, Deputy, or Representative jobs, where needed, even before they have completed their full two-year hitches.

2. Recommendations for Implementation During 1962:

   a. Recommend that PC seek amendment to the Peace Corps Law to provide that PC may set up its own autonomous personnel system. As justification, it could be pointed out that PC, like the State Department, has peculiar needs and functions, and therefore should be independent of the Civil Service Commission.

   b. Recommend that the new autonomous PC Personnel system provide that:

      (1) Almost all substantive jobs in PC should be filled, as soon as possible, by qualified PCV alumni. A “substantive” job is a job – high or low – which influences the shape and gusto of PC programs, e.g., officers in Recruitment, Selection, Training, and Program Development and Operations, including overseas Representatives.

      (2) PCV alumni, and all other staff employees, should follow the principle of “in-up-out.” The law should set a maximum number of years – perhaps eight years – after which all staffers are required to leave and find jobs elsewhere.
3. Advantages of this Plan:
   a. Excellence: Only the “cream-of-the-cream” of PCV alumni would be chosen for staff jobs.
   b. Sound Programs: Programs would be planned by ex-PCVs who have fresh valid field experience, who know field conditions intimately. Impetuous, impractical, and unsound project would thereby be avoided.
   c. Effective Field Operations: Our Peace Corps Representatives would really know the language, customs, politics, family systems, economics, etc., of the host country, having learned all this as PCVs. PCRs’ orders would be sound, because the men giving the orders would already have been through the experience of have taken orders.
   d. High Morale: A Volunteer would know that he has a chance for a later staff position if he performs well, shows leadership, and truly masters the language and customs of the host country.
   e. Elimination of Inappropriate Applicants: This plan would discourage applicants who might be looking for a cushy life-long berth where promotion depends on seniority rather than dynamic creativity.
   f. Facilitation of Careers: Because of the eight-year limitation, there would always be “room at the top” for deserving staffers. PCV alumni could therefore move up rapidly.
   g. Impact on Foreign Policy: The “in-up-out” principle would result in immense benefit to American foreign policy. Young ex-staffers would move rapidly into jobs in State and AID, in foundations and universities, etc. And they would move in at high levels of responsibility, because they would already have worked at high levels of responsibility in PC. Thus we would reduce by many years the time it would otherwise take to make our impact felt at policy levels within key organizations connected with U.S. foreign policy.
   h. Youthfulness: Above all, this plan would make PC the first organization in U.S. administrative history that was not only born young, but stayed young!
trusted by him. My memo:

Williams tweaked my memo slightly and sent it to Shriver the next day. Suffice it here to say that in 1963 the In-Up-Out system was administratively approved by Shriver for immediate implementation. Then, in 1965, Shriver went one step further, and assigned to Bill Moyers the task of persuading Congress to amend the Peace Corps Act to mandate adherence to this principle. Moyers succeeded. Today, four-plus decades later, In-Up-Out is still the law.

In 2010, as the Peace Corps approached its fiftieth anniversary, Congress mandated that it carry out a “comprehensive assessment” of the organization’s strengths and weaknesses. The report includes a detailed assessment of how the In-Up-Out principle has actually worked in practice. The document recommends retaining the In-Up-Out requirement, with various adjustments. It points out that today, five out of every six overseas PC staffers is a returned Corps volunteer; a result of the In-Up-Out policy that I find highly gratifying.

Whether or not the In-Up-Out system is literally unique, it certainly has been highly productive. The Peace Corps, though now more than half a century old, gives strong evidence that it truly “was not only born young, but has stayed young.” The Peace Corps continues to flourish, and is now regarded by many historians as one of the most important elements in the Kennedy legacy.

After leaving Peace Corps/Washington in early 1962, I continued my efforts to help this great experiment succeed, by serving repeatedly as a visiting lecturer, helping to train contingents of PCVs headed for Thailand, Malaysia or the Philippines. These stints were usually one- or two-day stands at the various training universities. Because the PCV trainees were so profoundly interested in the host cultures in which they were about to serve, they were hugely motivated to learn—and, hence, delightful to teach. Only in the summer of 1966, five years after first joining the organization, did I call a halt to these training stints—telling the universities that my duties should be turned over to qualified returned PCVs. By then, I had lectured in 24 programs, and reached 1,600 PCVs. It was time to move on.

This concludes my personal history from 1940 to the middle of the 1960s. In concluding, I feel that it is appropriate to state, simply and without hyperbole, that I am grateful to Blair Academy for two years of excellent education, where I learned a lot from books, from people, from experience, and emerged as a better, more capable and more confident guy than I would otherwise have been. Blair truly changed my life. Thank you, Blair!
Mike Habermann ’41 was drafted into the army in 1943 and served with the 9th Infantry Division in Normandy, France. After WWII service, he attended the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and then returned to France to marry a French woman, Marguerite. A lengthy business career in Canada and Central America was complemented by wide-ranging travel and interests in Mayan and MesoAmerican civilizations, the cave art of France, 19th-century French literature, opera and classical music. He and his wife raised four children and lived for years in Hacketstown, New Jersey. Margureite passed away in the fall of 1999. Michael continues to visit Blair campus quite often and supports various student programs, including summer language study in Quebec.
In 1960, I was residing in Montreal, Canada, when my employer, a Swiss-French enterprise, decided to transfer me to Mexico. Their Mexican branch company was experiencing many problems and it was time to replace the general manager. I was selected to replace him and reorganize the company. It was obviously a big change and challenge for me, but a change I never regretted.

My command of Spanish was rudimentary. Ferdie Marcial, venerable Blair master, was able to stuff some of the language in my reluctant brain and my command of French helped me to learn Spanish. People often began speaking English to me but I replied in French, to their consternation. I was determined to speak Spanish fluently. I listened to only Spanish-language radio stations and TV programs. Within a short time, I felt at ease speaking Spanish.

In time, I learned to leverage the knowledge and talents of the Mexicans workforce to navigate the ins and outs of the Mexican import system, negotiate a new way to divide the sales territories which doubled our sales force, and realize a dramatic increase in business volume. Given these successes, international management assigned me to supervise their distribution operations in Central America, the Caribbean and South America. This entailed constant visits to distributors in each area. The places I enjoyed visiting above all were Guatemala and Chiapas (the southernmost state in Mexico).

My initial visits to the distributors in the Yucatan and Chiapas were adventuresome and amusing. Following a visit to Merida, a well-run operation, I decided to visit the ancient ruins of Palenque in Chiapas. To go with me, I invited our Yucatec salesman of pure Mayan descent. We crossed several dangerous raging rivers in the car I brought from Canada. We did not realize the road to Palenque was under construction through the jungle. We arrived late in the day at the beginning of the new road construction. Very little was in passable condition; mud and deep ruts had to be navigated. We advanced very slowly, only to become stuck in the middle of the jungle as night enfolded us. It was impossible to advance. By luck, I still had the chains I once used in Canada to maneuver through deep snow. We managed to install the chains and work our way back out of the creepy night jungle. Eventually, we found a tiny “hotel.” My Mayan friend knew of a small private air-strip close by where we found a pilot able to fly us in an old two-seater to a cornfield near Palenque.

We spent the next two nights in
Palenque. At that time, no hotel existed in the area of the ruins. Only two couples visited the site during our two-day exploration. One was a couple from the midwest, the second from New York City. They looked at the Mayan glyphs and soon engaged in a fierce debate. The midwesterners insisted that Palenque was a relic from the flood described in the Bible, when the earth and time stopped. The other couple was aghast at these opinions and furiously refuted them to no avail. They nearly came to blows. It was a comical sight to see these four people on the platform of an ancient temple shouting at each other.

Palenque is perhaps the most beautiful of all Mayan temple sites. Stephens made extended and extensive explorations, revising all previous speculations about the origins of Mayan civilization. Chiapas is an area I love to visit because of the many temple sites and beautiful surroundings. The largest nearby town is San Cristóbal. One of my Mexican friends, an ethnologist, had lived among and studied the dwindling Lacandon Indian population. He introduced me to Trudy Duby, a Swiss anthropologist who lived in Chiapas for over 25 years. Her writing about the Maya and her explorations are classics in the field. In San Cristóbal, she housed a huge collection of Mayan artifacts, as well as a dozen or more Lacandon Indians.

I once traveled to San Cristóbal with a group from the Smithsonian Museum. They were scheduled to visit her museum/home. Trudy was a dominating person, unpredictable. She disliked the tour director and refused entry to one of the highlights of the tour. I already knew Trudy, having visited her with my sister-in-law who lived there for over six months. Trudy spoke only French and Spanish, both of which I speak. Naturally, I spoke to her in French and was able to convince her to admit the tour group. I became a “hero” for the rest of our tour.

When Comandante Marcos initiated a Mayan peasant rebellion a few years later, I was in Chiapas. It was a troubled and dangerous moment to be there. As quickly as I could, I left San Cristóbal and went on to Guatemala.

Our distributor in Guatemala was a large, prominent organization. To protect the company from the danger of guerilla attacks, they kept a machine-gunner guard on the alert. Political discord was source of violence. Despite the danger, I loved to visit Guatemala, particularly Antigua, a lovely city not far from a volcano which once destroyed the city. Close to Guatemala City at the peak of a mountain lies one of the most beautiful lakes in the world, Lago de Atitlán. The lake is surrounded by several volcanic peaks and small Indian villages dotting the shore. The villages were difficult
to access. The native Indian people spoke very little Spanish and still dressed in their pre-Spanish clothing.

Guatemala was dotted with many exotic and fascinating towns, among them Chichicastenango, where colonial Spanish churches were the gathering place of the Mayan Indians. Every year, I organized a sales meeting for all the distributors in Central America. A technician from Mexico City presided over the group, introducing our latest products and how to use them. These meetings were always popular with the salesmen who seldom had the opportunity to visit another country or meet with representatives from elsewhere.

Our largest customers in Central and South America were sugar mills, an attractive target of violent rebel groups. On two occasions, I barely missed being in the midst of rebel attacks. In both instances, I arrived only minutes after the assaults. Columbia and Venezuela were two of our best markets, but also the most dangerous. Political turmoil was intense. The scariest moment happened in Bogotá, Columbia. Assassinations were a daily occurrence in the 1960s. A prominent general had just been killed and the streets were lined with armed soldiers. Unfortunately, I was in a car driven by one of our distributor’s executives when we were stopped by a machine gun unit at an intersection.
Armed soldiers searched our car and found a loaded pistol belonging to the driver. We became immediate suspects. A soldier put a rifle to my head, much to my dismay. I thought, “This is it!” How my friend talked our way out of this predicament, I do not know. He undoubtedly cited the name of a high-ranking politician or army person. We were released and given a safe-pass. This came in handy because we were stopped at two more intersections without further incident.

During this same visit, I lunched at an elegant restaurant. At the exit door, I was stunned by a load roar. At the top of the street, protesters were rolling down the street 55-gallon drums filled with stones. The sound was that of a volcanic eruption. At the bottom of the hilly street, armed soldiers prepared to attack the protesters. I retreated to the back of the restaurant. On several other occasions, I was caught in street crossfire and quickly sought refuge in close by stores or doorways.

Another incident occurred at the Hotel Tequendama where the English soccer team was staying. The World Cup Soccer tournament was to be held in Mexico, so the English team prepared for the games in Bogotá, which at 8,000 feet was an ideal training situation to prepare for the 7,000-foot elevation of the Mexican playing fields. The rivalry for the World Cup is very intense. Dirty tricks are expected. In this case, the British team was accused of stealing valuable jewelry from the hotel and other items. The objective of the accusers was to delay or prevent the English team from arriving in Mexico. The ploy almost succeeded. The team, like me, a guest at the hotel, was unable to leave until a world-wide uproar and an investigation by the city police decided that the British players had not stolen anything. The team arrived in time to participate in the games.

So did I. I remember the game between Brazil and England played in Guadalajara. I was there along with several of my salesmen. The evening before the final match was pure pandemonium. It was dangerous even to venture outside. American NFL Super Bowls and World Series games are like garden parties compared to the turmoil and hysteria of the soccer final, which Brazil won, helped by the goal scored by Pelé the famous Brazilian star.

Flying and traveling in Latin America during the years I worked there could be both hazardous and eventful. Schedules were uncertain and planes not always reliable. One particularly “irregular” flight originated in Caracas and was destined to stop in Bogotá, Panama City, San Jose and then on to Guatemala. We took off on time only to return to the Caracas airport shortly after take-off. The wrong fuel had been used and we wasted time refueling,
getting us into Panama City several hours late. En route on the next leg to San Jose all seemed normal, despite being late. In the seats on my left sat a young Chilean couple, recently married and going on to Guatemala City to celebrate their marriage. The pilot misjudged our approach to the runway. The plane touched the ground at high speed almost half-way down the runway. The pilot jammed on the brakes, the tires exploded, the plane shook and swayed from side to side, and the left engine burst into flames as we skidded toward a barranca at the end of the runway. I was certain the plane was about to crack up. The left wing was dragging on the ground, but we finally stopped only a short distance from the deep ravine at the end of the strip. It was almost impossible to see because of the dust, smoke and confusion. The crew was equally confused and of no help. The young lady by the window seat jumped right over her new husband’s lap and joined me in the tilted aisle. I ran to the emergency exit, the young lady alongside. The plane was nose down, the left wing was damaged, but the right wing was intact. With the help of the young lady, I opened the door and managed to climb out on the wing. A dozen taxis and several ambulances, aware that the plane was in danger, rushed to the scene. Somehow, we managed to get down from the wing and were whisked away to safety. The damaged plane, its engine on fire, remained unmoved for two days. Finally, a military transport from Guatemala picked us up and flew us to Guatemala, two days late.

Our company was remodeling the factory in Sao Paulo and looking for offices in Rio de Janeiro. I made weekly trips between the two. The planes that flew to Rio were unscheduled small units of dubious air worthiness. When it rained, water would seep into the passenger aisle. On one occasion, I refused to fly. The plane supposed to take me was a three-winger dating back to the First World War...scary even to look at. There were several other incidents of a similar nature in Central America, each demanding a strong nervous system.

The political and social tensions were extreme in the 60s. Dictators and corrupt governments dominated the scene. In South America, Brazil, Peru, Colombia and Venezuela were dangerous at all times as were Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras in Central America. Only Mexico in those years was prosperous and optimistic. A strong middle class was emerging in Mexico, as evidenced by my company.

The military, the Catholic Church and the wealthy aristocracy were dominant throughout Latin America and employed any and every means to maintain their dominance. The political turmoil caused
problems for our area supervisors in Peru, Venezuela, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. On several occasions they were in serious danger because of guerilla attacks. During the war between Honduras and Salvador, our representative was obliged to hide for over a week. You can imagine the impact it had on me, the person responsible for the assignment.

On the other hand, I witnessed changes that surprised me, especially in Guatemala and Chiapas. The area, once under the complete religious control of the Catholic hierarchy, was faced with the impact of evangelical inroads into their authority. I was astonished by the number of Pentecostal, Evangelical and other Protestant churches in these countries. Severe tensions were evident in small villages, divided by the growth of these sects and those who resisted change. Once, outside the village of Chamula, I saw a large group gathered around a preacher. I asked what was happening and was told it was one of many such gatherings under the guidance of local Mayan preachers teaching the indigenous people. These were signs of a new spirit in the small local communities.

Latin America has innumerable sites of great beauty. Who can remain unmoved by the extent and majesty of the Andes, the beauty of Rio de Janeiro, the depth of tropical jungles in Central America and the Amazon (which, unfortunately, I never visited). Each country has developed a distinct personality, although Spanish remains a common bond. Yet what most intrigued and interested me were the remains of the ancient civilizations and the indigenous native people who inhabit the towns and villages. Palenque, Copan, Chichen Itza and Teotihuacan are only a few of the many ancient centers I visited on many occasions. They left an indelible impression upon me. Above all, I admire the creativity of the people who built the temples, the artistic works of great variety of the pyramids and above all, the unique beauty of each location.

Latin America, the existing Spanish heritage and the Spanish language are all part of me now, but my greatest admiration is for the ancient Mayas and their descendants who still inhabit the area. Quirigüá remains one of the touchstones of my experience in that region. While there, I acquired several rubbings of Mayan nobles. The original disks have deteriorated since I acquired them. An American anthropologist asked me to bring the rubbings for examination. While in Quirigüá, I also took a serious tumble from the edge of a temple platform, which was not fully excavated and spent a week recuperating.

Visiting Tikal, perhaps the greatest of all Mayan sites, I met and befriended two prominent
Mayan experts. One of them lived and worked in the ruins in Tikal for more than 10 years. His works included the most detailed examination and description of Mayan ceramics now existent. Each time I go to Santa Fe, we meet and have, a hearty laugh about the travel woes we shared crossing rivers and the impenetrable jungles lining the shores of these rivers.

I still dream of revisiting the temples and pyramids of the Yucatan, Tikal, Uxmal (great kingdom of the jungle area), Bonampak, the grandiose plateau of Monte Alban and Quiriguá again. I look longingly at the brochures describing tours to these places. But alas, now having passed my 90th birthday and on weakened legs, I fear and know it is to remain only an alluring dream.
Judith Kahan Kampmann... skipping along the decades, the 1980s, spent in L.A., were focused on marriage to Steven Kampmann (the rejected actor-for-the-role-of-husband) (long story), writing and acting, and having three superior (as if I would say anything else) children, Woody, Billy and Mikey Kampmann. The end of the 1990s brought Steven and me and our three boys on a great life adventure to New Jersey. (Really long story.) We said goodbye to our friends, work and good weather to begin our lives at Blair. Steven and I were the housemasters of Mason Hall for five years (before moving off campus) and our boys each graduated from Blair. Steven taught English, screenwriting and the ultra-popular senior English elective, dubbed “The Dreams Course.” In 2001, I started the video studies program that is still going strong. At Blair, Steven and I were exceedingly happy for 12 years, in spite of the fact that we were aging rapidly. We retired in June 2010.
A Risky Proposition

Before I can properly begin the account of my life in the 1960s, I have to take you back to the 50s. (I was born in 1948.) When I was a young girl, I wanted to be an actress. I’m fairly sure that’s not a remarkable young-girl thought, but the thought shifted to passion in 1960 when Mercury Records released the album (may I assume we all know that CDs didn’t exist back then?) *An Evening with Mike Nichols and Elaine May*. I listened to it over and over and over, memorized the words to all the sketches, watched them whenever they appeared on television, imitated the way they spoke their lines, listened carefully to how they listened to each other, and knew that when I grew up I had to do whatever it was they were doing. It was called improvisational comedy. Unremarkably, there was no one in my family who had ever had anything to do with comedy, although I shared aspects of my father’s sense of humor. My dad was a very smart, highly educated chemist (he received his B.S. from Columbia University at age 16…I love getting to say that), and he loved wordplay (especially puns) as do I. He was highly entertained by songs written by the popular Harvard-educated mathematician and performer, Tom Lehrer. As a child, I listened to Tom Lehrer’s two very clever albums, and I loved them, too. Sadly, memorizing his song about the periodic table, “The Elements,” was the best experience with chemistry I would ever have. (Chemistry was the only subject I ever had to repeat in summer school. My poor father.) Throughout my high school years, I also bought the 1961 album *Comedy from the Second City* featuring Barbara Harris Alan Arkin, Paul Sand, Severn Darden, and the rest of that great Chicago cast, *The Best of (Peter) Sellers* (which included his insanely funny Hindi-accented version of “Wouldn’t It Be Loverly” from *My Fair Lady*), more Nichols and May albums, and lots and lots of other comedy albums. I have already confessed that I wasn’t a great chemistry student, but I was, unquestionably, a dedicated student of comedy, and when I arrived in high school, the dream for my future expanded to include musical comedy. Because I grew up on Long Island, just 22 miles outside of Manhattan, and because back then it was possible to buy standing-room tickets to Broadway shows for only eight dollars, I saw...
everything. My junior year, I saw every play and musical that was on Broadway, even trekking into the city for a show that had an inauspicious beginning when the infamous New York City blackout on November 9, 1965 postponed its opening night. (The show was *The Zulu and the Zayda*. My best friend, Linn, and I were stuck in the city for hours! It opened November 10th [without us] and ran for 179 performances.) Meanwhile, at Roslyn High School, I was in every choral music group I could join (keyword: group). I remained too embarrassed to audition for parts in plays and in four years was only in one show as an understudy. But in my mind, I was still “an actress.” Fantasies can be so much more fulfilling than reality…

In the fall of 1966, I went off to college. I had been too terrified to audition as an actress required for entry into any university theatre departments, so I enrolled in the Boston University School of Fine and Applied Arts as a voice major. (I had sent them an audiotape for my audition.) Boston was the world’s coolest city to be in as a college student (and I think probably still is). All those colleges and universities with about a billion 18-25 year olds! I loved living there. Then, in the middle of my sophomore year, everything changed in the real world (more about that in a moment), as well as in my world. In December, I had gone home for a long Christmas break. Back to school during the first week of February 1968, I picked up Boston’s version of *The Village Voice* called *Boston After Dark*. (Years later, it morphed into the Arts insert of another Boston paper, *The Phoenix.*) I noticed that a new show called *The Proposition* had opened on February 1 in a teeny, tiny space in Inman Square, Cambridge. *The Proposition* was billed as a “topical, intellectual, satirical, musical revue.” It had been started by a bunch of Harvard students and was playing four performances a week on Friday and Saturday nights only, two shows a night. The “theatre,” a converted bakery, sat 106 people. I read the ad for the show and nearly passed out.
This show was all I had ever wanted to do! It was Nichols and May and Second City and singing all rolled into one and it was in Boston! How did I not know about it? How did I miss auditioning for it? I needed to be part of it! I WANTED to BE IN THE PROPOSITION! At the very least, I had to see it. I instantly phoned up the box office and bought a ticket for the Friday night 8:00 performance. It was only the third night it had been open. *The Boston Globe, The Herald Traveler, Boston After Dark,* the local TV and radio stations had instantly fallen in love with *The Proposition* and almost immediately it became the show to see in Boston. With so few seats in the theatre, the wait for tickets grew long, which only added to its freshly minted “hit” status. The show was funny and smart and clever, the songs (music and lyrics by John Forster) were brilliantly funny, and, to this day, I have no idea how the cast was going to their Harvard classes, getting their papers written and putting the show together at the same time. Not that I would have necessarily been chosen, but I’d missed any chance I might have had to be in it. I was beyond depressed. I was 19.

In the real world in 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis on April 4 and the major cities erupted in riots, though in Boston, the riots were not as intense as in other cities (see box). On June 5, Robert Kennedy was assasinated in the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles just hours after he had won the California Democratic Primary. And it was in August 1968 in Chicago when the riots at the Democratic National Convention shocked the nation and the world. It was, objectively, a horrible year.

At *The Proposition,* meanwhile, the news was providing an enormous amount of material to write about and the audiences were eating it up. (Think Jon Stewart’s, Stephen Colbert’s and Bill Maher’s shows today.) Because of its huge success,
the producers had been approached about putting together a second company to perform on Cape Cod that summer. This time, I didn’t miss seeing the call for auditions. I auditioned in March. On the evening of April 10, while I was watching the Academy Awards on television, I received a phone call informing me that I’d been hired to be in the cast. Regardless of the date on the calendar, I’ve always considered Oscar night my show business anniversary. All of the new Proposition hires were incorporated into the Cambridge show and the performances were increased from four a week to six plus special bookings for corporate gatherings. Jane Curtin (who had dropped out of Northeastern University) and I auditioned together and were hired at the same time. We worked together in Boston for three years before moving with the show off-Broadway for another year in New York in 1971. (It did pretty well there, too, although by then the focus of the comedy had shifted from political to social observation.) Because I went right to work in April, I ended up taking incompletes at BU for my second semester. I never returned to school. Chemist Father and Highly-Opinionated Mother were horror-struck. The only deal I could offer them that they had no choice but to accept was that if I gave up college, I would be on my own financially. Self-supporting. So that was that. I was 19, earning $5.00 a show (you read that right), and fiscally independent. (I swear to any and all gods out there, that’s the truth. Nothing says independence from parental control like paying your own bills.) I could only count on $20 a week, the salary for four paid performances (in order to keep everyone else in the cast performing each week), but I didn’t care. And then the Cape Cod production fell through. Welcome to show business!

In order to earn rent money when school ended in May and my dorm room was no longer available, I had to invent another income source. I was given the newly created job of publicity director for The Proposition. As the show was growing so quickly and almost everyone
was enrolled in school and still going to classes (they all graduated on time and most with honors), somebody needed to help write the press releases and deliver them personally to all the newspapers and magazines. Of course, I had no training to do that, but why not me? I was officially put on staff (in addition to acting in the show), which gave me an additional $75 a week. I’d hit the lottery! One of my first ad campaigns to announce the additional weekly shows was to use tag lines from other shows running at the time taken directly from their ads. Can you say cut and paste? Fortunately for the show, I became more skilled over time.

Because of the events happening in the world, the expectations of the audiences to see the advertised “topical and satirical” material meant we all had to be on top of the news and personalities making the news. But there was still plenty of room for absurd material. I can recall one blackout (when you have
a set-up, a punch line and then the lights go out) that featured a Boston Brahmin preppie (a la Ahab) looking out to sea and stating in a very snotty tone, "Well, it's a good white whale but not a great one."

But given the times, given the fact that improvisational comedy lends itself perfectly to commenting on events of the day, and given that both the performers and the audiences were hungry to find any way they could to not laugh about what was going in the world, but rather to get through it, the mandate was that we had to be knowledgeable and prepared. We all read the daily newspapers, we had great arguments and conversations, we developed characters through which we could offer differing points of view, and we had a blast doing it. We were writ-

The photo of cast mate Alaina Warren and me (I'm on the left) appeared on the first page of an article about the show that ran in the November 3rd edition of the Sunday Boston Globe Magazine right before Election Day 1968.

THE PROPOSITION:

POLITICS

"THE Proposition", the satirical revue which has been puncturing foibles and producing funnies for these many months in Innman Square, Cambridge, naturally has some things to say about the political campaigns now coming to a climax. More of its comments are on Page 29.
ing sketches, improvising sketches nightly based on audience suggestions, then distilling the best ideas for new written work and always trying to invent new characters we could plug into new situations. At its best, the show was really funny, brave and edgy. In 1969, our new director, Allan Albert, transformed *The Proposition* into a totally improvised show. No more sketches like Second City. We had certain frameworks and layouts for both the spoken and musical pieces that we worked within, but it became a high-wire act. Man, when it was great it was really great, but when the suggestions were mundane, or we were off, the show would suffer. But the format made us unique and separated our show from other improvisational shows. This was a very valuable distinction when we opened in New York. Even with the off-Broadway opening in the works, the show continued to run in Cambridge. Above is a page from a brochure printed in 1969 (I was clearly no longer doing the press) celebrating our 600th performance. What does it say about me that I have no recollection of being on the same bill on New Year's Eve 1969 as the Grateful Dead? I remember that Livingston Taylor (James’s brother) sang that night, but I was never into the Dead…

The show was such a darling in Boston that in 1970, Massachusetts Governor Francis W. Sargent declared “Proposition Day” on February 1. Four of us in the show dressed up to go to his office and accept the proclamation.

The decision I made in 1968 to audition for a little tiny show, *The Proposition*, directed everything significant in my life after that. Being in the Boston show led to the New York show, which led to obtaining a theatrical agent, which led me to work with people in both New York and L.A. who would become exceptional mentors. In the years that
followed, I worked with some of my heroes: Hal Prince, Stephen Sondheim, Lily Tomlin, Richard Pryor, Norman Lear, Grant Tinker, Mary Tyler Moore, Bruce Paltrow, Harold Ramis and more. Beginning with taking a risk and following my passion, the late 1960s were filled with bold, life-changing decisions, and the first half of the best college education I could have hoped for: four years spent with The Proposition.

(Post-script #1: In August 1973, in one of the greatest disasters in Off-Broadway history, the old Broadway Central Hotel that housed the Mercer Arts Center in downtown New York (the theatre complex where The Proposition had moved after initially opening in the Gramercy Arts Theatre) collapsed. Besides The Proposition, other shows left suddenly homeless were the long-running One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest and El Coca Cola Grande. After the collapse, The Proposition moved to Manhattan Theatre Club on East 73rd St. I don't know when the run finally ended.)
Post-script #2: In 1973, Steven Kampmann and his friend, Jon Smet wrote a comedy act “Please God, Can I Go Home Now?” which they performed throughout New England and used for their audition for Second City in Chicago. It worked. They were hired by the comedy troupe and Steven spent a total of four years with Second City. His first two years were on the main stage in Chicago and his last two in the Toronto company. Even though I didn’t meet Steven until 1980 in Los Angeles (when he auditioned for the role as my husband in a TV pilot I co-wrote and starred in... I rejected him), Steven and Jon had rented the proposition theatre in Cambridge on a night when the show was dark. I was already in New York. Small world.
Peter Amerman came to Blair in 1969 as school minister. He later served as dean of academics and dean of faculty and, throughout his long career, coached a number of successful athletic teams. He was educated at The Hill School, University of Pennsylvania and Princeton Theological Seminary. In 1993–94, he was a recipient of the Kelley sabbatical and spent the year studying at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Upon retirement from Blair in 2008, Peter moved to Tucson, Arizona where he resides with his wife Cindy, daughter Lynn, and grandchild, Sophie. Beyond various activities and foreign travels, Peter has ministered to “illegals” trapped in the Arizona desert as they cross into the United States.
Personal Reflections
on the Early 1960s

In the decade of the 1960s, I lived about half of my adult life. I do not mean that as a measure- ment of time, but as a measurement of significant life experience. The decade took me from a high school student to the chaplaincy at Blair Academy, the place where I would spend the bulk of my adult life.

I graduated as one of 126 boys from The Hill School in June of 1960. Earlier that year, I had been named for the second time as a scholastic all-American in swimming, after I anchored a winning relay at the Eastern Interscholastics. I had survived our primitive version of college applications, determining that I would attend the University of Pennsylvania in the fall.

My senior class at The Hill School included no women, no African-Americans, about a dozen Jews and two young men of Asian descent. We were bright, cocky and fundamentally naïve. We headed off to college with the usual mix of apprehension and brash confidence. The economy, social justice and world peace were not on our radar screens. The world was our oyster.

That summer, through some strings pulled by my father, I landed a job working in a steel fabricating plant for American Bridge in Pittsburgh. My father’s unspoken agenda was for me to learn first-hand why I was going to college. His plan worked.

I commuted to work from our suburban home in Sewickley with two other college guys, both a year or two older. We worked a swing shift: two weeks 7:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M., two weeks 3:00 P.M. to 11:00 P.M., and two weeks 11:00 P.M. to 7:00 A.M., and so on. The Schiffler Fabricating Plant made the steel pieces used to construct high tension wire stations—those steel towers we see arranged across the countryside, holding up looping electric power cables.

My job was a smorgasbord of experiences. I ran indoor cranes, worked in a galvan shed, worked with a blacksmith on a die press, with an acetylene cutter and a drill press operator. I ran a hydraulic grinder and helped bundle steel beams for loading on freight cars.

Union rules mandated that a worker could not handle more than 40 pieces of steel in an eight-hour shift. This rule made sense for people working with 30-foot I-beams. But I remember grinding the burrs off little six-inch square steel plates. I could do one plate in about 20 seconds; so it was a shock to learn that the union rule applied here, too. I had no idea that the literal application of this rule was one of a number of signs foreshadowing the
demise of the U.S. steel industry.

On the night shift, I had my introduction to what a later acquaintance called “milking the duck.” Here is how it works. You come on at 11:00 P.M. and work hard for an hour. By that time, all the workers and the foremen from the previous shift have left. The pace of work slows, and between midnight and 1:00 A.M., you take a break. On several occasions, we went outside, crawled into an empty boxcar, and fell asleep. Between 5:30 and 6:00 A.M., everyone comes back to work, and we’re going full tilt when the next shift comes on at 7:00 A.M.

This sort of institutional malfeasance could have been seen by wiser souls as a precursor to the death of the U.S. steel industry.

At the end of the summer I packed off to Penn. I may have taken the train. My parents did not go with me. (Several times during college I flew to or from home on Allegheny Airlines—$25.00 one way. Allegheny later became U.S. Air.)

I played on the freshman soccer team. (In those days, by NCAA rule, freshmen were ineligible for varsity.) I played left defensive back with a mix of mostly better players. Our coach was Lefty Didrikson, the goal keeper for the National Ukranians, a fine Philadelphia team. Under Lefty’s direction, we were undefeated at 10 and 0.

That year, the Pittsburgh Pirates beat the Yankees in a seven-game world series. I remember hearing parts of that seventh game on someone’s portable radio on the soccer field. When Bill Mazeroski hit his series-winning home run, all was right with the world. (One month later, John F. Kennedy was elected president—a fact that made less of an impression than his violent death, three years later.)

On the academic side of things, we freshmen were getting rid of required courses and learning how to drink beer. The freedom of college life was heady, and I was among those who had fun at the expense of serious academic work. And my grades showed it. Of the nine of us who had come from The Hill School, four were invited to take a year off—a sort of temporary flunk-out. I was among the five who moved on to be sophomores on time, but barely.

Like most students, I was supremely unaware of the wider world. I only vaguely understood the differences between Democrats and Republicans. I knew nothing about Hindus or the Congolese. I knew that the Soviet Union was our global rival and our enemy. But I had certainly never had a conversation with a Russian-speaker and never looked at the Communist Manifesto. In hindsight, I see my life as an odd extension of childhood. I lived very much in the moment, thinking as far ahead as the next weekend or the next vacation.
I was woefully disorganized, and I worked hard only when the chips were down and academic disaster might be only a test or a paper away.

After soccer season ended, I went out for swimming. A confluence of negatives (I couldn't shake a bad cold; I didn't like the coach; I wasn't especially close to any of my teammates; I disqualified in a relay in a meet against Navy) led to my quitting swimming after about a month. I felt guilty—or at least regret—about leaving what I thought of as my best sport; but it wasn't fun. It was tiring me out both physically and emotionally; so I decided to stop.

That semester was pledging season for fraternities and sororities. The thought of becoming an “independent” sounded too dorky—too out of it. So, without a great deal of thought, I and my friends set out for various open houses and rush events. I was a legacy at Zeta Psi, since both my mother's brothers were Zets. But in the end, I and my two soccer-playing friends, Chris Donner and Dick Chalfen, pledged Sigma Chi.

This was a fraternity which we identified as nicely diversified—by which we meant not too many jocks, not too preppy, not too egg-headed, but with a smattering of all those types. It seemed like a place where people knew how to have a good time. Creative parties were a given. The fact that there were no blacks and no Asians barely registered. I suppose we gravitated to people who felt familiar.

I was elected president of our pledge class of 14 freshmen. We had four weeks of pledging and light hazing, a “hell weekend” and initiation. We aren’t supposed to ever tell what we went through. A clue is that our pledge master was an ex-Paris Island Marine. Some day when I’m older I may spill the beans, about Jake’s Bath and the great Quest.

During that second semester, I connected with some people who were starting a Rock ‘n Roll band. They were a year or two younger—at least one still in high school—and they lived in Chestnut Hill, a nearby suburb. I had a one-pick-up Harmony electric guitar, on which I could play about six chords. So I became rhythm guitarist for King Simon and the Messengers.

We were loud, and we could play “Money,” “Get Off of my Cloud,” “Wipe Out,” “What’d I Say?” and a few others, so we got a few weekend gigs at parties at local colleges. We played as far away as Lehigh University and as close as Phi Gamma Delta at Penn—just a few blocks down the street from Sigma Chi. We were typical for the day: heavy downbeat, basic lead guitar, decent vocals, and did I say we were loud?

I ended the year with a dismal academic average—just decent enough for full credit and a return
in the fall.

That summer, I worked at The Lake Placid Club in the Adirondacks as a live-in day camp counselor. We staffed in a building called The Playhouse, where children of the members came in the morning for their day camp activities. We took them swimming and hiking, instructed them in archery, sailing and canoeing, taught them some elementary nature craft, and kept them well involved until 4:00 P.M. when their parents would pick them up. In the evenings, we wore coats and ties to the club dining room, where we were waited on by the young women we would go out with later in the evening. The drinking age in New York State was eighteen then, and a pitcher of draught beer cost $1.25. It goes without saying that it was great summer.

In September of 1961, I moved into a triple at Sigma Chi Fraternity. My roommates were fellow soccer players, Dick and Chris. The three of us made the varsity that fall. My friends were destined for greater athletic distinction than I, mostly because they had more talent, but also because I got injured in practice about mid-October. I partially dislocated and separated my left shoulder. Since this injury occurred decades before arthroscopic surgery, I was given the option of having an eight-inch steel rod surgically put into my shoulder or trying to heal on my own. I chose the latter—a decision I don’t regret. But this injury was the beginning of the end of my college soccer career.

I need to make some comments about sex and dating. Nineteen-year-olds in the early 1960s were certainly as hormone-driven as the same group in any decade. But times were different then. On the one hand, we didn’t have to worry about AIDS—a phenomenon destined to arrive 20 years later. On the other hand, we were also more than a decade before Roe v. Wade and “the pill” was a few years away. So the fear of pregnancy was quite real.

Among fraternity “men,” there was a lot of talk about “getting laid.” And, certainly, there were among us some user and abusers of women. But the talk far outweighed the action. There was much lusting and fantasizing and self-stimulation. But ours was not the decade of the 1970s, and “free love” was a phrase not yet heard.

My own love life was relatively tame. I had a girlfriend from home—at college elsewhere—with whom my level of attachment was erratic more than it was erotic. There were no promises between us, and no indications that she would much later become my wife; so dating local college women was within bounds for me. My first two years of college were marked by casual dating with a number of young women leading to one lasting friendship with a folk guitarist.
and singer named Ann. She and I spent much time laughing together, struck by the same sorts of whimsy and wit.

In early 1962, the Cuban Missile Crisis led some of my college friends to believe they were about to go to war. A fraternity brother in NROTC was presuming a call to active duty.

Like most events of international importance, this one only half-registered with me. It was about people I had never met and places I had never been. As shallow as that sounds, this was the level at which I was thinking. This immaturity was destined to dissipate significantly the next year, when I moved to Paris to study at the Sorbonne.

I spent the summer of ’62 working again at the Lake Placid Club. I had a more regular connection with a girl named Linda, someone whose older brother went to Penn, and whom I would see again away from the Adirondacks.

A moment of college kid craziness is worth including here. The club bought four Sunfish sailboats during the summer, and they were delivered in large pasteboard crates. After the boats were extracted and assembled, these twelve-foot long cartons were lying around. So someone had a moment of inspiration. On a particular moonlit night, after more than a few pitchers of beer, eight of us strapped two of the cartons to the roof of a car and drove to the 90-meter Olympic ski jump. Since the drop from the lip of the jump to the landing run-off is about 10 vertical feet, and since none of us was drunk enough or suicidal enough to entertain going off the jump, we decided we would toboggan down the landing area.

We curled up the front end of the cartons, so they looked roughly like traditional toboggans. Carrying them to the top of the landing area, we loaded ourselves, four in each sled, sitting with our legs locked around the person in front of us. We shoved off, and by the light of the silvery moon, we went careening down the landing slope of the Olympic ski jump. There was some straw down along the slope, so we slid easily along the ground, quickly picking up speed. There was no way to steer these contraptions; so about halfway down the hill, the “toboggans” began to veer sideways. We were probably going about 30 miles per hour when our cardboard sled rolled, sending all passengers sprawling and tumbling down the slope. Everyone was battered, bruised and bloody; but no bones were broken, and it was such a rush that we all lay there laughing hysterically. It was a stupid, glorious evening, and we were really lucky that no one was seriously hurt.

The fall of ’62, I returned to Penn for my junior year. I had a single room in the fraternity house, planning to leave for France after
the first semester. I played J.V. soccer briefly, but my injured shoulder was still hampering my running. Falling or running into another player was painful. So I bid farewell to competitive soccer, I thought, forever. I was destined to pick it up again a year out of college, but I’ll talk about that later.

I had declared French as a major the previous spring, and I was arranging to take a leave of absence with credit for the second half of my junior year. Chris and Dick were having successful soccer careers on varsity. I was still playing in the band, but not as often. It was that semester that I got my first “A” in a course; and there were glimmers of the start of some academic maturing.

I did not return to college after Christmas vacation. The weekend of Feb. 2, 1963, I went to my Uncle Eddie’s and Aunt Betsy’s apartment in New York City, fully packed for my overseas venture. The night before I left, I went to dinner with my friend Linda from Lake Placid. Little did I know that by the time I returned, she would be married, and I would never see her again.

The next day I took a cab to Pier 54 (I think) where I boarded the Queen Elizabeth to sail to France. It was a five-day crossing. I was traveling steerage class, or whatever they called it; so my room was tiny, and I had three roommates. On board, I met Kay Billig, a folk musician who played three instruments and spoke four languages. She and I became friends. Also on board were 40 young women from Hollins College in Virginia, all headed off for their junior semester abroad. Several of them became my companions whom I would later see in Paris.

Traveling across the Atlantic by ship is a romantic venture, and this was not my first. In the summer of 1959, we had sailed as a family from Montreal along the St. Lawrence Seaway and across to the U.K. Those memories, plus various encounters in fiction, came flooding back to me. Of course, I thought I was living in the
modern age. Our ships had stabilizers, ship-to-shore radio and steel plate construction that made the Titanic look puny. But there was no satellite navigation and no cell phones. Once we were out of sight from land, we were really gone; out-of-contact in a way that the modern world no longer experiences.

It did not take long for a pall of homesickness to descend. At first, the newness of the adventure held any sadness at bay. I was living in the moment, soaking up smells and sounds of life on shipboard, and meeting and greeting my fellow passengers.

But when I stepped off a train in Paris on a cold, rainy February night, and boarded a taxi for the Lutetia hotel in the St. Germain section on the Left Bank, the full reality of my alone-ness hit home. During the following week, I worked at finding a place to live and to getting a Carte de Sejour—a rough equivalent of a student visa. I needed to enroll for classes at the Sorbonne, get assigned to a student restaurant, and learn my way around the Left Bank, the full reality of my alone-ness hit home.

During the following week, I worked at finding a place to live and to getting a Carte de Sejour—a rough equivalent of a student visa. I needed to enroll for classes at the Sorbonne, get assigned to a student restaurant, and learn my way around the Left Bank. I knew no one; so except for an occasional exchange in halting French, I had no conversation, no meaningful human contact.

I was trying to be true to my self-assigned identity as an adventurer and a bon vivant. But it wasn’t working. I began hanging out at a bar called the Monaco, just off the Rue St. Germain, because it was an easy walk from my classes, and there were usually a few English-speakers among the patrons.

Over the course of the next few weeks, I began to meet a hodgepodge of young people from around Europe and the States. There were some fellow students, some musicians, a couple of gypsies, a merry Russian alcoholic and a German pen-and-ink artist who supported himself selling hand-drawn postcards on the street. There was also an English con-man and practical joker named David Freeman.

These new acquaintances were sufficiently interesting to present a collective distraction from my loneliness. None of them became a good friend; but they were fellow travelers, bright young adventurers from a mixture of past histories.

Early on, I was more focused on my social life than on academics. I went to my classes (mostly), and I took notes; but I was not heavily invested in the academic part of my life. I found the French method of teaching to be pedantic and authoritarian. And while this may have been an accurate portrayal, it was also a way of excusing my indifference.

One day after a good lecture on the Fifth Republic by professor Maurice Duverger, we learned that during our class, his apartment had been bombed by the OAS (the Secret Army Organization against DeGaulle and Algerian indepen-
This event was a bit of lightning, bringing home the reality that the material we were getting in class was not just intellectual fluff, but that it was connected to actual events in the world.

In early August, with my friend Dick Hull, who had joined me from home for some summer travel, we sailed for home on the Holland-American ship Rindam. This 10,000 ton vessel was tiny in comparison to the 86,000 ton Queen Elizabeth on which I had come. Its passengers were predominantly students on their way home from study and travel abroad. The crossing was eight days of smooth sailing through thick fog on a glassy-smooth ocean. It was eerie to come on deck and see precisely what we had seen the day before and the day before that. I remember wondering if we had really left the coast, and if we were ever going to get back to New York.

The rest of the summer and my return to college in the fall were muffled events for which I was not fully present. I was going through reverse culture shock. I found myself looking at things and people and feeling as if I was in the wrong place. And I recall realizing that my fraternity brothers and my home friends were out-of-touch with me, or I with them. They were the same old folks I had left months before. It seemed as if they had not changed, but I had. There was something about my view of living in the world that had shifted.

I still liked parties, and I liked the Beatles, who had emerged in the U.S. during my absence. Much of me remained the same old guy. But I found myself wondering more about the way we all thought about things. It was as though the easy-going college slant on love and life and the world was too easy, or too presumptuous, or something. I had one foot in my life and one foot out. I spoke French to myself sometimes, and I thought a lot about the people I had met abroad.

Although I had fleeting fantasies about turning around and going back to France, I never fully unhooked from my American identity. I was glad to be home, glad for hamburgers and rock ‘n roll, glad for fraternity parties and football games. But now, I moved about with an additional lens that affected how I saw things. I could not then nor can I now fully articulate this additional way of seeing. In part, it was centered in the fact that people and places my friends saw as foreign were not that way for me. I knew and liked people in France who, if they suddenly appeared among us at Penn, would not be comfortable. They were different, just as my old friends believed. But their differences were for me an attraction—something intriguing.

It was a bit as though I had grown up in a culture that was cen-
tered in a particular color scheme, and that I had been living abroad with a culture who saw things in different hues, whose way of digesting the world around them entailed a sort of cultural scope or vision that was subtly but really at odds with the vision-orthodoxy of my home.

This other color scheme was something I could talk about in vague terms; but it was not something I could convey experientially to my college friends. So I felt strangely alone at times.

Near the end of the fall term of my senior year, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. I remember walking down Locust St. on a raw, gray day. Someone had put a radio in his apartment window and had cranked up the volume. The announcer was going on about a shooting—something about a presidential assassination. The reality of what had happened was so far away from my views of what was possible, I remember thinking, “Those crazy South Americans are at it again.” Later, I walked into a laundry that also functioned as a check-cashing agency. People were standing around looking dazed with tears running down their cheeks. Only then did the horror of the reality hit home. It was so hard to believe.

We did not know then that the 1960s were to be a decade of assassinations. Malcolm X, Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King would all die violently in the course of the next six years.
James W. Mell, was a Blair faculty member from 1964-1973. After leaving Blair in 1973, Jim and his wife, Karen, had their second daughter, Kristen. Their first daughter, Kimberley, is now director of academic standards for the State of New Jersey. After several years of teaching in Montessori schools, Kristen married and moved to Kansas City, Kansas. Jim and Karen have four grandchildren. Jim became the family program director of Little Hill-Alina Lodge, a long-term residential rehabilitation center for chemical dependency in Blairstown, New Jersey, in 1973 and became their CEO in 1993. Karen and Jim opened their own non-profit outpatient substance-abuse counseling agency, Step Ahead, Inc., in 1998 and are still counseling today. Jim is a consultant to Blair on matters pertaining to substance abuse. He has been choir director and organist for his church for 29 years and sings in The Water Gap Singers, a local choral group. The Mells still live in Blairstown and their e-mail address is stepahead@goes.com. They love hearing from Blair alumni.
Has Anything Really Changed?

At the end of June 1964, I returned from Brown University, where my application and acceptance to the master of arts in teaching program in European history had been lost. Rather than try to unravel the mystery of what happened to them, I decided to come home and look into teaching for a year before deciding if graduate school was for me. I called the telephone operator and asked if she could give me the number for Blairstown Military Academy. Yes, a real live operator! She replied, “Do you mean Blair Academy?” I said, “Whatever!” Yes, I did use that word! She connected me to Blair. I was interviewed in August by a desperate Ferd Marcial, Henry Cowan and math department chairman Wil Jones, as Jim Howard was on vacation. They were desperate because they still had no one to teach two sections of Algebra I, run the gym store and run the PT classes. Nevett Bartow also needed an accompanist for the glee club. Essentially I said, “Yes! I can do that!” I had a good aptitude in math, but hadn’t had a course in it since my freshman year of college. I had never been employed in a retail store and, although athletically coordinated and a varsity college athlete, I had no training in physical education. I could play the piano and had a long suit in glee clubs, having sung in them throughout my own prep school and college educations. Mr. Bartow was thrilled! Ever see the movie The Great Imposter with Tony Curtis? I had! I was hired. Ferd offered me a salary of $3,000 a year, but I held out for $3,500 and got it. Do you think things have changed?

I began my teaching, running the gym store and leading PT classes with all the enthusiasm only a naive 21-year-old freshly graduated college student eager to teach could have. I was a cigarette smoker then and I smoked in the dorm, in the dining room and in the classroom, like most other faculty members at the time. Do you think things have changed? Marijuana was not on anyone’s mind, unless you were an artist or musician living in Greenwich Village. There were no such students at Blair at that time. However, along came the educational revolution ushered in by the tragic riots at Kent State University, the formation of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the advent of Woodstock, inspired by the new music of the Beatles, Woody and Arlo Guthrie, Joan Baez, Judy Collins and The Rolling Stones, along with a growing unrest over the Vietnam War. “Peace, baby!” At Blair, this meant student participation on committees where there had been none, a new familiarity between students and faculty (not always appreciated by the faculty members who viewed it as disrespect), par-
ticipation in the A Better Chance Program (ABC) and some new looks in student eyes, sort of reddish and a bit bleary and unfocused. In my opinion, Jim Howard masterfully navigated some very turbulent waters, implementing changes that he believed were in the best interest of education at Blair, and avoiding fads that diminished the true value of an educational experience. Changes such as the ABC program, which brought economically limited, inner-city, African-American students with strong academic abilities to Blair, student participation in school government and a new structure for seniors to assist them in making the transition from a highly regulated boarding school...
to the loosely structured college environment. The Senior Plan was formulated, spearheaded by dean of students John Carhart and chaplain Foster Doan. Instead of lights out by 11 p.m., there were no lights out. Absences from classes and many other heretofore “no-no’s” were tolerated and dealt with more through “discussion” than rules, more things were voluntary rather than required. The Rules and Discipline Committee (R&D) was created, of which I was the first chairperson. Students now had equal representation with faculty to determine the fate of irresponsible students. We made recommendations to the Headmaster, which sometimes were accepted and sometimes not. Class elections became important politically, not always electing the most responsible classmate, but usually the most likely to become a lawyer or Supreme Court Justice! Hours upon hours were spent in a classroom by the R&D trying to decipher innocence from guilt, and when guilty, coming up with the fairest consequence for the offender and the school. My wife, Karen, was beginning to wonder if she was still married, not having seen me for what probably seemed like days! Now, upon entering a student’s room, I began to find a new interest in horticulture. Plants were being grown in typewriter cases. Yes, typewriters—not word processors or computers. They were fragrant plants and it turned out some students were smoking them! Do you think things have changed?

After Woodstock was held in 1969, the campus was clamoring for a mini-Woodstock at Blair. It was called the Fine Arts Weekend. I can’t remember ever having more fun! Talent came out of the woodwork from students, faculty, the local area, New York City, Philadelphia and many other locations—artists, musicians, poets and storytellers. There were non-stop events from Friday night until Sunday afternoon. There were concerts in different
venues. The “new dorms” of Mason and Freeman hosted guitarists, sing-a-longs and poetry readings with students and faculty hanging over the balconies, watching and listening late into the night to the wonders occurring in the common rooms below! Nevett Bartow was the prime mover and it was spectacular! This was to be no flash in the pan experience! For several years, the Fine Arts Weekend was held annually. But of greater consequence was the evolution of the “Gas of the Week” (“gas” being a term that meant “over the top,” “Wow!” or “most incredible event”). Nevett felt students needed to realize and share their individual talents and cultural tastes in a non-competitive, supportive environment. So, on a Wednesday evening in the spring, he invited any student who wanted to share something of meaning through music, art, literature or any other creative medium to come to his residence at the Old Academy after dinner to do so. The first Wednesday brought maybe a dozen students. Their experience was electrifying to them and, the next Wednesday, there were better than 75 students spilling out on the lawn around the Old Academy listening to the various “cultural treasures” presented by their fellow students and faculty—opera excerpts, rock music, paintings, poems—it was incredible! Nevett had become the Pied Piper of Blair. The Gas of the Week became a schedule fixture,
sometimes with over 100 students in attendance, and produced a new level of consciousness about the arts in students at Blair.

There were so many other things that perhaps those students and faculty in the 1960s reading this may remember that I have forgotten. Although 21 then, I am about to turn 70 now, so I may not recall everything. I left Blair in 1973, at which time I was “assistant to the headmaster in charge of dorms and discipline,” teacher of algebra I, II and trigonometry and music I (for which I had written an extensive drill book of sight singing, ear training and elementary counterpoint exercises, since we couldn’t find a suitable one for secondary school students), coach of varsity soccer and varsity tennis, assistant choir director and director of The Tweeds. I left to pursue a career in substance abuse/dependency counseling and currently am a consultant to Blair in that capacity.

Have things really changed? Yes, they have. Those seeds planted before and during the 1960s have continued to be nurtured and cultivated. They have grown to be unrecognizable in some ways and intimately familiar in others, providing today’s students with greater advantages and privileges than ever before. May you accept and use them wisely! If you do, you will change for the better, too!

Anything *Really* Changed?

Coach Mell
Dr. Elliott Trommald H’65 taught at Blair from 1962 to 1968 and again from 1977 to 1985. He created the Society of Skeptics and was inducted into Blair’s class of 1965 as an honorary member. Elliott taught at the University of Queensland in Australia, where he developed an American Studies program, and finished his teaching career at Middlesex School in Concord, Massachusetts. Since retiring in 2000, he has been an adjunct lecturer at the University of Massachusetts and at Clark College in Vancouver, Washington, where he specializes in Lincoln, foreign policy and the crisis of the American dream. Elliott continues to write about Blair’s founder, John I. Blair, and is a mainstay of the “Thirsters” weekly intellectual forum held in Portland, Oregon.
I was a child of the silent generation brought up in highly sexist institutions—an all-boys prep school and an all-boys college—although Yale preferred the term “men.” But both institutions provided a strong ethical and intellectual base that shaped my future. My education was about to begin. I graduated in 1959 and went on to teach in an all-male prep school in Massachusetts and then to grad school for an MA; landing at Blair in September 1962. By 1962, I suppose I was a classical male chauvinist pig—but never knew it. What I knew was that I had a growing interest in history, politics and the confusing foreign policy of my country. Those interests mushroomed and were nourished by six of the most interesting and fulfilling years of teaching that I have experienced. Blair’s faculty was dominated by unforgettable characters who made getting up in the morning an ode to joy; and, at times, a descent into despair and frustration. The latter I can barely remember, but that joy is as alive today as it was then.

I arrived in 1962. Paul White had been hired to take over the history department from Bill Nesbitt, who departed for Penn Charter. The three of us never lost touch. But Paul was my mentor and became a close friend who made the classroom vital and history alive. Our differences were thrashed out over coffee, cigarettes and drink—often late into the morning. We team-taught a course on foreign policy, the most challenging teaching I have experienced. I will never forget those classes, partly because the students mostly from similar socio-economic backgrounds shared so little in common when it came to issues like race, foreign policy, politics and morality. Neither Paul nor I knew what to expect from day to day, but we relished the joy of learning with them. Ideas were as important to them as to us. I don’t remember a dull class with that group, but I do remember the stress of debating Paul and students who seemed never to arrive unprepared for battle.

Many were members of the International Society, a group of students that met Monday nights to thrash out issues that mattered. Debates were high level because Paul would have it no other way. One Monday evening in October during my first year at Blair, we experienced history together. It was as if JFK had actually decided to speak to the nation at the same time International Society met. It was October 22. The campus had been a buzz that afternoon because we had learned U.S. military forces worldwide went on high alert and all B-52s for the first time were armed with nuclear weapons. There, in the basement of Clinton Hall, sat some 15 students, Paul, and I. Never, NEVER will I forget the expressions on those faces. The president began his 17-min-
ute speech. Three students, who today I can still name, leaned in closer to the radio as the president spoke, some sat back just listening, seeming to will that war was avoidable. Paul and I exchanged frequent glances. Then came the answer to the question on all our minds: the U.S. will “regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response against the Soviet Union.”

At that point, the three who had been leaning into the radio sat upright, disappointment registering on their faces. And then discussion. We should have dropped the bomb! Kennedy did not have the nerve required of leadership? A “strict quarantine” was a weak-kneed, half-way policy. Others lashed back, no, it would have been risky and a massive failure of leadership. Voices escalated and the discussion cut into study hall—as often it did. Paul and I would apologize to faculty running dorms and study hall upstairs. Late into that night, after South Cottage had gone to sleep, I walked up the hill to Paul’s and we smoked and imbibed and tried to make sense out of that meeting. The only positive sense we had was that 15 students really cared and were passionate about their beliefs. What they cared about scared me.

But there was always South Cottage to return to; freshman and sophomores and the best prefect I could have imagined. They, too, educated me. South was not about Cuba, nuclear war, civil rights; South was all about music. “What, Mr. Trommald, you have never heard of Bob Dylan? Listen to this!” I spent hours doing that, listening, learning, enjoying their love of music, which usually transcended their love of the classroom. “You can’t go; you’ve got to hear this.” And I did. Here were two sides of a school that would undergo major change in just six years.

From 1962-1968, I witnessed a school transform itself from one where its life and reach had largely been confined to 360 acres to one with a national, even international flavor. A few memories make the point. Jim Howard and Ferd Marcial were figures that inspired, embraced the faculty, made us understand the importance of what we did and always made me laugh. They made Blairstown a home I enjoyed, as well as a launching pad to think about the meaning of education. Dagne and I made close and lasting friends during those six years, but there was always a gap between the enthusiasm of the husbands teaching and the feeling of the wives living. That was an issue of constant discussion.

At some point, Jim told the faculty he wanted each of us to write a paper on the topic: “Justification for the existence of a prep school.” He may have used the term “in-
dependent school,” he was such a stickler for language. But I agonized over that, and recognized my response was a reflection of a wonderfully transformative faculty: Foster Doan bringing in powerful speakers whose task was to light a fire under the students and faculty who didn’t move or grow quite fast enough; taking groups of students and faculty to hear Martin Luther King speak when he visited Drew; Tony Cassen freeing students from the daily school regimen to march in protests outside of Blairstown; Art Spring stretching minds in his own brilliant, inimitable way; and then, on campus, there was the transformative spirit of Larry Joline. He made the Peddie bonfire a spiritual exercise few students who experienced it ever forgot. Unforgettable. Larry gave an annual chapel talk about the human love of fire, working in images of historical “rallies” going back a thousand years. His voice rising and falling for emphasis, his eyes gleaming with a satanic fury as he walked back and forth behind the dais, arms always in motion, working his willing audience into a lather. These were willing students who for weeks pulled out of the woods gigantic logs that would become a bonfire larger than any I ever experienced. On that bonfire, he told us, the enemy would be consigned to flame. Memories: our 3- and 5-year-old daughters carried on the shoulders of seniors as they marched to the field to witness the conflagration. More than once, I envisioned images of 1930s Germany and, probably for the first time, came to understand how easy it is to incite people to follow a leader and rouse them to passionate support for purposes and ideals. I could feel that charged emotional excess that transcends reason.

That emotional excess, too, was part of the 60s that transformed us at Blair. The assassinations of JFK, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Bobby Kennedy and civil rights protesters forced us to come to terms with ourselves and the meaning of education. I remember reluctantly, and with some degree of horror, my first reactions to news that Malcolm X had been shot. It was “good,” and then “I hope it was by a black man.” As I write this, I cringe, but it is a reminder how important it is that people never stop growing, learning, evolving.

I remember the conflicted, angry, excessive, but always open reactions that took place on campus among faculty and students. Many of those reactions are not pleasant memories, but between ’65 and ’68, it seemed to me that the Blair world, or at the very least, my world, had been turned upside down. Joline and I taught next door to each other and we both chain smoked and drank coffee through our morning classes, and often discussed these issues with students and each other. That, too, was part of the Blair...
education. And when we retreated to the faculty room for more coffee and conversation, the education continued. The faculty was divided on so many issues of the day. There was always a respect for each other in that smoke-filled room. I still feel Gordon Paul's passion and eagerness to challenge those with whom he disagreed. Glasses hanging from one ear so he could see you better, cigarette in hand, "No Elliott, Owen Taylor (Gordon's Schenectady hero for whom he had worked) was a Hoover man. He would never stomach FDR." I, cigarette and coffee in hand, "No Gordon, I know Taylor ran a Republicans for FDR committee in 1931 and 1932." And the veins in his neck would pop out, the glasses swing but never leave his ear. Gordon was the last of a breed of what Jim Howard called with great fondness the "true school master." I coached JV football with Gordon—and even there he coached with a passion and understanding that was infectious. How could one not love this man, love working with him. Who could avoid infection?

The many students and faculty I fondly remember during these years profoundly shaped me. And the institution, while never as important as those who composed it, was unique. If it had a second-rate reputation and was for many a safety school choice, it was populated by first-rate human beings, some of the best I have taught in 50 years of teaching. Blair is a major reason I still teach. The unique quality of the 1960s was gone by the 1970s and 1980s. Consider admissions. In 1968, Duncan Alling and Alma Costantino were it. Charlie Underwood and I each took a term where we did the interviewing. At the end of the year and early summer, we came together as a group to read files. I remember calling Ferd on more than one occasion when a parent applied for a child in the first or second grade. What do I do? Ferd's response: "If they are warm and breathing, fill out the application." There was very little separation between faculty and administration in those days, the school felt seamless and interconnected. And that was a feeling I never experienced again in any other school.

In 1968, I was a substantially different person than the very young teacher who walked onto campus in 1962. I still remember walking up from South to the dining room with my wife of one year, and hearing a student on the Insley porch call, "Hey Dagne, what the hell are you doing here?" It was a handsome student she had double dated with a few years back. That memory now seemed from a different world. And some of the ill effects of my all-male education were beginning to erode, but serious change in that area would have to wait a decade. And, strangely, it waited until I returned to a co-educational Blair in 1977.