

Milton



A GENERATION LOOKS AHEAD

HOW WE WILL WORK, LEARN,
LAUGH, CRY, AND LIVE TOGETHER
IN THE FUTURE

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“We need to become tech skeptics who continually take stock of digital life from multiple perspectives in order to use these extraordinary inventions more wisely.”

MAGGIE JACKSON '78,
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On the Cover



This issue focuses on Generation Z and the challenges that lie before it. On the cover, the Italian illustrator Jonathan Calugi captures this generation—clear-eyed and determined—as it forges a new path into the future.

Milton
Magazine

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A Generation Looks Ahead

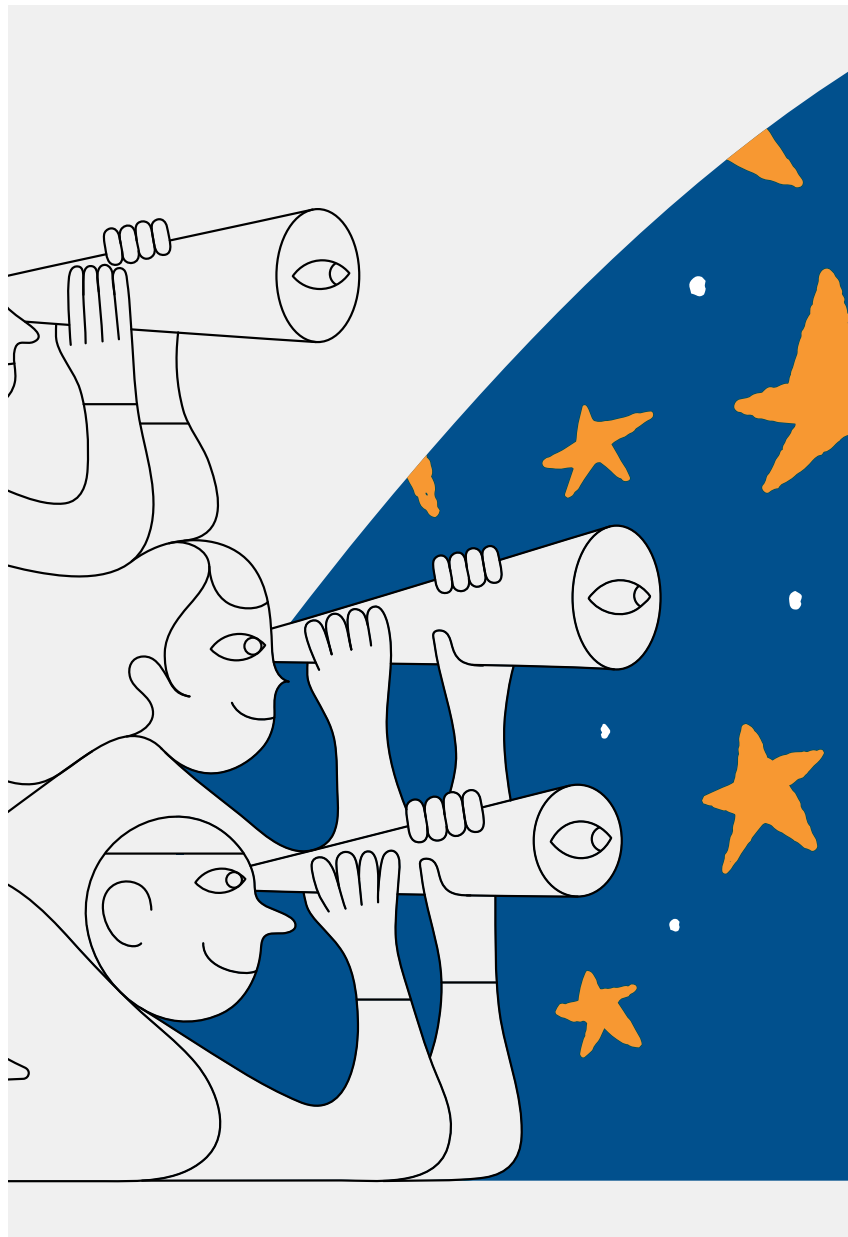
The past year has brought about difficult new realities—a healthcare crisis, historic economic instability, accelerating climate change—on top of entrenched social and racial inequity. In this issue, the Milton community looks toward the future.

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Milton

DARE TO BE TRUE
SPRING 2021

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What does it mean, in a fractured time like this, to be funny? Gemma Soldati '09 and Max Kliman '15 consider the future of their craft.

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In difficult times, Kimberly McManama O'Brien '96 strives to take advantage of the fact that this generation is more comfortable talking about mental health.

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Renowned journalist and social critic Maggie Jackson '78 wants people to understand how digital technology threatens the crucial work of focusing well and thinking deeply.

Quad





Challenge(s) Accepted



BY TODD B. BLAND, HEAD OF SCHOOL

OUR TWIN DAUGHTERS arrived two months early. ■ Although my wife, Nancy, and I knew the elevated risks of a twin pregnancy, nothing could have prepared us for the trauma of seeing our babies in neonatal intensive care for almost three weeks or for the two months they remained in the hospital after that. Twenty-four years later, we are blessed with two healthy and thriving daughters, **MAGGIE '14** and **EMILY '14**. But during those months, almost every other thing in our lives fell away as we faced the impossible test of watching our children suffer. ■ That time also built in us a resilience we have carried in our family ever since, a muscle memory for how to handle challenge even in the darkest moments. For Nancy and me, this resilience has been a gift that we know comes from pain. We reprioritized our lives; our world became small and intensely focused. Although that period is now, thankfully, a distant memory, it has continued to help us separate what is truly important from what is not. ■ Last year, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the world into a crisis the likes of which few have ever faced. The devastating toll on human lives, the grief and isolation, the stress on medical professionals, and resources stretched to their absolute limits all contributed to a painful time for the world, the country, and our own Milton community. ■ This time has shone a brilliant light on the importance of science and medicine and of connections, patience, and kindness. It has taught us difficult lessons in rising to the occasion and doing what's right, even when the hardships and interruptions of living through the pan-

■ FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MILTON'S PANDEMIC RESPONSE AND EFFORTS TO CREATE A CULTURE OF ANTI-RACISM AND INCLUSION AT THE SCHOOL, PLEASE READ THE INTERVIEW WITH HEAD OF SCHOOL TODD BLAND AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES PRESIDENT LISA DONOHUE ON PAGE 6.

demic have caused us to be less than our best selves.

It has also spurred collaboration and innovation in ways that will change us forever.

Necessity is the mother of invention, the saying goes. Anytime societies have faced crises, innovation and the indomitable human will to thrive have driven new developments in science, medicine, communication, food, and agriculture. The light bulb, the jet engine, refrigeration, computers, blood banks—even superglue—are all solutions born of adversity. The same holds true for the natural world: Plants and animals, in response to predators and environmental shifts, evolve to build strength and protect their own survival. Adaptation is the key to living in a sometimes volatile world.

At Milton, the need to adapt and build resilience became clear in 2020. Facing the ongoing pandemic and a vital movement for racial justice, we became witnesses to the power of change. We turned a critical eye on teaching and learning to find the best ways to reach students, whether in our physical classrooms or halfway around the world. We established a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Commission, whose members are investigating what we need to build a more inclusive, anti-racist community. We test each person on campus for COVID-19 weekly, monitor a daily health attestation program, and have de-densified campus, among other efforts, to keep all members of the community safe. We also made significant investments in technology and our physical spaces to promote a healthy and functional school.

“Milton students have risen to the challenges of this past year with remarkable flexibility. They have built resilience, together and as individuals, that will serve them the rest of their lives.”



Milton students have risen to the challenges of this past year with remarkable flexibility, creating points of support and connection with one another, organizing virtual workouts with team members, performing music and drama while physically distant, advocating for justice, and serving the local community from all over the world. They have built resilience, together and as individuals, that will serve them the rest of their lives.

So, too, has our School. Actions in response to these specific global crises will benefit Milton in the years to come. Through extensive professional development, our teachers have committed to a curriculum focused on student outcomes and growth—one that teaches through an anti-racist lens and challenges students at all grade levels to be engaged, critical thinkers. Our

work on DEI issues focuses not only on immediate needs but also on efforts that will build a more just and inclusive Milton. Many alumni have strengthened their commitment to Milton, virtually visiting classrooms to share their knowledge and experience. The costs of managing the School in a pandemic were incurred with the future in mind.

In these pages you will find snapshots of a moment unlike any other in recent history and a look ahead to what's next. We have all received intensive training in handling the unexpected. Our students have shown us that they are ready for anything the world holds for them, and many alumni are focusing on big solutions for the future. I hope you will find, as I do, that the adversity of the present will strengthen our community and all its people for the future.

A Year of Struggle and Opportunity

HEAD OF SCHOOL **TODD BLAND** AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES PRESIDENT **LISA DONOHUE '83** REFLECT ON THE PAST 12 MONTHS.

LAST MARCH, THE United States entered an evolving global crisis—the worst health crisis in a century—that created significant challenges for operating schools. In May, the nation responded to a racial reckoning that also had serious implications for institutions across the country. *Milton Magazine* spoke with Head of School Todd Bland and Milton's Board of Trustees President **LISA DONOHUE '83** about the many challenges in the past year, some of the difficult decisions they've had to make, and where Milton is today.

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HIT THE UNITED STATES IN EARNEST IN MARCH 2020. CAN YOU TALK ABOUT WHAT THOSE FIRST FEW WEEKS AND MONTHS WERE LIKE FOR MILTON?

BLAND: We were all surprised by the magnitude and speed of the transmission of this disease and how it impacted countries around the world. We had been working on coronavirus planning for several weeks, given its spread in China and beyond, which affected our international students and families as well as planned school trips. We hoped to make it to spring break and then have some additional time to prepare for local impact, but all of a sudden the wave that hit not only the country but the Commonwealth of Massachusetts had us depart a day early. So this remote world began, and we ended up spending essentially the spring break period doing everything we could to plan for what lay ahead. Fortunately, we had assembled a coronavirus task force in January and were already

preparing for the future. First and foremost, our planning was guided by the health and safety of our community—the children in our care and our faculty and staff.

SCHOOLS WERE FORCED TO PLAN FOR NEW OPERATIONAL APPROACHES, INCLUDING REMOTE LEARNING, DURING THIS TIME. WHAT WAS MILTON'S APPROACH, AND HOW WELL DO YOU FEEL IT WENT?

BLAND: It would be more accurate to describe our shift to online learning as “crisis remote learning.” In those first weeks and months, most of our time was spent developing emergency plans for all three academic divisions. That included coordination with remote-learning education experts. We knew we needed to plan for three distinctly different learning strategies because of Milton's divisions and age ranges. There were many conversations around the creation of schedules and the advantages of synchronous and asynchronous learning. This time also included a Zoom speed round of training for our teachers and building the technology required for remote teaching. Everyone—teams within the divisions and teachers doing their own work—was preparing for our remote return from spring break.

The backdrop to all this was a pandemic that was clobbering our country, with all the fears that it created in people—fears about their family, about their own health, and about loved ones in their care. This made our work all the more challenging, because people were also

“It would be more accurate to describe our shift to online learning as ‘crisis remote learning.’”

trying to care for themselves and their families in new ways.

DONOHUE: This was a time that required a rapid shift into crisis management. Things were changing dynamically. The School was making short-term, rapid decisions with the best information we had at the time. And we wanted to be a beacon to our community—to our students and their families and to our faculty and staff—and show that we were there for them and listening. At the same time, we needed to make decisions that were not always popular with a community that held a wide range of opinions. While we were there to listen, we also needed to stay the course on decisions that we felt were in the best interests of our students and adults. So it was a balancing act between listening and holding fast on the decisions we made. When we had new information that persuaded us to change, we did so, but we couldn't change just because there were voices wanting us to do something differently.

BLAND: What guided us from the beginning was that our decisions must be based on what we believed were in the best interests of the children in our care and of the School. We knew these were challenging decisions that could never satisfy everyone and that there would be criticism around some of them. Our North Star was always doing what we believed, as educators, was best for our students.

CAN YOU SAY MORE ABOUT THE DIFFERENCES MILTON FACED BETWEEN THE LOWER/



MIDDLE SCHOOLS AND THE UPPER SCHOOL?

BLAND: One of Milton's greatest qualities—our structure—can at times present challenges that peer institutions don't need to consider. Few schools in the country are K-12 with a full boarding program in the upper school. Our response, institutionally, had to fit our needs. Creating a viable, functioning remote-learning program for a five-year-old is completely different from creating one for an 18-year-old. In addition, viable options for students in Shanghai, in Stoneham, or in Sacramento are very different.

The Lower and Middle School divisions have 150 students each. Size and program needs simplified the approach. The Upper School, with 700 students, had a different

set of challenges. The learning that happens at that level is not really by grade, but by individual course, so the intricacy of building that platform and a schedule was far greater. We were dealing with 12 different time zones that would allow for some synchronous learning. We also needed to be attentive to issues of equity and access to technology and resources.

DONOHUE: It's important to understand that the pedagogy and curriculum of remote learning and in-person learning are very different. The assumption that we, or any school, could pick up the curriculum and put it online was not realistic. We recognized that some families wanted our remote program to immediately deliver the same experience found in the classroom. Given

Head of School Todd Bland (right) and Board of Trustees President Lisa Donohue '83 (opposite)

the differences, however, and the sudden shift to remote learning, that simply was not possible. You can't underestimate the fact that every teacher had to rewrite a curriculum, whether a kindergarten or a Grade 12 teacher. By fall, the school was able to adapt and build a robust curriculum and execution for hybrid and remote learning.

BLAND: To pick up on Lisa's point, difficult times bring out the best and the worst in people. This pandemic has been no exception. Many have expressed extraordinary gratitude, have brought forward concerns in a productive manner, and have acknowledged the pain and suffering that was going on. Most had a broad perspective on the entire community and the array of challenges this pandemic had created; others had a more narrow perspective, specific to their own needs. The vast majority of people were supportive and compassionate, and we are grateful. Some of our best enhancements came from people who offered constructive feedback along the way that was extremely valuable. And we continue to learn and are committed to taking lessons from this period forward.

A MAJOR CHALLENGE FOR MILTON HAS BEEN ENSURING THAT THE CAMPUS WOULD BE SAFE FOR ITS STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF WHEN IT REOPENED. WHAT HAS THAT ENTAILED, AND WHAT HAVE BEEN THE FINANCIAL REPERCUSSIONS FOR THE SCHOOL?

BLAND: From the start, ensuring

the safety of our students, faculty, and staff was our highest priority. We organized a cross-functional internal effort, along with outside experts in public and environmental health, medicine, and education, to develop and communicate a robust health and safety protocol. During the fall semester, we were pleased to have had few cases, and we credit our community's compliance with important preventive measures required to safely operate on campus. Our safety measures helped contain transmission when cases did occur on campus. Testing is a significant piece of our efforts—all students, faculty, and staff on campus are tested weekly or more often and must also submit a daily attestation of health. During the first semester, we conducted almost 15,500 COVID-19 tests across our community and had only 30 positive cases, which translated to an average 0.2 percent positivity rate. Six-foot social distancing, mandatory masking, and hand-washing protocols—along with all the corresponding signage—have been critical. We de-densified our campus to structure our physical spaces for six feet of distance. Environmental health consultants analyzed our buildings and plans to ensure that our interior air quality is what it needs to be. There's PPE throughout campus. I feel as confident and at peace with our response relative to health and safety as I do about anything.

DONOHUE: I would emphasize that we worked very hard with the Broad Institute to get the best testing protocols we could find and will continue to do so as testing evolves. The other infrastructure measures are significant. We



anticipate that by the end of this school year, \$8.5 million will have been spent on COVID-19-related infrastructure and operational expenses. There was never any hesitation by Todd and his team or by the board in doing whatever it took to keep our community safe—the significant steps that were needed not just to open the School in the fall but also to operate this school year in a pandemic.

MILTON MADE THE DIFFICULT DECISION TO BEGIN IN SEPTEMBER WITH A PHASED

RETURN OF STUDENTS TO IN-PERSON LEARNING—WITH THE CAMPUS OPEN TO LOWER AND MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS, AND THEN UPPER SCHOOL DAY STUDENTS, BUT STILL CLOSED TO BOARDERS, WHO CONTINUED TO ATTEND SCHOOL ONLINE UNTIL JANUARY. WHY DID YOU MAKE THAT DECISION, AND WHAT WERE SOME OF THE CONSEQUENCES?

BLAND: The Upper School is half day and half boarding, so isolating

“By the end of this school year, \$8.5 million will have been spent on COVID-19 related infrastructure and operational expenses. There was never any hesitation by Todd and his team or by the board in doing whatever it took to keep our community safe.”

LISA DONOHUE '83, PRESIDENT, MILTON BOARD OF TRUSTEES



our boarding community was impossible given our circumstances. Ultimately we decided to begin with a hybrid model to allow those who could attend as day students to do so in two alternating groups, but to not open the dorms initially. There was understandable concern with the ability to reopen the dorms safely. There was also a significant debate about the emotional well-being of students in such a restricted residential setting.

DONOHUE: The administration and the board knew this decision was going to be deeply, deeply disappointing, especially to the boarding population, but also to the day students who were looking forward to seeing their friends and their peers. It's hard to convey to those kids and parents how much empathy we felt around that decision, but it was real and was felt by all. But it was the right thing to do to ensure the safety of our community, just as it was the right decision for us to open the dorms in January, after we had confidence that the campus could be well managed and safe. We'd demonstrated that our testing was excellent and would only get better because of the changes we were making. You have to do what you believe is right, but through it all, we never lost sight of the importance of the boarding program and our boarding community. It's part of our identity.

BLAND: We never faltered in our commitment to our boarding program. We were grappling with immensely difficult circumstances that affected living spaces even more than learning spaces.

DONOHUE: We did fall short on soliciting our parents' input. We worked hard to listen to our range of constituencies, but parents were a key voice that was underrepresented. We've since instituted more parent surveys (and student surveys) and we'll continue to do more. We recognize that there is a need to improve our sharing of information and outreach to families—particularly during these stressful times. There are opportunities to communicate more frequently and more clearly.

BLAND: Some families, particularly within the Upper School, felt that we provided too much discretion to teachers, especially in terms of remote instruction. Your child's personal circumstances mean that it can be experienced very unevenly. If, for example, a majority of your child's teachers are remote, that can feel very different than if they're in person. So that piece has been a criticism that we have to acknowledge and an area that we will continue to be attentive to going forward. This pandemic has created many difficult choices. It has been very hard for everyone—schools are certainly no exception. But I'm proud of a community where teachers are a part of the decision-making process. Different people have different perspectives on this, but teachers are frontline workers whose needs must be considered.

IN LATE MAY, NATIONWIDE PROTESTS RESPONDED TO THE KILLINGS OF GEORGE FLOYD, BREONNA TAYLOR, AND OTHER BLACK AMERICANS. HOW DID THE MILTON COMMUNI-

TY REACT TO THAT CALL FOR RACIAL JUSTICE, AND WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM THE CONVERSATIONS YOU'VE HAD ABOUT STRUCTURAL RACISM?

BLAND: It shook me and it shook everyone—the faculty, the staff, and the board. My goal as a leader is to make sure that every child here feels that this school is their school as much as it is anyone’s school. Sadly, members of our Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) community said, often expressed through social media, “It did not feel like my school. I went there, but I still felt like I was a visitor.” That was heartbreaking, but critical for us to hear and acknowledge. Something is broken and needs to be fixed. What happened this past year showed how much further we have to go.

DONOHUE: It was very difficult at first to hear the comments, and it needed to be. What was also hard, but important, was how personal the comments got. Then you continue to go deeper and listen. It took great courage for students and alumni to name their truth to more aggressively hold us accountable. Outside our own walls, Milton is known as having a diverse community, faculty, and staff. It is known as having a diverse board, and we have long had the Office of Multiculturalism and Community Development. But what we heard is “That’s nice, but it’s not enough, and my experience was not positive. You need to wake up and realize it’s not enough and it’s not effective enough.” You go through that journey and realize that the gap between where we are and where we need to be is still big.



FOUR YEARS AGO, MILTON STUDENTS OF COLOR STAGED A SIT-IN THAT, ACCORDING TO WHAT YOU LEARNED FROM MILTON STUDENTS AND ALUMNI IN THE SPRING, RESULTED IN LITTLE MEANINGFUL CHANGE. HOW WILL MILTON'S ACTIONS GOING FORWARD BE DIFFERENT?

BLAND: The work we’ve done since the sit-ins is not enough. This is clear. Those students who participated in the sit-ins, who are either still students or graduates, didn’t feel there was enough sustained change from our efforts thus far.

Things might have improved, or perhaps there was a good moment, but it wasn’t sustained. We need to do better.

DONOHUE: There needs to be greater sustainability in the solutions we develop and the speed at which we implement those solutions. It’s hard to admit, but after the sit-ins, there were actions we wanted to take. But in the grand scheme of operating the School, we did not move fast enough to implement our plans and as a result have clearly been unable to make enough progress. What happened

“Something is broken and needs to be fixed. What happened this past year showed how much further we have to go.”

TODD BLAND, HEAD OF SCHOOL

to George Floyd and other Black Americans, and the hurt and emotions engendered by those tragedies, helped clarify the depth of the institutional challenge we needed to address. There needs to be greater sustainability, efficacy, and transparency in how we address these issues.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES THAT ARE BEING BROUGHT ABOUT BY THESE CONVERSATIONS?

BLAND: We recently created a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission, a group made up of alumni and members of the faculty, staff, and board whose fundamental role is to assess, prioritize, and name a set of recommendations to the administration and the board for concrete short-, medium-, and long-term goals that the institution needs to achieve and be held accountable for. A lot of the work of the commission is to make sure that what we’re doing is foundational, but it also will identify work that we are missing but that needs to be done. I would also like to recognize faculty and staff for stepping up in all divisions, working to identify ways to support policy and practice development.

DONOHUE: With members of the board on the commission we want the community to understand how committed the board is not only to helping Todd and the School make the changes we need to make at the pace we need to make them, but also to participate in those changes.

BLAND: One of the primary complaints that came out of the recent

conversations is that there was no one place to go other than the administration to discuss people’s concerns. We recently announced the appointment of faculty member Suzanne DeBuhr as director of truth and reconciliation, a new position that will help the community address grievances, including micro-aggressions and racism. This is a trusted place for adults and children to go. We’ve created a new fund for diversity, equity, and inclusion to ensure this work is effectively resourced. The Milton Fund is a major source of philanthropic support. We’ve also hired Diversity Directions, a consulting firm that focuses on K-12 schools, to help provide direction for us as we make these institutional changes. The firm will bring a degree of granularity that requires both listening and analysis to help us move in the right direction. Since January, they’ve been carrying out an audit, interviewing members throughout the community. We had already created an authorized strategic plan, but we want to evaluate what may be missing and be sure that the plans we’ve made are the right ones.

Part of the work we’re doing, with the commission’s help, is to reimagine our Office of Multiculturalism and Community Development (OMCD) to ensure that it’s positioned to best serve and engage the community and the School in the next stage of this important work. We have just named a new chief diversity, equity, and inclusion officer, Vanessa Cohen Gibbons. Heather Flewelling, director of OMCD, is departing Milton to explore new opportunities after nearly two decades of doing many great things for the School. Vanessa

will also be a direct report to me and sit on my administrative team.

DONOHUE: The addition of a third-party expert consultant was also meant to push us hard and aggressively. The killings of Black Americans highlighted even more the importance of the fight against systemic racism. Feedback from our own community affirmed our need for more external voices who are experts in this space. This work is hard. But we are committed to it.

BLAND: What’s next will be a balancing act between the yearning for immediate change and making sure that the changes we’re implementing are effective and long-term. It takes time to develop foundational change, change that will last for a long time and will continue to evolve as needed. What we’re trying to do is build an anti-racist institution. Part of this work is to create a foundation for a different type of school, and we must recognize that this work will never be finished. It is important that this remains an ongoing priority. You can hear the historian in me, because I always think about looking back, but I hope that we’ll be able to look back at this time not only as a time of devastation, sadness, and fracture, but also as a time when the institution answered the call, and that Milton made a fundamental shift that altered the school’s trajectory in really important and positive ways from 2020 forward.

A YEAR INTO THE PANDEMIC, HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE MILTON TODAY?

DONOHUE: I am so impressed with

our students. They’ve been through a lot. All of them. Seniors are persevering and making the most of their last year of high school. Our new students have embraced forming new relationships at a new school in a COVID-19 world. What kids have had to experience and learn in this environment has not been lost on us. They are awe-inspiring. A year into this, we’ve moved into a position of confidence in how we operate, both within our current limitations, where we’ve learned how to continuously adjust and evolve moving into the winter semester with boarders back in the dorms, and ultimately into the fall, when we expect our entire community will be on campus together once again.

BLAND: I’ll echo Lisa—the kids are resilient and show amazing creativity. I am so proud of our students. And I am so grateful for our dedicated faculty and staff, working so hard under extraordinary circumstances. Honestly, it takes my breath away. This has been an incredibly difficult time for everyone, but good things will come out of it, including the resiliency and adaptability it’s taught people. The work we’ve had to do to function within the parameters of the pandemic will also provide the School with important, lasting lessons that will affect so many things: how we operate, how we teach, what we teach—and how we appreciate one another. We are optimistic for the future. We look forward to moving beyond this stage of the pandemic, to the vaccine rolling out despite early hurdles, and to being back together again, all of us, on campus and in person in the coming school year.

At Milton, the Show Must Go On

ALTHOUGH KING THEATRE FELL QUIET LAST FALL, THE PERFORMING ARTS AND MUSIC REMAINED ALIVE AT MILTON.



PERFORMING ARTS FACULTY MEMBER ELEZA KORT (TOP LEFT) AND STUDENTS MEET ON ZOOM TO REHEARSE THE FALL CLASS IV PLAY, *ALL I REALLY NEED TO KNOW I LEARNED IN KINDERGARTEN*.

KING THEATRE STAYED pretty quiet in the fall of 2020.

Health and safety protocols in response to the COVID-19 pandemic made live performance impossible, but Milton's performing arts and music faculty made sure that student actors, musicians, dancers, and speakers were still able to command the (virtual) stage.

To accommodate the semester's hybrid-learning program, faculty guided the production of three plays (stitching together scenes students filmed at home), several musical performances, and success in remote speech and debate competitions.

"Continuing to create performances and just making sure that our kids remain connected with one another are the guiding principles of what we've been doing," says Music Department Chair Adrian Anantawan. "Music helps glue communities together. If we're thinking of the arts as this adhesive in a way that transcends the boundaries of Zoom, or international boundaries, we're doing our jobs."

Nationally, the pandemic dealt a devastating blow to professional performers and live venues. In the spring and summer, some performers got creative, putting on socially distanced concerts in large fields or at drive-in movie theaters, but many shows were canceled indefinitely. At the time this story was written, the \$10 billion bipartisan Save Our Stages Act, intended to keep independent venues afloat, was before the Senate, but some venue owners feared that any bill might be too late.

Artists, meanwhile, turned to digital tools to keep working. At Milton, cell-phone videos and vid-

eo-conferencing technology like Zoom made it possible for students to collaborate and perform.

For orchestra musicians, Anantawan and music teacher Eric Goode had each student record their part on their phones, which the teachers then edited together. It's no small task to compile videos of varying quality to make a performance cohesive.

"There are a lot of technical aspects that go into it," Anantawan says. "It's almost like a new form of conducting, because you find the voices you want to bring forward and the parts you want to be a bit more mellow. Obviously, it's not ideal, but it's something. It allows our students and ourselves to become more digitally literate, so it's a new set of skills we're all developing."

Performing-arts faculty members had to get creative about the three fall plays: Because they could not have live performances, directors had to find shows that could be licensed to be recorded and then had to comply with licensing specifics. Dar Anastas directed *The Illustrated Bradbury*, a series of vignettes featuring stories by the author Ray Bradbury. For the Class IV play, Eleza Kort selected *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. Faculty member Shane Fuller, a theater designer and filmmaker, edited the videos of students' scenes to make cohesive shows.

The third play, *Macbeth*, provided more leeway for creativity. Because Shakespeare's tragedy is in the public domain, there were no restrictions on recording. Director Peter Parisi and production manager Evan DelGaudio decided to re-

lease the play in six episodes.

“Part of the power of theater for audiences is that you’re in this one place at the same time, experiencing something in the dark together,” Parisi says. “So the hard part of recording, whether in episodes or otherwise, is missing that connection. But we have this situation with the pandemic, and we needed to adapt. We weren’t going to be able to have an audience of any size, let alone actors on stage, unmasked. So we just talked about leaning in to what we were capable of doing.”

The faculty went above and beyond to make sure that every student who wanted to participate in the fall shows could, says Performing Arts Department Chair Kelli Edwards. That meant some night and early-morning rehearsals to accommodate students in different time zones; she recalls that Anastas worked in the middle of the night with a student in Saudi Arabia. Fuller and DelGaudio were indispensable because of their knowledge of film and digital platforms, Edwards says.

Part of the joy of being in a cast or on a tech crew comes from the moments of downtime. Under normal conditions, while preparing a show, students hang out in the hallways or the lobby of the Kellner Performing Arts Center and work on their lines, chip away at homework, or goof off with one another. Although they couldn’t replace those moments, the directors made sure to build in times when students could socialize and get acquainted.

“We have these informal check-in conversations for the first few minutes,” Parisi says. “Just chatting, having some laughs, creating these



“Continuing to create performances and just making sure that our kids remain connected with one another are the guiding principles of what we’ve been doing.”

ADRIAN ANANTAWAN
MUSIC DEPARTMENT CHAIR

moments of connection that maybe we did take for granted.”

Live performance will survive the pandemic, Edwards says. Theater has been around forever; it has endured through the collapse of empires, wars, and other historic pandemics. It’s possible that some of the technological holdovers of the COVID-19 era will linger, allowing performers to expand their reach in addition to live performance, and promoting collaboration in exciting new ways.

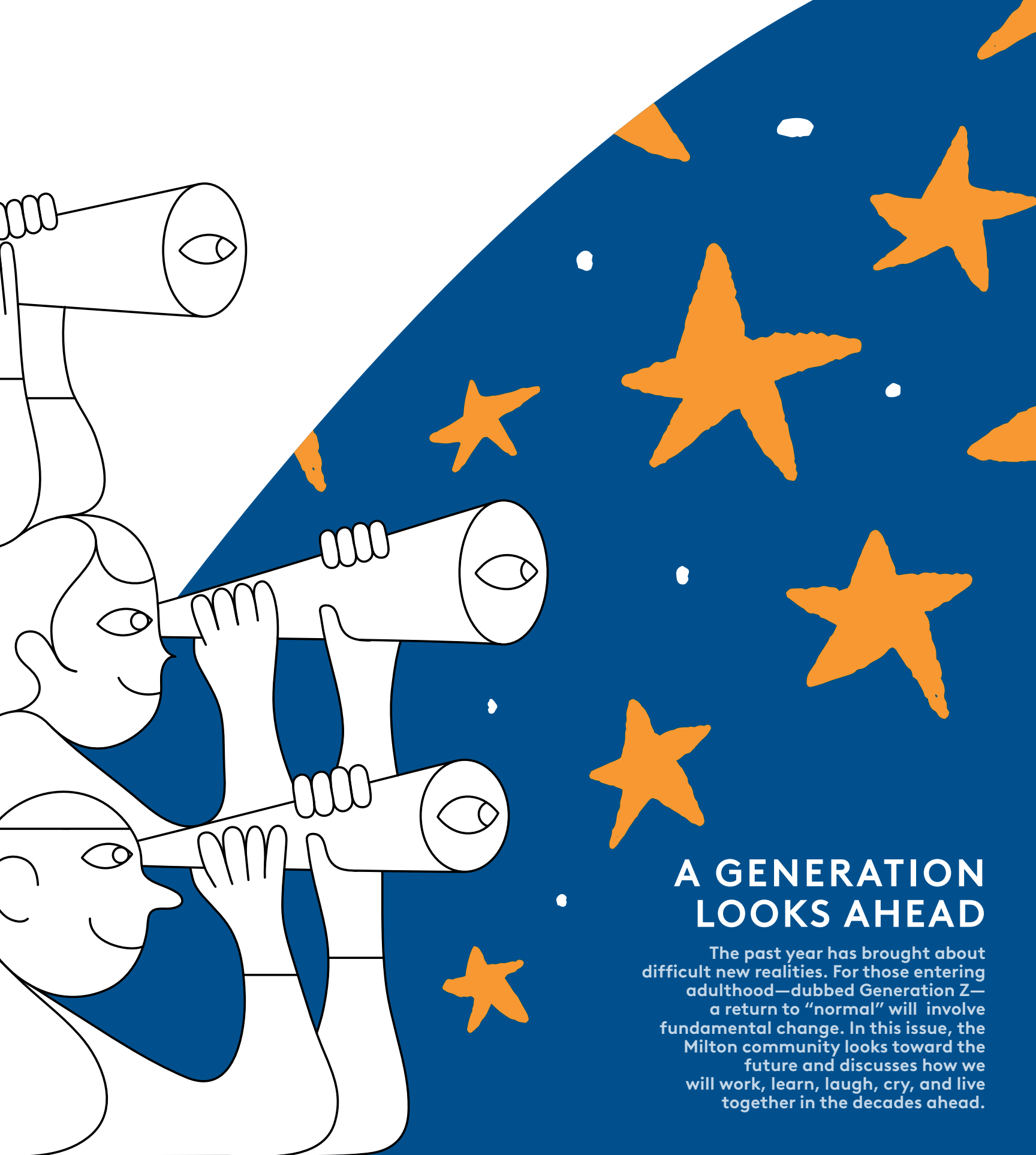
Creating art in remote and hybrid settings allows performers across the world to share a stage, which the Music Department put to its advantage. Orchestra students performed with other orchestra students from Toronto on part of John Williams’s

Harry Potter movie score. The **MELISSA DILWORTH GOLD ‘61** Visiting Artist Layth Sidiq visited Milton from Spain, using Zoom to give workshops and teach students about Arabic music; the workshops were open to students from Toronto and Philadelphia.

“It’s expanded our classrooms, this digital format,” Anantawan says. “That’s here to stay, I hope, so we can bring in these world-class artists or collaborate with schools in completely different countries. We’re laying the foundation now, and allowing students to get used to these platforms, so they can gain a different kind of understanding of their relationship to the world.”

MARISA DONELAN





A GENERATION LOOKS AHEAD

The past year has brought about difficult new realities. For those entering adulthood—dubbed Generation Z—a return to “normal” will involve fundamental change. In this issue, the Milton community looks toward the future and discusses how we will work, learn, laugh, cry, and live together in the decades ahead.

education



STORY BY SARAH ABRAMS

A FORK IN THE ROAD

JENNE COLASACCO '95 has experienced primary and secondary education from many angles. Raised in the Boston suburb of Needham, Colasacco attended the town's public schools (K–8) before entering Milton Academy in ninth grade. Later, as a young teacher in Baltimore with Teach For America and then for a few years in Providence's public schools, she saw yet another side of the education system. ■ “I was always pretty cognizant of the differences in opportunity and privilege among schools—even the differences between my affluent suburban public school and that of Milton,” she says. ■ And I was certainly aware of how my stu-

dents in Baltimore and at other urban schools were not getting that same education.”

“Talent, curiosity, and intellectual genius exist everywhere,” she says, yet so many children do not have a chance to realize their potential. “Because of systemic inequity, barriers exist for some students that don't exist for others.”

As she has risen through the ranks as a classroom teacher, a school principal, and, today, executive director of Lynch Leadership Academy at Boston College, Colasacco has worked to flatten out those differences and increase opportunity for all students.

Last spring, as the COVID-19 pandemic forced schools across the country to move to online learning, her commitment to leveling the playing field became even more challenging. She describes the past 12 months as a “we're building the plane while we're flying” type of year.

Today, Colasacco sees her task as twofold: to help administrators manage the current circumstances while not losing sight of their long-term goals of improving educational opportunity for all children.

“Since this all began,” she says, “every teacher I know is committed to doing the best that they can, but the impact of a virtual year on a student—just as the research would tell us—is significant and is especially detrimental to a student from an underserved community.

“If we can bring the anxiety level

down and help teachers focus, it enables them to move through that feeling of almost panic. But we're still coaching leaders on effective school leadership around equity, around instructional leadership, around executive management and change management. That's what we do.”

—
Teaching was not part of her earliest career plans. At age 12, Colasacco was already preparing to become a genetic counselor. At Milton, she studied genetics with Linde Eyster, and at Brown University, she majored in human biology with a focus on human health and disease.

But Brown had a strong community service component to its undergraduate program and while she was mentoring at a community center and tutoring at a district charter school, both in the Providence area, Colasacco became intrigued by the profound difference a good teacher could make in a child's life.

“I was pretty hooked on the combination of talking about content that I found exciting, but also empowering students and being part of their success and celebrating with them,” she says.

Still committed to genetic counseling, but drawn to the power of teaching, she joined Teach For America after graduation. It was in Baltimore that she shifted her career plans permanently. “I realized the field of education was a better fit,” she says, “in that the possibilities



JENNE COLASACCO '95 BELIEVES THE CURRENT CRISIS IN EDUCATION WILL HAVE LINGERING EFFECTS—AND IT WILL NOT BE SHARED EQUALLY AMONG STUDENTS.

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were so inspiring. As a teacher, you can do so much.”

She returned to New England and taught in the Providence public schools. Within a few years, she was named principal at the Academy of the Pacific Rim Charter Public School (APR) in Hyde Park, a grades 5–12 school located in Boston’s southernmost neighborhood.

Looking back, she says, every step along her career path she’s taken in order to make an ever greater impact, especially on urban students of color and underserved communities. “I chose teaching because I saw the impact I could make; as an administrator I realized I could make an even greater impact because you’re creating systems within the organization.”

Colasacco wanted to provide her students with some of the same opportunities that students from more affluent communities have. “I wanted them to have access to the type of intellectual quality of education I received. Not everything is possible without systemic change; a teacher or a principal cannot on their own necessarily obtain the resources to build a science lab like the one at Milton. But sitting around a Harkness table talking about a piece of literature and having a really analytical discussion—that’s possible. A teacher or principal can make that happen for students while also advocating for the systemic change that will bring the science lab.”

One of Colasacco’s first actions as principal at APR was to shift away from a popular teaching method at the time: what she calls the “no excuses” charter school model. Students were expected to adhere to

behavioral standards that struck Colasacco as demeaning and counterproductive. “It had a good end in mind, but the means to that end, I struggled with,” she says.

When she arrived, because teachers worried about how high school students might behave as they transferred between classes, pupils remained in the same seats, in the same room, throughout the school day, while teachers rotated in and out of classrooms. “These were kids who come from all over the city, who got themselves on a bus, sometimes changed buses, who were going to be on a college campus in 10 months, and we think they can’t walk down a hallway,” Colasacco says. “What’s underneath that lack of belief in kids?”

“I think about the pretty significant degree of freedom and trust that I had in high school. I certainly didn’t need anyone monitoring my every move. At Milton, you walk around campus, you go where you’re supposed to go; there’s so much implicit trust, even if it’s not talked about.”

Colasacco instituted several changes. AP classes were added to the curriculum, and Harkness-type seminars and English classes that combined juniors and seniors were introduced. Students ran their own extracurriculars without an adult in the room. “Today, that sounds absurd,” she says, “but, back then, giving students that freedom was a departure from what people believed was an okay thing to do with teenagers from these communities. It’s our job as educators to challenge and change those biased mindsets.

“It all has to make sense,” she says

about the implicit messages students are sent. “If you tell a kid you believe in them and they can do this challenging work in their AP calculus class, but then you won’t let them go to the bathroom, they see the dissonance in that. They’re smart.” Over time, she says, the policy and curricular changes that were made helped improve performance and “empower our students intellectually.”

After nine years at APR, Colasacco, once again seeing an opportunity to make a greater impact, joined Lynch Leadership Academy, where, as executive director, she oversees a team of former school administrators who mentor a network of principals and administrators in public, charter, and Catholic schools from across Massachusetts.

As school leaders struggle to keep up with the profound demands the pandemic crisis has placed on them, the leadership program team has responded, providing increased support. It helps administrators ask the right questions: How are teachers building a curriculum? What does it mean to build community across a screen? What technology training do teachers need? Are they collecting the data to know how students are faring? What is the outreach that families need?

Colasacco believes that shrinking the education gap produced by the health crisis, particularly for students from underserved communities, will be a challenge facing educators for years to come. But the future, she says, cannot be about just shrinking the gap. “We have to make

up the gap and move forward and educate and empower our students simultaneously.”

Research showing the consequences of this degree of interrupted schooling is limited, she notes. “People have followed the trajectory of the students during Argentina’s military dictatorship of the late 1970s and early 1980s. We know their college attendance and graduation rates were lower; the amount of income they earned over their lifetimes was lower; all the sorts of measures of healthy adulthood were lower. They did not recover as a whole.

“The way I choose to see that, and how I think many folks in education leadership choose to see that, is that it’s a warning. We know what will happen if we don’t do anything, which makes it more urgent that we do something.”

Innovation, she says, is one positive result of the sudden move to online learning. What has been learned around virtual teaching and synchronous and asynchronous learning will be helpful for students with long-term medical needs and for adult students who don’t fit well into traditional school settings.

“It’s always good to have more than one way to approach teaching students with varying needs, but that doesn’t compensate for what I think are real losses,” Colasacco says. “Coming out of this, it is going to be incumbent upon schools to take the necessary steps. Fortunately, we do know how to do this right; there’s scholarship and research on how to accelerate learning for students.”

Colasacco has been grateful for and inspired by the way the phil-



anthropic community has stepped up. “That support is going to need to continue post-pandemic, because the acceleration of learning is going to be intense and it’s going to take time,” she says. “People will need to be really committed; otherwise the impact of this is not going to be recoverable for most of our students.

“We are at a fork in the road: We

know what will happen if we don’t do anything, but we also know so many things to do. There needs to be a collective commitment—in government and in society—to support the things we know we need to do. These kids deserve it; they’re the next generation of leaders in our society.

“To me it’s a deep, moral issue that we respond forcefully.”

▲ COLASACCO HAS BEEN GRATEFUL FOR AND INSPIRED BY THE WAY THE PHILANTHROPIC COMMUNITY HAS STEPPED UP. “THAT SUPPORT IS GOING TO NEED TO CONTINUE POST-PANDEMIC, BECAUSE THE ACCELERATION OF LEARNING IS GOING TO BE INTENSE, AND IT’S GOING TO TAKE TIME.”

climate science



STORY BY SARAH ABRAMS

PRIORITIZING THE PLANET



PLANETARY HEALTH:
SAM MYERS '83

Protecting our planet will be one of mankind's greatest challenges in the decades ahead. The alumni featured here are working to address some of the challenges—from establishing global collaborative efforts to protecting fragile ecosystems to making sure that the funds needed to address environmental problems are distributed equitably. This article is the first in what we hope will become an ongoing series about Milton alumni who are working in this critical field.

As a young physician working on health and conservation projects around the world, **SAM MYERS '83** witnessed up close how mankind's interactions with nature—the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the soil that helps feed us—were affecting human health. If we were to effectively respond to the harm human activity was causing, Myers believed a more unified approach was needed.

“Trying to address the pace and scale of human disruption of natural systems and the impacts of that disruption on our own health and well-being at the level of projects, one community at a time, was not going to work,” he says.

In 2016, with support from the Rockefeller Foundation, Myers launched the Planetary Health

Alliance (PHA). Based at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, the program is what Myers describes as “the connective tissue in bringing the field of planetary health together.”

In just over five years, PHA has grown to include more than 210 organizations in more than 45 countries. Among them are universities and research institutes and both non-government and government agencies. The program has also formed networks with clinicians and students from around the world and offers a rich source of research and educational materials for those wanting to develop courses, lectures, and workshops on planetary health. A PHA blog and a monthly newsletter keep members updated.

Last year, Myers, with co-editor Howard Frumkin, published *Planetary Health: Protecting Nature to Protect Ourselves* (see page 71), the first textbook for this young field. The book explores how changes to Earth's natural systems are affecting human health and provides some solutions.

Myers was a student when his interest in the natural world was shaped by two preeminent scholars: physician and biologist Lewis Thomas, whose writings Myers was introduced to at Milton, and evolutionary biologist E.O. Wilson, who advised him as a Harvard undergraduate to study medicine as a way of exploring the connections between nature and natural systems



and human health.

“The problems facing humankind are so much bigger than climate change,” says Myers, who is also a principal research scientist in the Chan School’s Department of Environmental Health. “Even if we decarbonize the energy economy, we’d still be driving the sixth mass extinction of life on Earth; we’d still have a huge problem with air, water, and soil pollution. It’s really not climate change, it’s ‘everything change,’ and all these large-scale anthropogenic changes are interacting with each other to affect poor conditions for health.”

“And it’s not just about innovation and technology,” he adds. “We need to live differently. We need to reinvest our relationship to nature with the kind of reverence and awe that so many people feel toward the natural world. It’s already too late for some species. There already has been significant human suffering around the world associated with global environmental changes and there will continue to be very significant human suffering.”

Myers is optimistic, however, as he sees movements such as the Extinction Rebellion and the School Strike Movement spring up around the world. “A lot of the solutions are right here in front of us, and they’re starting to be picked up,” he says. “The question is, How fast are we going to act? Obviously, the sooner and the more profoundly we react, the less suffering we will see, so the question is, How quickly can we achieve that course correction?”

“One of the interesting things is there’s absolutely no set of skills



GUATAPÉ, COLOMBIA

that are not relevant to moving us toward the Great Transition [a vision for a just and sustainable global future], and everyone can be part of it,” he says. “Whether you’re an artist or a writer, or you’re going to be a lawyer, or be in government, or in engineering and technology, or science, all those disciplines are going to be really central.”

“To me, it’s enormously exciting, because there’s really no reason why we can’t have our grandchildren living in a world where things look as good as they’ve ever looked for human beings and where there’s actually more room every decade for the rest of the biosphere.”



COLOMBIA’S FRAGILE ECOSYSTEMS:

BEATRIZ (TIZ) MOGOLLÓN '04

Colombia, one of the most biodiverse countries in the world, is home to several important ecosystems, from the Amazon rainforest in the south to the tropical dry forests of the Caribbean in the north to the flooded savannas of the Orinoco Basin in the eastern plains. Although the country monitors deforestation of the tropical rainforest, the other ecosystems receive little attention.

As the environmental governance lead in USAID’s Natural Wealth Program, **BEATRIZ MOGOLLÓN '04** is helping to monitor them. “These ecosystems are being looked to as the next agricultural frontier for Colombia, but the rate of transformation of change is really very rapid,” she says. “The tropical dry forests are disappearing quickly as landowners cut down large swaths of trees, and the flooded savannas

“WE NEED TO LIVE DIFFERENTLY. WE NEED TO REINVEST OUR RELATIONSHIP TO NATURE WITH THE KIND OF REVERENCE AND AWE THAT SO MANY PEOPLE FEEL TOWARD THE NATURAL WORLD.”

SAM MYERS '83

are threatened by the large-scale production of crops such as rice, oil palm, and rubber.”

Mogollón grew up with a deep appreciation for the outdoors. “Early on, I was exposed to the natural world,” she says. For years, her father, José Vicente Mogollón Vélez, a former minister of the environment in Colombia, operated a shrimp export business on the Caribbean coast. “We would spend our summers there horseback riding or walking through the mangroves,” Mogollón says. “The land was just full of beautiful vegetation.”

The program’s approach to protecting these ecosystems is twofold: helping integrate biodiversity conservation into municipal and departmental 12-year land-use and four-year development plans, and creating a monitoring system that can track changes to the ecosystems. Working from Bogotá and from regional offices in the Caribbean and Orinoco regions, Mogollón and her team advise local authorities to help reduce the threats to these ecosystems. “We might identify environmental assets to authorities and say, ‘It’s best not to develop here,’ or ‘Put certain conditions on development here, because this is an important area for biodiversity and ecosystem services.’”

The team might also weigh in on current practices. “A classic practice in the Caribbean and in other parts of the world is ‘slash and burn,’” she says. “We might explain to environmental authorities, ‘You don’t need to slash and burn more of your land—just make the land that you’ve already cut down more productive.’”

Using satellite imagery, the team tracks changes to the land cover and provides weekly alerts to local authorities. “We want to ensure that the people who are making these transformations are not encroaching in areas where they shouldn’t be,” Mogollón says. “There are all these drivers of deforestation: land grabbing, expanding the agricultural frontier for cattle ranching, illegal mining, logging, and illicit crop production. From an institutional point of view, there needs to be a clear process of how to decrease deforestation, where providing accurate and timely information is key.”

“The challenges of these two ecosystems is that the tropical dry forest is deciduous,” she says, “so there comes a time each year when all the leaves fall off, and this means the sensors that are developed don’t really catch or monitor those ecosystems. And the flooded savannas are not forested, but, nonetheless, it is an important ecosystem for biodiversity, flood regulation, and carbon sequestration.”

When the USAID Natural Wealth Program ends, in July 2022, Mogollón expects to leave behind processes that can be sustained over time. “We want to create a lasting impact, one that helps change the way people think about their environment,” she says. “We focused a lot on capacity and on setting up a program in a way that transfers capacity to local environmental authorities. That way they can make better decisions on how they manage their land in a sustainable way.”

And Mogollón will continue to focus her career on protecting Co-

lombia’s environment. “My parents raised us to get our training abroad, but to return and give back to the country,” she says. “I’ve always felt a responsibility to come back.”



UNTYING THE KNOT:
THEO SPENCER '84

Years ago, **THEO SPENCER '84** was a business reporter for *Fortune* magazine when he came across a story that would permanently change the course of his career.

“There was an article in the *New York Times* about a study on the disparity of asthma rates between Harlem and the Upper East Side,” he recalls. “That really was the tipping point for me, this sense of injustice, that this is wrong. It just motivated me to say, ‘Okay, I’m going to quit my job and find work with an environmental group focused on these issues.’”

For the next 11 years, Spencer worked at the environmental non-

profit Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC) as a senior policy advocate in the organization’s Climate Center. He focused on improving vehicle and power-plant emissions standards, regulating coal-leasing on public lands, decreasing the impact of climate change on water resources, and managing urban climate preparedness initiatives. For many years, he also sat on boards at the Rockefeller Family Foundation and the Water Research Foundation.

He formed his own consulting firm, Spencer Environmental Consulting in 2018, and today he is working with foundations and nonprofits to help bring greater attention and support to community environmental groups, particularly those led by people of color.

“We’re trying to figure out how to get more money, more quickly, to groups on the ground,” says Spencer. “To this day, something like 90 cents on the dollar that’s given to environmental causes ends up going to white-led organizations, many of them the large national groups. Why isn’t more money going to groups led by people of color?”

Spencer points to an area in Texas and Louisiana called Cancer Alley, where fossil fuel facilities—petrochemical refining plants, liquefied natural gas export plants, coal-fired power plants, natural gas plants—predominate, and where disproportionately high rates of disease occur.

“There are a lot of local groups, small groups, trying to fight what’s going on there, but they’re very un-

der-resourced,” he says. “Why are these community groups along the Gulf Coast still struggling to get money to do the work to fight these chemical polluting plants?”

Spencer is working to remove some of the obstacles confronting smaller organizations, such as the challenges involved in submitting grant requests and reports. Standardizing these processes, as college applications were standardized, “would make it less cumbersome,” he says. “If you get a grant from the Hewlett Foundation or the Kresge Foundation or the MacArthur Foundation, it can be a pretty bureaucratically intensive process. They want reports every quarter on how you’re using the money. They have all these metrics, and a lot of these small organizations are working on a shoestring. They don’t have grant writers; their staffs don’t have the time to do all that’s required by these large funders.”

Making sure the voices of those in low-income communities are heard is critical to change, says Spencer. “If you want any kind of real change, it has to have grassroots support, instead of just the action being driven by people writing super long, deep policy briefs. Politicians have to be hearing from their constituents, headaches have to be created, people have to be calling their offices and asking for meetings to bring these issues to the forefront.”

Spencer believes the fight to protect the environment has never been more urgent or challenging. “It’s just so sad that the anti-health-and-en-



“IT’S JUST SO SAD THAT THE ANTI-HEALTH-AND-ENVIRONMENT-PROTECTION WORLD, WHICH CORPORATIONS AND LOBBYISTS HAVE SET UP, HAS BEEN SO SUCCESSFUL IN CASTING DOUBT ON WHETHER CLIMATE CHANGE IS REAL.” SAYS THEO SPENCER ‘84.

vironment-protection world, which corporations and lobbyists have set up, has been so successful in casting doubt on whether climate change is real,” he says.

Pushing against current trends and working for those disproportionately affected by climate change is what keeps Spencer going. “What has always gotten me the most motivated about working on environmental issues,” he says, “is the sense of injustice and disparities and right versus wrong.”



COASTAL RESILIENCE:
KATE BRODIE ‘02

From her office at the U.S. Army Engineering Research and Development Center (ERDC) in Duck, North Carolina, **KATE BRODIE ‘02** looks out on the Atlantic Ocean and surrounding coastline.

Since joining ERDC as a research oceanographer 10 years ago, Brodie has been tracking the effects of storms on coastal communities as they become more frequent and extreme. “For many of our low-lying areas—whether that’s a city or a small town or an island—some of these 100- to 200-year events are going to become much more common,” she says.

“That’s a little scary for a lot of these communities, but that’s not something that we can change or stop, so the question becomes, How can we look to nature to figure out how we can best adapt to these changing processes, and how can we implement measures that allow

"THE MORE THAT YOU CAN EDUCATE AND HELP PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND, THE MORE LIKELY THEY ARE TO BE WILLING TO CHANGE."

KATE BRODIE '02

our coasts and communities to be resilient to these changes?"

To help communities respond, Brodie and her colleagues are currently focused on enhancing a natural dune system. Using sophisticated remote-sensing techniques, they are increasing their understanding of what happens during a storm: how dunes naturally evolve, how much they erode, how fast they recover, and what is the role of various types of vegetation at trapping sand and growing a dune.

With a better understanding, says Brodie, "we can try to work with nature in the face of this approaching sea level and see what we can do to try to reshape and provide accommodation for that to take place. We can then guide our local communities: How wide does your beach have to be to enable dune growth? How tall a dune do you want for your particular beach? What types of vegetation should you be planting on it? Those are some of the questions that the ERDC is really trying to answer."

Much of Brodie's early research was focused on developing the tools and techniques for gathering information. But the technology has become so advanced, she says, that the sensors can now be mounted "just about anywhere." They are even using drones to capture information.

Helping coastal residents understand the need to adapt can sometimes be a challenge, she says. "One of the things that we struggle with in general with coastal development is that we as humans want to build our house here and put



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our road here, and we expect our beach to be this wide and this far away. We have these very rigid expectations of how the landscape should be, and we build around that landscape assuming it's not going to change.

"But coastal systems are some of the most dynamic landscapes in the world. I walk my dog down to the beach every day; it looks different every single day. The beach is constantly changing in response to the changing waves, winds, tides, currents. We know those

processes are going to change as our climate changes, and so we have to adapt."

Although Brodie's job as a research oceanographer is to develop the technology and systems that will help protect these coastal communities, she welcomes the opportunity to speak directly to people about the agency's work. "When we're out on the beaches collecting data, people will often stop to ask what we're doing," she says. "Every time I get one of those opportunities, I see it as a chance to educate the pub-

lic about what we're learning, why we're doing this research, and how it might help them.

"I have found, as with most things, that the more you can help people understand, the more likely they are to be willing to change. That's what I have to fundamentally believe in and hope: that the power of information and education will help people evolve toward taking a more adaptive approach to what they want to get out of their coastal resources and what they're looking for."

comedy



STORY BY MARISA DONELAN

What does it mean, in a fractured time like this, to be funny? What—in the midst of public health, political, social, and environmental crises—does a sense of humor look like? ■ Comedians have always served society by highlighting the absurd and the ironic, even the darkly morbid opportunities to laugh. Satire, play, jokes, mimicry, and mockery mark thousands of years of art and storytelling around the world. Although humor doesn't always translate across cultures, funny people—from jesters to playwrights to stand-up comedians to TikTok stars—have played important roles in diverse world traditions. They speak

KEEP 'EM LAUGHING

truth to power, call out hypocrisy, inform the public, and, just as important, invite us into pure, giddy silliness.

This past fall, as the COVID-19 pandemic entered its darkest days and political chaos reigned, *Milton Magazine* reached out to two alumni in comedy, **GEMMA SOLDATI '09** and **MAX KLIMAN '15**, for a serious look at the unserious.

“It’s not like comedians are bringing funny into society,” says Soldati, a creator and theater performer. “People who are comedians in any form are simply the ones who are saying, ‘Look, everybody, look.’ Comedy exists in the same way that gravity exists. It’s just there. You either see it or you don’t, but it’s still going to be there. We all trip. We all stub our toes and bump our heads. Humans are funny. Life is funny. Having a sense of humor is just about being available to that reality.”

Milton has graduated its fair share of funny people, including actor and comedian **JENNY SLATE '00**; playwright **DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE '88**; **WILL GRAHAM '98**, executive producer for *Mozart in the Jungle* and various projects for *The Onion*; **DJ NASH '90**, who toured as a stand-up comic before developing several sitcoms and the ABC drama *A Million Little Things*; and **CJ HUNT '03**, a field producer for *The Daily Show*. Milton students participate in improvisational comedy classes and performances, and aspiring hu-

morists fill the back pages of *The Milton Paper* and *The Milton Measure* with jokes.

Answers to the question “What’s funny?” have varied over the years and continue to be highly subjective. Many comedians emerging today are politically and socially aware, smart, and exploring new media. As some decry what they view as censorship for the sake of political correctness in humor (“cancel culture,” in other words), others, like Soldati and Kliman, celebrate an industry that’s gradually making way for more diverse voices and viewpoints.

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Soldati and her writing partner, Amrita Dhaliwal, developed their award-winning 2018 clown show, *The Living Room*, while they were both coping with devastating loss—the deaths of Soldati’s boyfriend and Dhaliwal’s mother. The show, billed as “a comedy of grief,” featured the two creators as accountants of the death toll, mixing comedy and tragedy. It became a festival hit, winning Best Comedy at the Melbourne Fringe Festival in 2019.

Clown, in the context of Soldati’s work, is a specific type of theater performance that involves playfulness and interactivity. Audiences watching *The Living Room* or her new show, *The Adventures of Sleepyhead*, might not jump to the word “clown” to describe the shows, she says. They might describe them as



THE PANDEMIC
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BACK TO HER HOME
STATE OF NEW
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MAX KLIMAN '15

funny plays with improvisation. Her style is derived from the Italian commedia dell'arte tradition. She connects directly with the audience, employing physical comedy and breaking the fourth wall to engage with the crowd.

When the pandemic came to the United States and performance venues across the country shut down, Soldati's plan to tour with *The Living Room* fell apart. She had just moved back to her home state of New Hampshire after eight years in Los Angeles. Eventually she began developing *The Adventures of Sleepyhead*, a family-friendly solo show, for a local theater, where she had the option to live-stream her performance. A limited live audience of people who had quarantined together provided the interactive experience.

“Working on it has been a lifesaver,” Soldati says. “There is a real loss that has taken place for artists of all kinds. I felt at one point like all hope was lost and I would never do anything creative again.”

Last summer, before she even got her contract with the theater, Soldati began to develop the play around Sleepyhead, a character she created years ago. She started by making Sleepyhead's costume, which she worked on “incessantly” as a distraction from the sadness of the pandemic.

Kliman, an award-winning sketch comedy writer and producer, also felt the loss of live performance. He works for a management and production company in Los Angeles and

runs a sketch comedy group called Scary Horse with his Milton friend and current roommate, **JAKE DANIELS '15**. Although live shows were temporarily on hold because of the pandemic, the group continued its work on Zoom or recorded sketches in small, quarantined pods.

“Everything kind of went off the rails for a bit, but we soon realized that we could make our work happen,” Kilman says. “It’s been exciting to still be able to make things and to work in a new way that comedy hasn’t really seen before. We’ve

been trying to follow the model of *Saturday Night Live* when they did their *SNL From Home* shows and figuring out the best way to make funny content even when people can't really be around each other.”

For audiences, laughter and the state of play inherent in comedic performance provide an important service in times of grief or anxiety. Watching comedy can momentarily take the power out of something frightening or tragic, Kliman and Soldati say, or simply help relax people, regardless of what they're



KLIMAN WAS A WINNER OF THE 39TH COLLEGE TELEVISION AWARDS, WHICH RECOGNIZE STUDENT-PRODUCED PROGRAMS FROM COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES NATIONWIDE.

KLIMAN WORKS FOR
A MANAGEMENT AND
PRODUCTION COMPANY
IN LOS ANGELES
AND RUNS A SKETCH
COMEDY GROUP CALLED
SCARY HORSE.



“THERE IS A REAL LOSS THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE FOR ARTISTS OF ALL KINDS. I FELT AT ONE POINT LIKE ALL HOPE WAS LOST AND I WOULD NEVER DO ANYTHING CREATIVE AGAIN.”

GEMMA SOLDATI '09

going through.

“On a very superficial, surface level, comedy can be a salve to help heal an open wound,” Soldati says. “Or you can think of it from the chemical standpoint of laughter: It releases endorphins. It literally provides us with the chemicals we need to feel good.

“But then, philosophically, what it does is allows us, especially in a trying time like the pandemic or dealing with death, to see the wider picture of human experience. Comedy helps us realize, ‘Oh, sure, we’re in this absolute hellhole right now, but there are still so many things going on that are hilarious.’”

A dry, biting humor permeates modern comedy, Kliman says, particularly among young creators, in response to absurd and difficult circumstances. Even the most painful topics are fair game.

“People are commenting on what they’re observing and doing so in funny ways,” he says. “It’s a good way of coping with the world. In a lot of ways, it’s just reacting to reality, but it’s so raw and so funny just to call things out for what they are. On a lot of platforms, but TikTok in particular, people create videos in response to someone else’s actions, which has become a new form of social commentary.”

At one point in the past decade, Jon Stewart ranked among the most trusted media figures in the United States, particularly among young people. Stewart, a comedian and actor, was the host of *The Daily Show* on Comedy Central until 2015.



SOLDATI BEGAN LAST SUMMER TO DEVELOP THE PLAY AROUND SLEEPYHEAD, A CHARACTER SHE CREATED YEARS AGO.

Today, comedians such as John Oliver, Samantha Bee, and Stewart’s successor, Trevor Noah, are seen by some audiences as credible (and funny) news analysts.

Comedians, as opposed to political and business leaders, aren’t restricted by any filter when they speak, Kliman says. The pressure

to appear unbiased does not apply to late-night hosts and satirists the way it does to mainstream journalists. While attending Northwestern University, Kliman interned at *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*. Colbert said that part of his role as a late-night host was to make sure to give context and a realistic

EMMETT SOLDATI



reaction to the day's most absurd news.

"The fact that we have comedians who are really smart and informed, who can make jokes about the things we're all observing, is a real positive," Kliman says. "Something I learned from Colbert is that comedy can be an effective way to

reassure people that they're not crazy for thinking what's going on in the world is crazy."

In college, Kliman joined *The Blackout*, a late-night show at Northwestern, and led the creation of the web segment "Quarter Update," a news parody styled after *Saturday Night Live's* "Weekend Update." The segment, which covered Northwestern-related news, won a College Television Award—the Emmys equivalent for college TV. His work as a student opened up opportunities to intern at several late-night TV shows.

At *The Late Show*, Kliman witnessed the rush of building a nightly talk show, where the content had to reflect the day's news and provide unique takes on a variety of subjects. "You'd walk in at 9 a.m., he says, "and there'd be nothing ready, but by the afternoon you'd have a show to shoot, and in the evening, it would be all edited and ready to go. It was the most exciting and impressive experience."

Breaking news in 2020 flew so quickly that major stories, like the discovery of water molecules on the moon, lasted barely a day in headlines. Comedians, despite performance restrictions due to COVID-19, kept a running commentary on the flood of events—or provided light and funny distractions—through TV shows with adjusted formats, Twitter, TikTok, Zoom appearances, and outdoor venues that allowed for physical distancing.

Audiences respond well when a comedian can take a complex subject and deconstruct it or offer a unique viewpoint that people ar-

en't seeing elsewhere, Soldati says.

"I think comedy can be a really beautiful messenger to help people get from point A to point B, particularly with difficult issues," she says.

—
"Do you understand what self-deprecation means when it comes from somebody who already exists in the margins?" Hannah Gadsby says in her 2018 special, *Nanette*. "It's not humility, it's humiliation. I put myself down in order to speak, in order to seek permission to speak, and I simply will not do that anymore, not to myself or anybody who identifies with me."

Gadsby made headlines for *Nanette*, during which she talks about surviving sexist and homophobic violence and announces that she's finished making jokes at the expense of her identity and well-being. The show starts as a traditional stand-up special before shifting into serious, sometimes uncomfortable commentary about the harmful effects of comedy on marginalized people. *Nanette* was hailed by some as a subversive and revolutionary piece of art reflecting the #MeToo era and dismissed by others who complained that its success was part of a damaging trend of politically correct "wokeness" that threaten to destroy comedy.

Political correctness, argues comic actor John Cleese, stifles creativity and indulges the "most over-sensitive" people in a society.

Good comedians, regardless of medium, are those who recognize the importance of playfulness and strong emotions and use them to

their advantage, Soldati says. Once a state of play is established, not even the most sensitive topic is off-limits, provided the comedian is skilled and creative enough to handle it.

"Everything is on the table with play," she says. "Scientists have studied the physiological reality of being in play, and we know that it puts us in a heightened state. You can bring an audience anywhere with you if you have the chops and can be playful."

Kliman rejects the idea that political correctness is censoring or watering down comedy. Audiences change over time, he says, and what was considered funny in the past may no longer cut it. Comedians need to adapt for today. Comedy used to take place in limited venues—making it difficult for newcomers to be heard in an industry long dominated by a select few white men. Because there are so many more avenues for funny people to create and perform, the world of comedy is more open to diverse voices and viewpoints than it was in the past.

"I think that, for the most part, the people who are upset at wokeness in comedy might just not be good enough," Kliman says. "While in the past, comics could be lazy and say racist or sexist things to get a laugh, they have to be smarter now, because audiences won't respond to that. You can still joke about things that are controversial and hard to discuss, but you have to have an interesting angle on them. It's not that people are too sensitive about comedy, it's just that outdated ideas don't work."

mental health



LEARNING TO ASK FOR HELP

STORY BY LIZ MATSON

How to talk to a teenager as an adult—especially in deep conversations about emotions, life goals, relationships, sex, alcohol, or drugs—is a timeless quandary. But **KIMBERLY MCMANAMA O'BRIEN '96** does it every day and loves it. ■ As a clinical social worker and research scientist at Boston Children's Hospital, O'Brien says she enjoys "the feeling of trying to connect to the soul of the kid I'm sitting with. It's a privilege to hear teens talk about what they are going through and what's hard for them. I do whatever I can to give them a space to talk it through and figure out what they want to do about it. For me, that

challenge is so rewarding."

O'Brien is also an assistant professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and the mental-skills coach for Harvard's women's hockey team. She recently started her own private practice, called Unlimited Resilience, which is run by athletes for athletes. Most of her days involve some combination of clinical practice and research.

O'Brien says that what she and her peers are seeing in teens is heightened anxiety, particularly in high-achieving academic and athletic circles. But general anxiety about life—the political climate, race issues, and the pandemic—is escalating. Teens absorb all kinds of media every day, and they are "bombarded with information constantly," says O'Brien. "Their brains aren't fully developed yet to completely understand what's happening in a way that gives them any sort of capacity for abstract thought about it.

"Along with that anxiety can come a whole host of other things, like suicidality, substance use, and eating disorders. As teachers, parents, and trusted adults who support teens, we need to be aware of what we can do to help kids with anxiety. The first is recognizing it. Do they seem tense? Are they acting a little bit different? Do they seem fearful of things that they weren't fearful of before? Then the key is talking with them about it."

COVID-19 brought an additional stressor because when humans

experience anxiety, "the two main things we crave are certainty and comfort," O'Brien says. "Right now, in our world, there is no certainty. That means we need to focus on this idea of comfort. How can we help kids learn to soothe themselves and regulate themselves when they're feeling out of sorts?"

"Although there is much more awareness and discussion of mental health among today's teens than in generations past, it's important to help students understand how important their mental health is and how they can do something about it if they start to feel not so good," she says. "As this generation is more comfortable talking about it, we need to take advantage of this and help our kids build their skills.

"There is still sometimes a stigma about asking for help in general, because of the human ego. We want to feel like we don't need help, especially as teenagers—we think we can do this ourselves."

As a Milton student, O'Brien was a serious and committed hockey player and loved the team. But she was "a suicidal teen myself," she says. "And I never talked about my depression because it wasn't supposed to be talked about. I struggled with it through young adulthood until I started facing what was happening to me. Luckily, I eventually learned that it was okay to talk about it."

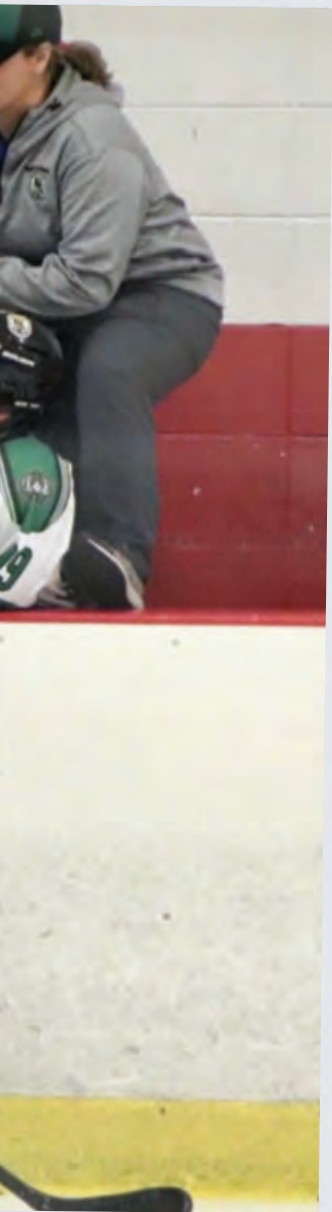
At Harvard University, O'Brien was an economics major and a four-year member and co-captain of the



WHEN SHE IS NOT WORKING WITH TEENS OR HER RESEARCH TEAMS, O'BRIEN IS BUSY WITH HER FOUR CHILDREN, ALL UNDER THE AGE OF 12.

▼ ONE WAY O'BRIEN STAYS INVOLVED IN ATHLETICS IS BY COACHING YOUTH HOCKEY.





“WHAT’S COOL ABOUT WORKING WITH ATHLETES IS THAT MANY OF THEM ARE GOAL-, TASK-, AND ACHIEVEMENT-ORIENTED. SO THEY DRIVE THIS. THEY’RE VERY ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THEIR TREATMENT.”

hockey team, which won a national championship in 1999. After a few years of working in an uninspiring corporate job, O’Brien found her natural fit and obtained her master’s and doctorate in social work from Boston College. She completed her postdoctoral fellowship at Brown University.

Her research grew out of her experiences working in psychiatric care facilities doing emergency evaluations, where she saw gaps between caring for acute crises and the follow-up that is needed when teen patients return home. So she is focused on developing interventions for suicidal teens and their families with or without the issue of substance use. In one study, O’Brien developed an app for suicidal teens and their parents called CrisisCare. She says, “It has a dual mode where the kid is linked with their parent, so they can have the resources they need to help themselves in a suicidal crisis and the parent will have the ability to coach them through it.”

Her work with athletes, both at Harvard and in her practice, covers areas such as mindset, performance anxiety, interpersonal conflict, coping with injuries, LGBTQ issues, substance use, and, most recently, loss of identity, as athletic competitions and practice essentially stopped during the pandemic.

“What’s cool about working with athletes is that many of them are goal-, task-, and achievement-oriented,” says O’Brien. “So they drive this. They’re very active participants in their treatment. That’s how I like it, because therapy works best when



I’m doing the least. They are figuring out what it is they need and what it is that helps them. Ultimately your therapist shouldn’t be taking care of you. Your therapist should be giving you the skills you need so you can take care of yourself.”

Sometimes what helps a teen patient is prescribed medication. But that’s a decision for teens and their families, O’Brien says. “What I do is present them with the information. For example, we know for kids with depression the best practice is a combination of cognitive behavior-

al therapy and, in some cases, SSRI medication. I talk to them about pros and cons of medications so that they can make an informed decision on their own.

“The role of autonomy is so important for these kids in feeling like they’re in charge of their treatment. We don’t want them feeling like somebody else is telling them what they have to do. They need to take charge of their mental health and understand what kind of treatment they are receiving. They need to take control of what their goals are.”

When she is not working with teens or her research teams, O’Brien is busy with her four children, all under the age of 12. She and her spouse, Kevin O’Brien, live in Walpole, Massachusetts, where O’Brien stays involved in athletics by coaching youth hockey, field hockey, and lacrosse. She also still plays competitive hockey and her new sport, platform tennis.

“Honestly, the teens I work with make me hopeful every day, because this teen population is a hopeful group,” says O’Brien. “I love to see what they care about, what they’re passionate about, and the dreams they’re chasing. There’s such energy in that. I am also hopeful that our society is starting to understand the importance of mental health and realizing how the mind and body are strongly tied. I’m hopeful that mental health will become something routine and something that people just do. Just like you’re supposed to go to your doctor every year, you should be taking care of your mental health, too.”

technology



THE MIND IN AN AGE OF FLUX

INTERVIEW BY SARAH ABRAMS

MAGGIE JACKSON '78, a renowned journalist and social critic, wants people to understand how digital technology threatens the crucial work of focusing well and thinking deeply. In the introduction to the second edition of *Distracted: Reclaiming Our Focus in a World of Lost Attention*, published in 2018, Jackson writes: “The way we live our lives is eroding our capacity for deep, sustained, perceptive attention.” Last year, *Distracted* received the Media Ecology Association’s Dorothy Lee Award for Outstanding Writing on Technology and Culture. Jackson’s new book-in-progress explores the critical role that uncertainty plays in higher-

order cognition. *Milton Magazine* recently spoke to Jackson about her hopes and concerns for the human mind in an age of speed, flux, and ever-more-powerful technologies.

IN *DISTRACTED*, YOU DESCRIBE HOW ADVANCES IN DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY ARE THREATENING OUR CAPACITY FOR DEPTH OF THOUGHT. WHAT CONCERNS YOU THE MOST?

The internet and AI revolutions are reshaping how we work, play, learn, relate, and think. Among these radical changes, what concerns me most is the fate of the latter skill. Today I see an increasing unwillingness and even inability to think deeply. Our devices immerse us in milieus marked by speed, brevity, and info-bites, realms where ideas seem downloadable and wisdom seems attainable at a click, vending-style. Studies show that only a quarter of online posts are actually opened or read before they’re shared, liked, or retweeted. Another body of research shows that people are less willing to struggle with a problem after just a brief bout of online searching. In essence, technology largely speaks to one side of our cognitive selves: the heuristic, short-cut gut thinking, such as stereotyping or learned-pattern recognition, that occurs quickly and often unconsciously. What gets sidelined today are slower, messier modes of critical thinking and

creativity, the types of mental operations that don’t happen with a click. How do we discern what’s relevant amidst conflicting evidence? How do we find the insights hidden within a muddy problem? These are some of the aspects of mind that are under siege today.

DO YOU THINK MOST OF US ARE EVEN AWARE OF WHAT’S BEEN LOST IN OUR ENTHUSIASM FOR WHAT TECHNOLOGY OFFERS?

The national conversation around attention and technology has slowly matured beyond the overly simplistic “Luddite” vs. “tech-booster” divide—and that’s truly heartening. Now I hear people of all ages questioning technology’s effects on their lives. A couple of years ago, I spoke to a group of university students who were very concerned about their young nieces’ and nephews’ screen time. These were students who had grown up with technology themselves and yet they shared older generations’ ambivalence about our deepening dependence on the virtual, the digital, and the algorithmic. It’s important that we continue to nurture a nuanced and judicious sense of tech-skepticism so that these inventions aren’t accepted mindlessly into our society and our lives.

IN SO MANY WAYS TECHNOLOGY HAS BEEN A GODSEND DURING THE PAST YEAR, AS WE’VE BEEN FORCED TO LIVE



JACKSON IS CURRENTLY
WORKING ON A BOOK
EXAMINING THE ROLE OF
UNCERTAINTY IN DEEPER
THINKING.

“THERE IS AN EXPLOSION OF NEW DISCOVERIES SHOWING UNCERTAINTY’S ROLE IN REFLECTION, FLEXIBILITY, CREATIVITY, AND EVEN WELL-BEING. UNCERTAINTY IS AKIN TO A MENTAL GADFLY, PUSHING US TO THINK MORE DEEPLY, TO INVESTIGATE, AND TO KEEP AN OPEN MIND.”

APART FROM ONE ANOTHER. AS WE’VE BECOME MORE ADEPT AT LIVING VIRTUALLY, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CONCERNS YOU RAISE?

The pandemic is truly a time of “invention springing from necessity.” We are living much of our lives on screens, often in new and creative ways. My neighbor had a holiday cookie baking party on Zoom with relatives scattered across the country. Yet the increased and even innovative use of technology doesn’t necessarily translate into fully understanding what we are gaining and losing in this new age. The scholar Walter Ong once wrote, “To know something as fully as possible we need to be close to it and ... at the same time distanced from it.” That’s so true of any technology—be it a book, a smartphone, or a robot pet. Any technology can be a vehicle (for gaining information or long-distance togetherness) or an impediment (to being present for others or focused problem-solving) as well as a hidden influence. Consider how Google answers your search question before you’ve fully asked it. To understand our devices on all these levels, it’s crucial to master their use while remaining a “tourist” in the technological world, keeping a “beginner’s mind” about this realm. That way we can turn our nascent concerns about technology into true skill in using our devices wisely. We can learn to continually ask ourselves, “Is this device bringing us together or getting in between us? Is this app enabling me to deepen my knowledge or keep-

ing me sated with surface answers?”

HOW CAN WE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ALL THE WONDERS THAT TECHNOLOGY HAS TO OFFER WHILE AT THE SAME TIME LIVING THOUGHTFUL AND MEANINGFUL LIVES?

As I mentioned, we need to become tech skeptics who continually take stock of digital life from multiple perspectives in order to use these extraordinary inventions more wisely. I’d suggest two further ways to pursue this crucial mission. First, use boundaries of time, space, and the mind. Stepping back completely from technology at times allows us to curate our environment, taming the fractiousness of the digital world and restoring what I call the integrity of the moment. Some CEOs and other leaders, for example, have experimented with limiting the use of devices in meetings. Even online, we can use boundary-making in order to foster depth of thought. In other words, open just one window, not six, while you’re working. Or turn off the constant interruption of notifications for a time. Studies show that people who multitask a lot have poorer memories and are more distractible than those who tend to focus on one or two things at a time throughout the day. When we draw clear lines between “this” and “that” or “then” and “now,” we are setting the stage for the attentional skill of focus, the most important boundary-making of all.

Another way in which we can take advantage of technology while cultivating skills of reflection and at-

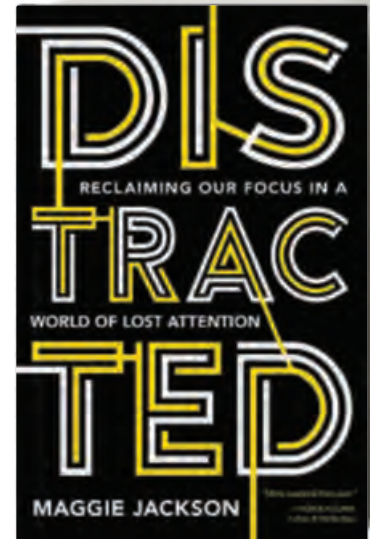
ention is by dropping the outdated metaphor of the mind as a computer. Our language is suffused with the idea that we are “programmed” to do this or “hardwired” to do that. For example, memory is seen as a kind of system of file folders that you click in and out of rather than the organic, evolving entity that it is. The mind in fact creates knowledge slowly by abstracting, synthesizing, and sifting information. If you put down your device and struggle to remember that restaurant where you ate last summer, or the forgotten name of a painter, you’re actually strengthening these astonishing processes of knowledge-building. Outsourcing memory is just one way that we often treat the human as a kind of deficient machine, and so lose chances to cultivate our species’ strengths of discernment, adaptability, empathy, and rationality. For all our frailties and errors, I’m not willing to give up on the human mind.

IN THE BOOK YOU ARE CURRENTLY WRITING, YOU EXAMINE THE ROLE UNCERTAINTY PLAYS IN DEEPER THINKING. CAN YOU SAY A LITTLE ABOUT THAT?

Everyone knows what it feels like to be unsure and how unsettling that state of mind is. We constantly have lamented “these uncertain times” this past year. But until recently, little scientific attention was paid to the mechanisms and importance of psychological or epistemic uncertainty, which is defined as the awareness of the limits of your knowledge. It was treated as a kind



“WE NEED TO BECOME TECH SKEPTICS WHO CONTINUALLY TAKE STOCK OF DIGITAL LIFE FROM MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES IN ORDER TO USE THESE EXTRAORDINARY INVENTIONS MORE WISELY.”



▲ LAST YEAR, *DISTRACTED* RECEIVED THE MEDIA ECOLOGY ASSOCIATION'S DOROTHY LEE AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING WRITING ON TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE.

of cognitive no-man's-land, little understood by researchers and laypeople alike. In this regard, uncertainty is like attention, which was a scientific mystery until a few decades ago.

Now, however, there is an explosion of new discoveries showing uncertainty's role in reflection, flexibility, creativity, and even well-being. Uncertainty is akin to a mental gadfly, pushing us to think more deeply, to investigate, and to keep an open mind. "Not knowing" allows us to drop our assumptions about people whose politics we loathe and equips us to realize when we need to study harder or take a second look. It offers us the mental space to en-

LJUBAPHOTO/ISTOCKPHOTO

gage in creative reverie or to test a rough hypothesis.

In my new book, I cite a revealing study about European CEOs who faced a huge European Union expansion, sort of the opposite of Brexit. When researchers surveyed the CEOs in advance of the change, in 2004, some predicted that the larger marketplace would be great for their firms. Others said the new competitive climate would threaten their businesses. To the researchers' surprise, however, a third group—contrary to the ideal of what a CEO should be—admitted to being unsure about what the expansion might bring. And lo and behold, it was this third group that a year later proved to be most adaptive during the crisis. They considered a wider range of options, included diverse voices in their decision-making, and showed more resourcefulness in their responses. Their ambivalence inspired actions better calibrated to the situation. In contrast, those who were most sure of the way stuck to tried-and-true measures or sometimes did nothing at all. I see uncertainty, along with attention and reflection, as one of the foremost pillars of human wisdom, mutual understanding, and creativity. And yet too often, in realms from medicine to business, activism to education, and even just around the dinner table, being unsure is seen as weakness, not wisdom—as something to run from or eradicate at a snap. We can't move out of this dark time unless we push back on the dominant ideal in our culture that knowledge is quick-fix, push-button, and certain. And I think we are on the cusp of doing just that.



Remember special moments. Reminisce with classmates. Reunite virtually for our biggest event yet, celebrating class years ending in 0, 1, 5 and 6 for Milton Reunion! Milton Reunion will be hosted virtually this year on Thursday, May 20 and Friday, May 21, with class meet-ups throughout the week.

Visit www.milton.edu/reunion, where you can:

- volunteer for your class committee
- submit a throwback photo or write a message on your class page
- see programming as it's announced
- make a gift in honor of your Reunion



On Centre

Student Life
at Milton





Taking a Stand

MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF 2021
FOLLOW THEIR DREAMS

A long-standing trait of Milton students is their passion for taking on issues important to them. But this generation of students are especially attuned to the issues affecting the world today and are actively involved in trying to shape their future. They are informed, courageous, and optimistic. We talked to five seniors about causes they care about—their involvement and their future paths.

Kayla Mathieu

► COMMUNITY SERVICE

For **KAYLA MATHIEU '21**, community service started at a young age. Her father is from Haiti and the whole family has been involved with helping people on the island—from collecting items for first-aid kits or basic-necessities packages to helping rebuild a hospital after the 2008 earthquake.

“Ever since then, I’ve always just felt it was my duty to help people, knowing that I have all this privi-

lege,” Mathieu says. “And I know it sounds cliché, but when you have this privilege, how could you not want to help people?”

In Milton’s Middle School, Mathieu began volunteering for the Special Olympics. Every Sunday, the Milton-Quincy Mustangs practiced on campus for the fall soccer, winter basketball, and spring track and field seasons. Student volunteers assisted athletes as mentors and buddies to develop skills for season competitions.

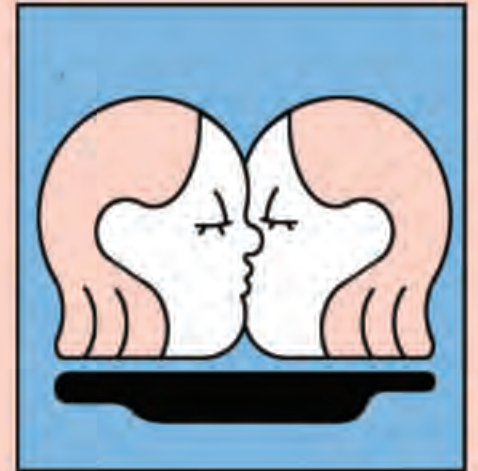
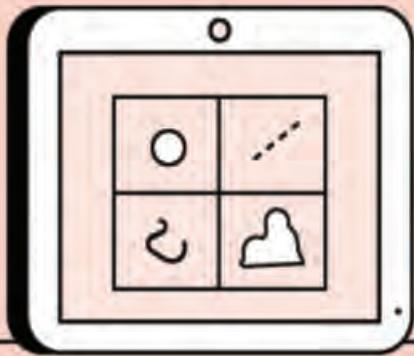
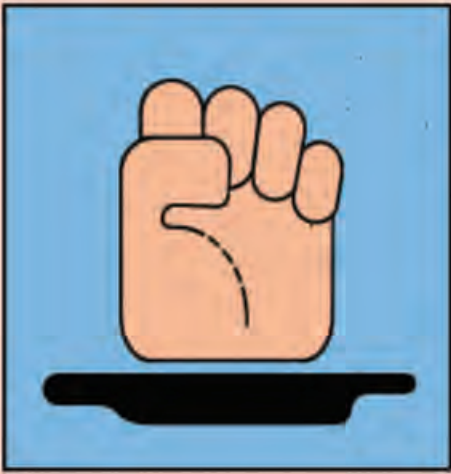
At first, Mathieu says, she was following in the footsteps of her sister **KENYA '19**, but “I found that I really liked working with kids. You definitely have to learn how to communicate in a different way. Also, I had never thought about what parents who have kids with special needs go through every day. So that gave me a new perspective, because it’s not something you hear a lot about.”

In the Upper School, Mathieu has served on the student board for Community Engagement Programs and Partnerships since the second half of her freshman year. In addition to Special Olympics, she started weekly service visits to the Milton elementary school she attended, helping with French immersion classes. Eventually she transitioned over to the Taylor School, a Boston public elementary school, where she ran art projects.

“To bring a diverse group of volunteers there is particularly im-

“I’VE ALWAYS JUST FELT IT WAS MY DUTY TO HELP PEOPLE, KNOWING THAT I HAVE ALL THIS PRIVILEGE. AND I KNOW IT SOUNDS CLICHÉ, BUT WHEN YOU HAVE THIS PRIVILEGE, HOW COULD YOU NOT WANT TO HELP PEOPLE?”





"I THINK WHAT WE SEE IS THAT A LOT OF THE WAYS OUR COMMUNITY IS STILL HIDDEN ARE SOMEWHAT SELF-IMPOSED. AND I SAY THAT NOT TO MINIMIZE IT OR DIMINISH IT, BUT BECAUSE IT IS STILL A DEEPLY UNCOMFORTABLE THING. A LOT OF STRAIGHT PEOPLE AREN'T COMFORTABLE WITH THEIR SEXUALITY AND GENDER EITHER."

portant, because it is a school with majority students of color," says Mathieu. "So to see volunteers who look like them is helpful."

When the Taylor School went to remote learning, Mathieu started helping its writing specialist virtually. "It's definitely hard to get the students to participate online, especially to maintain focus, not only because they're so young, but also because of some of their home situations. But it's still been a good experience, and we have fun together."

Mathieu is looking at a career in medicine and says that continuing community service in college is a priority. "In my college search, one of my top requirements is that there's an active community engagement program so that I'm not only going to the school in whatever town it's located in, but I'm also an active member of that community."

In addition to becoming a doctor, her long-term dream is to someday volunteer with Médecins Sans Frontières, an international humanitarian nongovernmental organization known for its projects in conflict zones and in countries affected by endemic diseases.

Walker Harris

► LGBTQ+ ADVOCACY

On campus, **WALKER HARRIS '21** is a strong advocate and a voice for those who might not be quite comfortable yet with their LGBTQ+ identity. He was elected the coordinator of the student LGBTQ+ Affinity group at the end of his freshman year.

"It's been one of the biggest commitments and a pillar of my experi-

ence at Milton," says Harris. "When I first started coming to LGBTQ+ Affinity, it was a significantly smaller space and was a little more niche. During my sophomore year, we tried to build out and reach as many people as possible."

At Milton, student-run affinity groups provide space for students who share an identity. Groups

usually meet weekly; some keep membership confidential so that students can be comfortable attending. Roughly 60 members routinely come to LGBTQ+ Affinity meetings.

"It's quite a vibrant community, which has played an important role in a lot of students' lives," says Harris. "As I became more involved, peers began to reach out to me, whether to help with coming out to parents or dealing with adults who get pronouns wrong or maybe who have said some upsetting things during classes."

He also helps out with Trans Affinity, a smaller group that is coordinated by another student. And there is GASP (Gender and Sexuality Perspectives), which is a student club. It's open to everyone and serves more as an educational experience, such as in hosting assemblies and speakers.

Harris says he's been documenting the history of LGBTQ+ Affinity, which was started at Milton about 30 years ago as an unofficial student group called the Cookie Exchange.

"It had none of the recognition like we do now," says Harris. "It was just a small group of friends who had all come out to each other and gathered to exchange cookies, but it was the beginning of the first queer affinity space on campus."

Although many of today's LGBTQ+ students are more comfortable being public with their identity, Harris says there is still contention within the community about how public and open it can and should be.

"Today's Milton is an overwhelmingly liberal place, although not as much as people might think,"



he says. “The discrimination that happens on campus is usually in the form of micro-aggressions. Those should be addressed, but it’s not the same level of systemic overt oppression that had historically been experienced.

“But I also think what we see is that a lot of the ways our community is still hidden are somewhat self-imposed. And I say that not to minimize it or diminish it, but because it is still a deeply uncomfortable thing. A lot of straight people aren’t comfortable with their sexuality and gender either.”

As a coordinator, Harris can approach the Office of Multiculturalism and Community Development with student concerns and issues, such as addressing the discipline system and specific anti-homophobic, anti-transphobic, anti-racist language. He is also focused on supporting students from countries where it is illegal to be gay who have been home during the remote learning period.

Outside Milton, Harris is involved with GLESN (Gay and Lesbian Education Student Network), a national organization that works to ensure that LGBTQ+ students can learn and grow in a school environment free from bullying and harassment. He is also involved with BAGLY (Boston Alliance of LGBTQ+ Youth), which offers workshops and advocates for programs and services for LGBTQ+ youth.

Harris plans to continue his advocacy in college. “My community is something that matters a lot to me,” he says. “Something I’ve considered while looking at different college campuses is how strong the queer community is there.”



Sam Bevins

► POLITICS

2020 was a busy year for **SAM BEVINS '21**, despite the pandemic. She worked to pass youth voting legislation in Massachusetts, volunteered on a national level for the Biden campaign, and ran an engaging Instagram account @samspoliticalscoop.

The importance of civic engagement was instilled in Bevins early on. Her grandmother was Vice President Al Gore’s family policy advisor. Her mother also worked for Gore, as a deputy director of national service, and is a close college friend of Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. A young Bevins tagged along to many of the senator’s events.

“I remember the first time, in seventh grade, that I really listened to her whole 30-minute speech,” says Bevins. “She laid out the stats about women, our lack of leadership positions, the mountains we still have to climb, and the glass ceilings we still have to break. At the time, there were only 20 female senators, and I re-

member being upset by these facts.”

Bevins says that because she was raised by two politically involved women, she was shielded a bit from the inequalities for women. After feeling crushed by Hillary Clinton’s defeat in 2016, Bevins turned her attention to when she would be eligible to vote, in 2020. At Senator Gillibrand’s presidential campaign launch, an advisor approached Bevins and asked for her advice on 17-year-old voters in Iowa, who could vote in the caucus for the first time because of recently passed legislation. This inspired Bevins to look into whether other states had similar laws, including her home state of Massachusetts.

“Our generation is very involved in politics,” says Bevins. “There is no way you can be on social media and not see something political. I hope we continue to stay engaged now that the election is over. When I researched reasons to support the youth voter legislation, it was interesting to see how many researchers have found that voting is habitual, and habits are formed at a young age. If you vote for the first time when you’re 18, the percentage chance that you vote again is much higher than if you vote for the first time when you’re older.”

After a lot of research and legwork, Bevins testified last spring before the Joint Committee on Election Laws at the Massachusetts State House on H.4161, her proposed bipartisan legislation to allow 17-year-olds to vote during a primary election if they will turn 18 in time for the general election. The motion was eventually put on hold because of COVID-19, so although it did not pass in time to affect the 2020 pri-

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maries in Massachusetts, it is not off the table, and Bevins is still involved in the process.

When Biden became the Democratic presidential candidate, she became the national events leader for High Schoolers for Biden and she was co-chair of the Massachusetts chapter. She held three or four virtual events a week. "It was the best way for me to see the community aspect of politics, because I've made so many friends through the campaign," she says.

Bevins is looking toward a future in politics. She wants to study government or international relations in college with a focus on Latin American studies or African American history, because she is passionate about immigration policy, racial justice, and criminal justice reform. Her ultimate goal is to run for office at the federal level.

"I really do believe in the positive aspects of politics and that change can come out of politics and public policy," she says. "Honestly, the partisan nature of our country right now motivates me even more to get into politics and bridge some of the divides."

George Rose

► ENVIRONMENT

The idea of solving climate and environmental problems can feel overwhelming because they touch almost every aspect of human life. It helps to have a particular focus. For **GEORGE ROSE '21**, that's transportation.

During a childhood illness, his father bought him a Thomas the Tank Engine set. He spent a lot of time playing with trains, and from there,

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his fascination with all things with wheels expanded to include trucks and cars. As he grew older, Rose became more aware of transportation's negative effect on the environment.

"Once I learned about the effect of emissions," he says, "I also began to learn about the great potential we have to not only reduce our emissions but also make our transportation system better. I was pretty hooked after that."

He also has a love of animals and biodiversity, which was fostered by elementary and middle school projects. A map of per capita carbon emissions that he drew still hangs in

his room. "My main interest now is in some of the technologies to fight against the problems in transportation," says Rose.

The summer after his sophomore year, Rose did an internship at the Sierra Club's Massachusetts chapter. His main project focused on the fight against a proposed compressor station in the town of Weymouth. An energy company wanted to build the station to connect two existing natural gas pipelines, but local residents were concerned about safety and environmental issues.

"We were in the State House a fair amount," Rose says, "dropping off materials to state reps and senators. During one of the hearings I went to, Governor Baker came and testified, so that was pretty cool. I learned a lot about the local political system."

Rose also spent time gathering data from towns on their sustainability practices. And he conducted research on "green zones," which the city of Pittsburgh was interested in implementing in its effort to reduce emissions. He also wrote letters to the editor at local newspapers. "At the Sierra Club, it was just cool to be around people who cared and were dedicating their careers to that," he says.

This year, he is one of the heads of the student Sustainability Board. The group has arranged for speakers to give talks to the Milton community over Zoom, including Kerry Emanuel, professor of atmospheric science at MIT, and Rose's former boss, Jacob Stern, deputy director of Sierra Club's Massachusetts chapter.

"I'm hoping to use the speaker series to build some momentum among the student body and hopefully make some change on campus," he says.



Rose is looking forward to college, where he can continue to pursue his interests. “This is definitely what I want to do for my career,” he says. “I’ve spent a lot of time thinking about exactly what path I want to take. I will major in either engineering or physics, because a good understanding of the mechanics—like electricity, magnetism, and thermodynamics—is really important, and then hopefully get a master’s in engineering or energy science. Then I can go into entrepreneurship with a focus on clean technologies.”

Jana Amin

► MUSLIM WOMEN AND GENDER PARITY

JANA AMIN '21 uses her voice and life experiences to work on changing the narrative around Muslim women, particularly young women and girls. She spent two years conducting research on three continents to deepen the understanding of a 20th-century Egyptian princess whose story had been only partially told. Her work culminated in giving a TEDxYouth talk in Boston when she was a junior.

Amin, who is a co-head of Milton’s Muslim Student Association, grew up in Egypt. When she first came to the United States, she attended a school where the students had international backgrounds similar to hers. But when she entered Milton’s Middle School, most of her peers were from local towns, and their interactions with international students, particularly with Muslim students, were limited.

Amin says it was classroom conversations and friends’ questions about what it was like to grow up



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in Egypt where she heard some inconsistencies between their perception of Muslim women and the Middle East and her own experiences. “I quickly realized that part of my mission was definitely going to be raising awareness about some of the misconceptions and helping fight those stigmas,” she says.

She found her voice, and the skills and tools she needed to articulate her message, on the Middle School Speech Team. “I learned that all our voices have power,” she says. “It’s about understanding how best to use them to amplify that power and to extend that as much as possible.”

As a freshman, she traveled on a school trip to Jordan, where students visited the Collateral Repair

Project (CRP), a non-governmental organization that works with refugees on community-building, education, and trauma relief. She was so moved by the group’s mission that she became an “e-learning partner” in her sophomore year, video-chatting with students to help them learn conversational English. Amin also became involved with CRP’s SuperGirls program for girl refugees.

“I’m passionate about girls’ education, and I wanted to help with visibility for this small program,” says Amin. To celebrate her 17th birthday, she hosted a virtual event, #17for17: Advocating for Girls’ Education, which brought together 17 speakers representing more than 15 countries to discuss the importance of girls’ education.

Over the past couple of years, Amin’s focus has broadened to furthering gender parity in general. Last September, for the UN General Assembly, she spoke on a panel about policies to further the UN 17 Sustainable Development Goal Initiatives. “My focus was on how we can—on an individual, governmental and business basis—center the voices of young women and girls, especially as we think about global recovery from COVID-19,” Amin says.

She will continue pushing for youth-inclusive spaces, particularly ones that value the voices and the perspectives of young women. “It’s important to include youth voices and perspectives and let them advocate for issues they care about,” she says. “Youth inclusion is so important in creating change because at the end of the day, they know what their communities most need.”

LIZ MATSON

Changing Minds: Building a Better, Stronger Milton

WITH MANY NEW PROGRAMS, MILTON SEEKS TO RESET ITS COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND JUSTICE

WHEN **JOSH JORDAN '11** arrived at Milton as a new sophomore, he felt as if he had entered a “sink or swim” environment. When he struggled in classes, teachers seemed to focus solely on his schoolwork instead of recognizing the massive cultural shift he’d experienced after transferring from a diverse public school.

At the time, Jordan says, he didn’t feel empowered to talk about some of the challenges of being a Black student in a predominantly white institution. Milton continued to be a part of Jordan’s life since that time: During college summers, he worked on campus, and he’s held various roles in all three of the School’s divisions. Now an Upper School teacher, dorm faculty member, and Lower School communications coordinator, he has started to feel more comfortable sharing his perspective on race and racism at Milton.

“It’s something that I’ve wrestled with because I’ve only really started to feel a sense of belonging this year,” Jordan says. “I felt this hidden pressure, when I started working with students, to uphold a certain image of Milton as this super diverse, perfect place. Internally, I was asking myself if I belonged here. Only recently have I started to speak more openly about that.”

The 2020 deaths of Black Americans—including Ahmaud Arbery, an unarmed man, killed while jogging in Glynn County, Georgia; George Floyd, a Minneapolis man killed by a white police officer; and Breonna Taylor, a Louisville, Kentucky, woman shot in her sleep by police officers during a “no-knock” warrant raid—reopened the deep wounds of American racism and caused scrutiny of the country’s institutions. A strong critique of

structural racism and white supremacy in schools emerged, opening discussions about curriculum, access, resources, cultural erasure, discipline, and equity.

Milton students, alumni, and employees who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) shared stories during the spring and summer of their experiences with racism and microaggressions at the School. This prompted the formation of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Commission, a group of current and former faculty and staff, alumni, and trustees dedicated to a comprehensive assessment that will guide recommendations for Milton to become an anti-racist school. Jordan, who serves on the DEI commission, hopes to see a cultural shift whereby BIPOC students at Milton feel they fully belong. That will require adults in the community who can make them feel safe and are fully equipped to handle difficult and sometimes messy conversations.

Mindset shifts and commitment are the first steps toward effective changes to curriculum and policies at Milton, says Vanessa Cohen Gibbons, Upper School director of equity and a member of the DEI Commission. The entire Milton community needs to be involved and understand that a culture change is the foundation for improvements.

“It’s about the decisions that get made here, and the people who make those decisions, and the groups of people tasked with running the different elements of School life,” she says. “The work has to begin internally for all of those people before trying to tack on new structures or materials. You can’t make anti-rac-



Anti-Racism in the Curriculum

“If you ask Middle School students about Black history, they’ll probably tell you about slavery or the civil rights movement,” says Gavin, an eighth-grader. “Although these are important moments in our country’s history, they should not be the only time that Black history is incorporated in the classroom.”

In a presentation for his grade 7 Choosing to Participate project—a year-long, deep research dive into a topic Milton social studies students choose to explore—Gavin, who is Black, explains that American schools provide “a very narrow perspective and an incomplete understanding” of history when curricula ignore the contributions of Black people. Teaching Black history as a stand-alone unit adds to the “us versus them” mentality that has long permeated predominantly white education systems.

As Milton commits to anti-racist teaching across all grade levels and academic disciplines, one of the primary missions is for teachers to recognize the whitewashing and structural racism of the traditional American educational system and dismantle it.

It’s important for students to receive a complete history. One that focuses just on trauma, such as the violence of slavery and the civil rights movement, ignores the richness and diversity of Black lives. In his presentation, Gavin explains that for white students, this approach contributes to harmful stereotypes about people of color and creates an environment where young Black students “question their potential or see their opportunities as limited.”

Middle School Principal Steven Bertozzi has partnered with a consultant from Diversity Directions, a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) firm, with which Milton has contracted, to investigate the School’s curriculum. The goal is to create “windows and mirrors” for students—windows to teach them about diverse topics and build cultural competency, and mirrors for them to see themselves represented in course subjects and in their teachers’ identities.

“We’re doing a deep dive to think about where we are and what holes we have in our curriculum,” Bertozzi says. “In particular, we’re looking at where we can take our curriculum and apply it from not only an anti-racist perspective but one that actively celebrates Black joy and other identities.”

There is room for anti-racist teaching in every subject, not just in history and the social sciences. In English classes, teachers can assign works representing a wide range of voices; in science, technology, engineering, and math classes, curricula can move beyond a Western, Eurocentric lens, says Math Department Chair LeeAnn Brash. When students are given a global perspective on the development of knowledge, racist foundations in education may begin to crumble.

ist decisions if you haven’t done the internal work.”

The School has contracted with Diversity Directions, a consultancy that performed an assessment of diversity and justice issues at Milton in January. The assessment provided an opportunity for members of the community to talk with consultants about their Milton experience.

Having a comprehensive understanding of current experiences will help the School create a framework for measuring its progress, in both qualitative and quantitative ways, in the future. Measurement will track changes and goals related to employee training, the recording of bias incidents, student demographics, hiring and retention of faculty and staff of color, leadership opportunities for BIPOC people, academic outcomes, disability issues, disciplinary matters, and more.

The School also introduced a bias-incident reporting protocol to help support adults and students, Cohen Gibbons says. “The expectation cannot be that we are not going to make mistakes. Everybody has made a mistake at some point that has hurt someone from a marginalized community. It’s what you do after you’re informed that you’ve made a mistake. Did you learn and grow and change? And can we track that trajectory in a way that’s going to have a long-lasting, positive impact on our students?”

All employees will have regular, in-depth training on diversity topics going forward, which is crucial to building a community that supports BIPOC students and adults at Milton.

“In the past, training has been optional, but it’s no longer optional,” says Alisa Braithwaite, a member

“The expectation cannot be that we are not going to make mistakes. Everybody has made a mistake at some point that has hurt someone from a marginalized community. It’s what you do after you’re informed that you’ve made a mistake.”

VANESSA COHEN GIBBONS, UPPER SCHOOL DIRECTOR OF EQUITY

of the Upper School English faculty. “It’s much more than what’s happening in the classroom, it’s also about retaining faculty and staff of color and creating an institution that supports them, promotes them, and puts them in leadership positions.”

Achieving Milton’s diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives hinges on accountability and regularly measuring progress, says Middle School Dean of Students Jacqui Hardaway.

“We need to hold ourselves accountable and recognize that for lasting change to happen, we must openly challenge our systems and restructure the fabric of who we are,” she says. “A transformation like this will take time to be seen, felt, and experienced on a regular basis. But the time to question, disrupt, and re-vision our daily work is now.

“One of the things I love about Milton, and something that we can harness as we move forward, is that we teach kids to be critical thinkers.

We actually teach them to challenge systems. We want them to grapple with issues, to pick them apart. We should be doing that, too.”

Helping BIPOC students develop a sense of belonging and ownership at Milton is something the School needs to improve, says Frank Patti, principal of the Lower School. Training for white members of the community is an essential starting point, he says.

“One of the things we’ve started to work on in the Lower School this year is to create opportunities for white members of our community to talk about whiteness,” he says.

White Milton faculty and staff have gathered weekly since 2017 in a voluntary K–12 group called AWARE (Alliance of White Anti-Racist Educators) to discuss issues of white privilege and supporting students and colleagues of color. Another option group, SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity), part of the National SEED Project, has been a

K–12 effort to create classroom and workplace practices that promote equity and justice.

If white adults show discomfort when talking about race, it signals to white children that those conversations are taboo and promotes the notion that talking about issues that affect Black and brown people is problematic, Hardaway says.

“We need to move beyond some of the fluffy stuff and do the hard work,” she says. “When white educators remain silent or avoid addressing racial incidents, we’ve failed to do two of the most fundamental parts of our job—educate and protect. When a student of color sees that, they see their teacher not taking them seriously. It’s all the little things like that that add up over time to create the feeling that they don’t fully belong.”

In order for any institution or person to be anti-racist, they must first accept that a position of neutrality on race—in other words, claiming “I don’t see color,” or “We treat everyone equally”—is one of inherent racism, writes Ibram X. Kendi, the scholar, activist, and author of *How to Be an Antiracist*. Because racial identity informs the full range of ways people experience the world, anti-racism demands that its practitioners acknowledge and understand those differences and work to dismantle racial injustice.

A person’s—or an institution’s—intentions are irrelevant when it comes to racism and bias, Cohen Gibbons and Braithwaite say. All that matters is the outcome of policies and interactions. A well-intentioned curriculum can still be harmful if it’s taught in an incomplete or biased way; a friendly employee can silence

a marginalized colleague in need of support by dismissing or belittling their concerns.

Sherry Coleman, a DEI consultant who met virtually with the Lower School faculty in December, said that in order to achieve racial literacy, “we must come to know that we judge the world from our own lens and sense of understanding, which for all of us is limited.”

BIPOC students and adults are often subject to tone-policing when they address issues of racism. Tone-policing occurs when a white message receiver refuses to acknowledge the content of a BIPOC person’s words and responds to their tone instead. It creates an environment where the white person’s comfort is prioritized over the legitimate concerns and needs of colleagues and students of color. It contributes to harmful stereotypes and ignores real problems, Coleman told her listeners. Meanwhile, white people may hesitate to discuss racism for fear of acknowledging that they’ve done something racist or looking ignorant; they may also resist or underestimate the need for changes in systems that benefit them. For students, the fear of speaking out against racism may come from worry over retaliation or the idea of a well-liked peer or teacher getting in trouble, she said.

“We need to move to more challenging and difficult conversations in order to build a common understanding,” Coleman said. “It’s a gift to yourself, personally and professionally, if you can do that. I do believe that when we as adults become models of racial mindfulness, we will impact our students positively.”

MARISA DONELAN



SPEAKERS

Poet Richard Blanco is Bingham Visiting Writer

"A poem isn't really done until it's shared and lives in someone else," said Bingham Visiting Writer Richard Blanco. Blanco read and discussed his poetry, which centers on ideas of home, identity, and nationality, with students in a Zoom webinar.

"What is home?" said Blanco, who immigrated to Miami as a child with his Cuban-exile parents. This idea grew bigger into What is a country? In my poems, I'm asking these questions for all of us." When he was growing up, he said, he wasn't sure if he was part of the American story. It wasn't until he was asked to be the poet for President Barack Obama's second inauguration that he felt his personal

story was part of the American narrative.

In the webinar, Blanco read poems from his most recent collection, *How to Love a Country*. He also read from *Boundaries* and showed the photography by Jabon Bond Hessler that accompanies each poem. About the poem "Complaint of El Rio Grande," Blanco said, "I wrote it with the voice of the river to speak to the absurdities of borders—they are just inventions, and I let the river speak about that."

Blanco also answered students' questions about his writing process and the power of art and poetry. "I don't think a poem can change the world, but a poem can change a person, and that person can change the world," he said.

Selected by President Obama as the fifth inaugural poet in U.S. history, Blanco is the first Latino, immigrant, and openly gay person to serve in the role—and was, until this year, also the youngest. His other collections include *Matters of the Sea/Cosas del mar*, *Looking for the Gulf Motel*, and *Directions to the Beach of the Dead*.

Established in 1987 by the Bingham family, the Visiting Writer Series brings esteemed writers, historians, and journalists to campus to speak and work with students and faculty.

◀ RICHARD BLANCO WAS THE INAUGURAL POET FOR PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA'S SECOND INAUGURATION.

AWARDS

Girls Who Code Club Members Attend Conference

Ten Milton students participated in the Harvard WECODE virtual conference in October. **CAROLINE WILSON '21** and **DINA-SARA CUSTO '22** served as Milton's student ambassadors and were two of the 21 (out of 80) student ambassadors who received WECODE Leadership Awards. Prior to the event, they connected virtually with the Harvard WECODE board, and other ambassadors from around the world to spread information and help organize the conference.

"We had the opportunity to listen to discussions surrounding STEM majors, internships, college admissions, college life, and other opportunities for women in technology," says Wilson. "Even after the conference, we continued to connect with women in tech from the conference via channels on the platform Slack."

Wilson says that Jen Easterly, managing director for Morgan Stanley, and Elena Glassman, assistant professor of computer science at Harvard University, "inspired our students to be fearless leaders not only in their computer science classes but also in their future paths."





ON CAMPUS

Cox Library Reimagined

Typically a busy hub for study and research, Cox Library needed a plan to serve the community through this year's remote and hybrid learning phases. Milton's librarians went to work finding creative ways to operate.

When Milton first went remote last spring, it "coincided with the start of the history department's 'research season,'" says Laura Pearle, the library's director. "We created a portal that included a chat box so that students looking for library assistance could talk with a librarian from 5:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Students from all over the United States, China, and Europe contacted us for help with citations, using the databases, and general help on various topics."

Over the summer, the

librarians (Pearle, Beth Reardon, Joanna Novick, and Mitchell Edwards) participated in professional development; attended numerous webinars about books, providing remote services, and tech tools for remote learning; and participated in online discussions with their peers nationwide on providing service with a closed facility. They started a library newsletter to promote new resources and remind people of existing ones.

The librarians also added SORA, an ebook service, and curbside pickup for the print collection. Students can reserve books online and pick them up from a table in front of the library. For Middle School students, books are delivered to homerooms.

SPEAKERS

Milton in the World: Patrick Radden Keefe '94 Discusses *Say Nothing* and Writing

Award-winning author and investigative journalist **PATRICK RADDEN KEEFE '94** spoke with students and alumni about his work, particularly his *New York Times* best seller *Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland*, as part of the Milton in the World webinar series.

Radden Keefe said he knew when he was a Milton student that he wanted to be a writer, but it took many years of rejection letters before he began writing professionally. Today, he is a staff writer at *The New Yorker*, producing long-form pieces that dive deep into a range of subjects, "from the hunt for the drug lord Chapo Guzman to the tragic personal history of the mass shooter Amy Bishop and the role that the Sackler family and their company Purdue Pharma played in sparking the opioid crisis."

He looks for topics that have a "strong narrative spine," he said. "I want it to be a story about people, often people in conflict. It's through that lens that I approach the bigger issues."

Obituaries are often a source for his ideas, said Radden Keefe. The concept for *Say Nothing* came after he read an obituary of Dolours Price, a key figure in the book, which chronicles life in Northern Ireland during the Troubles.

Lisa Baker of the English faculty moderated questions from the audience, many of which focused on Radden Keefe's writing process. For *Say Nothing*, he spent four years traveling among Northern Ireland, England, Ireland, and the United States, sifting through archives and interviewing more than 100 people.

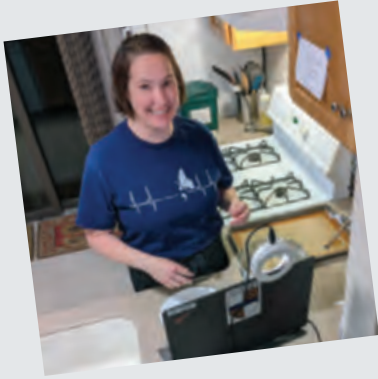
At the beginning of his writing career, "I was really inefficient because I love the research," said Radden Keefe. "I could do research forever. But you need to come back and tell the story. It's hard, but I think I've gotten better at it over the years."

Radden Keefe grew up in Dorchester, Massachusetts, and attended college at Columbia. He earned master's degrees from Cambridge University and the London School of Economics, and a J.D. from Yale Law School. In addition to *The New Yorker*, his work has appeared in *The New York Review of Books*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and other publications.



EXTRACURRICULAR

Cooking With the Zimmers!



Comfort food is having a moment, and science faculty member Heather Zimmer is showing students how to make it at home on a weekly cooking show. It's part of the new Opt-In Program, in which faculty host casual and fun Zoom sessions such as trivia nights and current events discussions.

The Opt-In Program started last fall after a few faculty members and student head monitors **ELIZA DUNN '21** and **GARVIN MCLAUGHLIN '21** thought about ways to keep the strong sense of community at Milton while in a remote environment.

Zimmer says she and her husband, the head chef at 2nd Street Café in Cambridge, loved cooking with students when they lived in Norris House, and this was a fun way to replicate that experience. In their first episode, they taught students to make mac and cheese from scratch.

"First, we taught everyone to make a comfort-food-style cheddar dish and then helped students customize based on what they wanted to eat that night," she says. The Zimmers provide the recipe in advance so that people can cook along with them if they wish. In other episodes a group made a "heartly chili as well as Rice Krispies treats with candy to celebrate Halloween."

ARTS

Nesto Photography Exhibit Featured Student Work

In the fall, the Nesto Gallery exhibited "I Need ___ To Breathe" as a 150-foot outdoor fence installed in front of the Kellner Performing Arts Center. (also inside in the Arts Commons Gallery). "I Need ___ To Breathe" was an interactive portrait project created by photography teacher Scott Nobles, in collaboration with three Advanced Photography students—**THEA CHUNG '21**, **LAUREN WALKER '21**, and **MADDIE WEILER '21**; and assistance from **SEBASTIAN PARK '21** with computer programming. Photographic portraits and audio recordings of more than 250 participants were captured at multiple Black Lives Matter events, rallies, protests, and vigils throughout the summer of 2020. Along the fence were QR codes that viewers could scan with their smartphones to listen to the important and meaningful voices of the individual participants as they completed the statement "I need ___ to breathe." The images featured inside the Arts Commons Gallery highlighted the portraits of those participants who were from the Milton Academy community.

► TOP AND MIDDLE: THE PROJECT HANGING ON CAMPUS. BOTTOM: FROM LEFT, PHOTOGRAPHY TEACHER SCOTT NOBLES, AND PROJECT PHOTOGRAPHERS THEA CHUNG '21, LAREN WALKER '21, MADDIE WEILER '21, AND SEBASTIAN PARK '21





SPEAKERS

Documentary Filmmaker Byron Hurt Speaks to Milton Athletes



Many boys in society are conditioned from a young age to be tough, to hide their emotions, and to avoid any appearance of behaving “like a girl,” documentary filmmaker and anti-sexist activist Byron Hurt told student-athletes last fall as part of a series of speakers in the fall to promote mental fitness.

This mindset favors aggression, prevents boys from connecting with their emotions, and undervalues girls and women, sometimes leading to toxic masculinity and violence, said Hurt, who visited Milton athletes virtually.

“I grew up in a culture where you had to perform a certain kind of manhood and masculinity in order to be accepted by other guys and be seen as a ‘real man,’” he said. Boys hear words like “soft,” “gay,” and “girly” if they don’t meet the expectations of masculinity—and when those words are used as pejoratives it triggers the idea that women and gay men are weak.

Hurt urged students to intervene when they witness someone using sexist and homophobic language. “It takes strength and courage to stand up and say, ‘That’s not what we do,’” he said.

“This exaggerated sense of manhood is in the air that we breathe. If the culture doesn’t give us permission to cry, to be soft, and to express the full range of our emotions beyond anger, there can be some negative consequences.”

Hurt majored in journalism at Northeastern University, where he played quarterback and envisioned a career in radio and television broadcasting. He received an Emmy nomination for his television show, *Reel Works with Byron Hurt*. His new documentary, *Hazing: How Badly Do You Want In*, explores the dangerous culture of hazing.

RESEARCH

Humanities Workshop Addresses Climate Issues

Milton students in several humanities classes join those from six other Massachusetts schools in studying climate change and climate justice through the humanities during this year's Humanities Workshop.

Teachers from the participating schools decided to focus on climate issues because they permeate so many aspects of life, including economic and racial inequality, human migration, and public health.

"There is a sense that climate change is just a science problem, which of course is not the case—it's a human problem," says Milton faculty member Alisa Braithwaite. "If our climate dies, so do we. We wanted to bring the concepts of humanities disciplines together to create a narrative that helps people to see that climate change is an urgent, human problem—one that we should be learning about and fighting for from every corner of our world."

The Humanities Workshop is a yearlong academic project conducted by a consortium of Boston-area public, charter, and private schools. Braithwaite and Lisa Baker, both Milton English teachers, founded the workshop in 2017 as a way to affirm the humanities' role in tackling urgent social issues. This is the second cycle; the first centered on issues of economic inequality.

"Under the umbrella of climate, students can tackle so many different topics, from how climate change relates to inequality, to public health issues like the pandemic, to migration as a result of climate change," Baker says. "You can look back at the history of how these issues have been addressed or not addressed. Who controls the narrative, and who changes that narrative are really interesting questions to explore within the context of the humanities."

The consortium includes Boston Latin School, Boston International Newcomers Academy, Boston Collegiate Charter School, Academy of the Pacific Rim, Boston College High School, Phillips Andover Academy, and Milton.



NEW FACULTY

Q&A: Math Department Chair LeeAnn Brash

New Math Department chair, LeeAnn Brash, joined Milton, along with three other new math teachers, just before the start of the 2020-2021 school year. Although it's been an atypical year, Brash spent the fall teaching Honors Calculus and Geometry and getting to know students and fellow faculty members.

HOW HAVE YOUR FIRST FEW MONTHS AT MILTON BEEN?

Very good. There are a million things happening with the COVID-19 pandemic that normally wouldn't be part of the picture, but all things considered, it's been really great. The Math Department has been incredibly welcoming and supportive, and I've had really good support so far from the other department chairs I've met. There are four of us new to the department this year—Brash, Akinade Adeboye, Cory Bhowmik, and Hubert Hwang—and we're all people of color, which is really cool.

WHAT KIND OF LEADERSHIP APPROACH ARE YOU TAKING WITH THE MATH DEPARTMENT?

Right now I'm trying to get to know everybody well. A friend of mine shared incredibly good advice that her mentor had given her, which is that the first year you're in a new place, you're getting to know the place. The second year, the place starts to get to know

you. And from the third year forward, you work collaboratively in an effective way. Right now, I'm getting to know how this place works and what its culture is. The students have been really helpful with that. My calculus students have been really sweet, telling me all the things they love about Milton and what excites them about being students at Milton. Even within the first week of classes, they were telling me about the big events on campus throughout the year that get people hyped up.

CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND?

I went to Harvard, which is where I had my first interface with Milton. My college roommate was a Milton grad, and I have a bunch of friends who went here. I majored in math in college, and then I stayed in the area. I worked in software engineering for a while, and then I taught at Wellesley College. After graduate school, I taught at the Cambridge School of Weston. I was there for 11 years before I came to Milton.

WHAT ABOUT MATH EXCITED YOU AS A STUDENT?

I liked working with abstract ideas and the idea that you could build a whole mathematical system that isn't something people already know. There are spaces to



explore. The things that are possible with math are fascinating to me. It's a lot like philosophy in the way that you can say, "Let's take what we know and go someplace we haven't been. What can we put together that will hold together on its own?" There is always a new and creative way to think about a concept.

HOW DO YOU APPROACH STUDENTS WHO ARE INTIMIDATED BY MATH?

A big value in studying math is that a student can face a challenging problem and not know how to do it at first, but then start with "OK, what do I already know, and building on that, where can I go from there?" And then, one step at a time, they work toward the

solution. The point isn't that every student will learn to love math and become a mathematician. The point is to show students that you can face a difficult problem and figure it out. The most important thing is that students are supported on that journey.

There is no other field of study that has a specific anxiety about it. Math anxiety has been studied by psychologists. There's no English anxiety, no history anxiety, no science anxiety, no music anxiety. If the messaging that a student receives is that people are either "good at" or "bad at" math, then they think those are their only options—that they are somehow intrinsically good or bad at something forever. That kind of language really disempowers people,

and it can start when kids are very little. In reality, math is something that students can practice, a skill that can be developed over time.

MILTON HAS MADE A COMMITMENT TO ANTI-RACIST TEACHING ACROSS DISCIPLINES. HOW DOES THAT LOOK IN MATH?

It applies to math a lot, much more than people realize, because there's a lot of public perception that math is separate from social issues. American math education focuses on the ancient Greeks, and then German, English, and French developments, but math has been studied long before those Western traditions. The concept of Pascal's triangle is a really great example: Pascal lived during the 17th century, but the concept was documented in China, on actual paper, about a thousand years earlier.

Some of anti-racist teaching in math requires teaching that the origins of mathematics are all over the world and not just in white, European societies. The House of Wisdom in Baghdad sent scholars all over the world to learn and bring back knowledge; many people don't think of the Middle East as an intellectual powerhouse, but it is. Some of the geometry we study now originated in ancient Egypt, because they used it to plan for flooding of the Nile each year. Across the hundreds of

cultures in Africa, there were some of the earliest records of mathematics, and ancient civilizations in South America, the Pacific Islands, indigenous Americans, all used mathematics. But that's not celebrated in Europe-centric education.

That perspective is necessary, and representation is necessary; STEM fields continue to be largely white and male. Students of color need to be encouraged. And then, mathematics can be used to pull apart statistics and as a tool for finding the objective truths behind things that are manipulated in messaging, which is important when we talk about the things that disproportionately affect people of color. Race and socioeconomic issues also come into play when we think about how students are placed in math courses and who has access to advancement.

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU'RE NOT TEACHING?

I help run a semi-professional choir in Boston, and right now we're trying to figure out what to do in this now-defunct holiday season. Outside the pandemic, I like to rock-climb, and I am involved with an adaptive climbing club in Watertown for people with physical disabilities. When I have the time, I like curling up with my son and reading together, and just spending time with my family.

Leaving a Lasting Legacy

Board President Lisa Donohue '83 describes her time in Milton's classrooms and playing fields as outstanding. However, it is her senior project—an unpaid internship at a small, Boston-based advertising and marketing agency—that remains one of her most transformational experiences. "I took the subway in to the agency and then came back for track practice. It was wonderful; it reaffirmed what I wanted to do." After graduating from Brown University, Donohue began her career with Leo Burnett in Chicago. She rose through the ranks there and at other agencies, most recently serving as CEO at Publicis, advising *Fortune* 500 companies around the globe. She credits Milton with helping her to think critically, essential in understanding her clients' industries, while Milton's diverse student body gave her exposure to working with people from different backgrounds. "There was a certain confidence Milton gave me early on, a confidence that the broader experience instills," she says. "After Milton, you can tackle anything." Donohue gives back to Milton in many ways, including naming the School in her will. "I want others to have the same experiences I had, and to experience not only professional success, but success as a person."

Milton

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Alumni Life



Meteors for Our Time, from an exhibition of glass art by artists Philip Baldwin '66 and Monica Guggisberg. See p. 67

News & Notes
from Our Alumni
Community

Bill Ursin '49 is a Korean War vet.



1946

GEORGE WIGGLESWORTH

WHITNEY, grandson of George Wigglesworth of Wigglesworth Hall fame, served in the U.S. Army 6th Division Artillery Military Police in Korea. He graduated from Colby College and then attended the Colorado School of Mines and the University of Colorado. He spent his career as a geologist in various capacities with corporations in several states. In later years, George was self-employed, belonging to various professional organizations, and was a licensed professional geologist in Wyoming. George and his wife, now deceased, had three children. His two surviving daughters have families—he has four grandchildren and one great-grandchild—and they reside in San Luis Obispo and Chico, California, while George lives in Centennial, Colorado.

1949

◀ **BJ (BILL) URSIN** “survived my 90th birthday” on August 8 and is hiding from the virus at home. BJ is a Korean War vet and an MIT graduate in physics. He resides in Washington State.

1950

LUKE HILL had a 40-year career in general surgery in Exeter, New Hampshire, and enjoyed a wonderful retirement with his very special wife, Nancy, until



SPOTLIGHT

Alumni Soccer Game Honors Co-founder

Forty years ago, **TED HAYS '70**, and Harry Blackman, Nobles class of '71, founded the Milton-Nobles Alumni Soccer Game, in which soccer players of all ages battle for the Hays-Blackman Cup. Hays passed away on June 26, 2020, after a courageous battle with cancer. His best friend, Harry Blackman, notes, "The Nobles v. Milton Alumni Soccer games would never have happened without Teddy Hays. The cup that bears his name will help keep his memory alive, but far more important is that those of us who knew the man keep his spirit alive. He was one of the most gracious, kind, and generous of men ... a fine life and a fine man."

her passing, in 2013. "Since then, I have been stashed at Riverwoods (a retirement community)—comfortable, safe, but lacking excitement due to the pandemic. This too will pass—before I do, I hope." Luke uses Zoom to keep up with his four children scattered around the country. He sends best wishes to his classmates during their 70th reunion year.

1951



JUDY GAMBLE KAHRL has been busy with Grandmothers for Reproductive Rights GRR!, an organization she founded nearly eight years ago. Judy shares that while restrictions to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care have increased, elders have more influence than they might think. "I love seeing elders, particularly women, discover they have a voice and speak up," she writes. Judy says she has no time to retire and loves living in Maine; its beauty makes up for days of fog and rain.

ANDY WARD and his wife, Liz, moved into The Marshes, a

multi-level care community on Skidaway Island, Georgia. "Enthusiastic neighbors said I had to remain healthy and fit, so they gave me a bright yellow shirt with SWEET OLD BIKERS written in bold letters. We enjoy weekly biking, although the SOB acronym is sometimes used as we pedal through the State Park."

1952

EMERY BRADLEY GOFF and her husband, Bill, moved to 75 State Street, a senior-living community in the heart of Portland, Maine's historic residential area, on March 16—the day that Maine closed down because of COVID-19. "Incredible serendipity! We have a bright, sunny apartment on the 4th floor overlooking a handsome Victorian church and distant harbor views. We are still deaccessioning—downsizing is not for the fainthearted, nor for the sentimental." Emery says they are well cared for and enjoy the community's activities. She swam in the ocean every day all summer and fall, and has now turned to architectural walks in their brick-sidewalk neighborhood. Bill is using a walker and spends much time reading, with great enjoyment, and he naps when Emery is not looking. Emery and Bill also remain active in the antiques business; their finds are available at four locations up and down the East Coast. Several of their six children and seven grandchildren are near enough

to enjoy socially distanced, but still delightful, visits, picnics, and more. They send very best wishes from the coast of Maine to all old friends from Milton!

1953

JOEL WECHSLER has survived the pandemic without too much disruption—their townhouse condo allows freedom of movement, and during the summer, they invited friends to visit on their deck. Their big news is the birth of their first great-grandchild, an adorable girl named Lucy, born in August. They hope to travel to Colorado to meet Lucy this spring. Joel had a good ski season in 2020 at Mt. Wachusett, Mt. Sunapee, and Waterville Valley, but with pandemic restrictions, he is not hopeful for this year. He sends his best wishes to all classmates.

1955

F. WARREN MCFARLAN shares that after 40 years of fundraising for nonprofits, he just completed *Effective Fundraising: Trustees and Beyond*, coming out this March.

1956

MIKE NASH and his wife, Nancy, have been living in Palm Harbor, Florida, since 1994. Mike had the fortunate experience of a transfer with Xerox Corporation, with which he worked for 35 years. Retirement has treated



SPOTLIGHT

Redefining the Cult Movie

Academy Award-nominated and Emmy-winning filmmaker **JEHANE NOUJAIM '92** and her husband, Karim Amer, released their true-crime documentary series, *The Vow*, on HBO in August 2020.

The nine-episode first season chronicles the rise and fall of Keith Raniere, a self-proclaimed success guru whose cult NXIVM (pronounced “NEX-ee-um”) is accused of sex trafficking and racketeering. A secret group of women within NXIVM, which was marketed as a personal- and professional-development program, were branded with Raniere’s initials and forced into sexual slavery. *The Vow* includes testimonials from survivors of NXIVM and follows actress Catherine Oxenberg as she attempts to extricate her daughter, India, from the cult.

Raniere’s self-improvement courses were taken by approximately 18,000 people in North America after its founding, in 1998. Some followers paid exorbitant amounts of money for the courses. In the secret group, named DOS, Raniere and a small group of accomplices kept women captive by demanding “collateral” in the form of explicit videos, which they threatened to release if the women left.

In October 2020, Raniere was found guilty in federal court of sex trafficking, racketeering, and child pornography. He received a 120-year prison sentence. A second season of *The Vow* is planned for 2021.

Noujaim and Amer have directed several films, including *The Square*, a critically acclaimed documentary about the Arab Spring, in 2013, and *The Great Hack*, a documentary about the Facebook-Cambridge Analytica scandal, in 2019. Noujaim has also worked as a co-executive producer on the television show *Ramy* and as a cinematographer on several projects.

Rupert Hitzig '56, with his grandson Connor (left) and his son Sebastian (right).



him and Nancy well, and Mike spends time playing tennis, taking daily walks, and serving on local boards. Until this year, they have enjoyed many travels visiting their five children and 12 grandchildren—their first great-grandchild arrived in September. Travels rarely bring them to the Milton area; he and Nancy wish their classmates good health and a joyful reunion celebration.

EUSTIS WALCOTT lives with his wife, Jenny, at the St. Andrews Club in Delray Beach, Florida. Eutie reports that he spends time keeping up with the news, exercising, swimming laps, and playing golf at the club’s Dye-designed par-3 golf course. Before COVID struck, he shared an enjoyable lunch with classmate **Leonard Ansin**, who lives in nearby Boca Raton.

LEONARD ANSIN has been married to his highschool sweetheart, Jane, for 59 years, and they have three daughters and four grandchildren. After spending all of their adult lives in Newton, Massachusetts, they decided it was time to enjoy sunshine year round and moved to Florida. He enjoys biking and spending as much time as he and his wife can with their children and grandchildren in Boston or in southern Florida. They wish everyone well during these challenging times.

JOSHUA LANE writes, “I’m still a Republican atheist (although I voted for Biden in 2020) but I’m no longer an optimist. I am fascinated by evolution, whose highest expression, the human brain, makes *Homo sapiens* (with some Neanderthal and Denisovan genes) uniquely

able. But the brain's success in improving human life experience has led to an explosion in population, roundly 80 million additional people this year and 5 billion in the last 50 years, so we now approach 8 billion. With the exception of the developed world, all those people want to use more energy and so, inevitably, the climate warms and the seas rise. Ultimately, our species will survive (unless AI gets us) as population and climate find an equilibrium, but getting there, likely by pruning the population, will be horrific. It's depressing, and my former optimism was more fun. On a happier, more mundane level, I have enjoyed 20 years of retirement and we, Stephanie and I, along with our children and their families, are well and doing fine. Have fun at the reunion."

◀ **RUPERT HITZIG** is still working, he says, "For me it's fun. Beats golf." He is making videos on human empowerment, setting up his next movie (pirates and time travel), and loving the residuals from 50 years of shows and films. He is married to a warm, funny, generous woman, and proud of his boys and his two grandchildren. "Life is good, and I am so glad that I have so many friends and memories of my four years at Milton. Looking forward to an in-person reunion before our 70th."

1957

PHILIP RAND has missed the



Sissel Falck-Jorgensen '59 with "the light of her life"—two-year-old Saga, her great-granddaughter. She says nothing can stop them from playing, mostly on FaceTime.

recent leaps aboard low-cost airliners, sniffing concerts, expositions, and operas. In the past, he enjoyed a trip of less than a week for Köln, Amsterdam, Berlin, Copenhagen, Prague, and home. This year, he didn't venture beyond 5 km from home. Nonetheless, the panorama of Rome viewed from his terrace, reading, yoga, and development of computer operations all provide consolation.

1958

GEORGIA (GABI) BRADLEY ZABOROWSKI, a professor emerita at the Community College of Rhode Island, lives happily in Groton, Massachusetts, with Stan and two house cats. She

had cancer of the kidney, which resulted in kidney failure, but she has been on dialysis for a year and a half successfully administered at home. Because of arthritis, she has given up playing her harp, but has wonderful memories of performing. Their life is rich with happy memories and shared activities with children and grandchildren. Gabi sends her thanks to **Ted Wendell** for keeping the class connected and her best wishes to all her classmates.

1959

THOMAS "TIM" WILLIAMS and his wife, Mary, lived in Warren, Vermont, in Mad River Valley, before downsizing in 2009 to a

condo in Middlebury, Vermont. Tim became president of the condo association, and Mary sings in her church choir and the Middlebury Community Chorus. After 20 years of teaching skiing, Tim stopped last year. They look forward to downsizing again to a cottage at East View, a retirement community in Middlebury. During COVID, they miss travel opportunities and spend their days walking as much as possible and reading more than ever before. They are grateful their children and grandchildren remain healthy and safe, and send best wishes to their classmates, along with an invitation to contact them if ever in Middlebury.

◀ **SISSEL FALCK-JORGENSEN** writes that compared with other European countries, Norway has done fairly well during the pandemic, with strict regulations leading to few hospitalizations and deaths. Thanks to "oil money," relief packages have been fairly generous. Her husband, Finn, has Alzheimer's and lives in a nearby nursing home, where she can visit whenever she wants. "He lost his speech several years ago, so we mostly communicate by holding hands (against regulations) and looking into each other's eyes while smiling. His sad eyes, sometimes filled with tears, make me think he knows who I am." Their three children and their families, including five grandchildren (ages 11 to 32) and two great-grandchildren (ages two and six months), also live in the Oslo



SPOTLIGHT

New Hampshire State Legislator Retires

After 30 years as an elected official in New Hampshire politics, **MARTHA FULLER CLARK '60** announced in 2020 she was stepping down as a member of the New Hampshire Senate. Throughout her time in office, she was a strong advocate for affordable health care, quality education, women's rights, and environmental protections. Since 2012, Clark represented District 21, which covers several of New Hampshire's seacoast communities, including her hometown of Portsmouth. Clark was a member of the New Hampshire House of Representatives from 1990 through 2002 and a state senator representing District 24 from 2004 to 2010. "There have been no stronger voices for the health and welfare of New Hampshire families, women's equality, and our environment than Senator Martha Fuller Clark," U.S. Senator Jean Shaheen of New Hampshire said at the time of Clark's announcement. For the past 13 years, Clark has been a representative of the state party on the Democratic National Committee and she will continue to serve as vice-chair of the New Hampshire Democratic Party.

area. The light of her life is two-year-old Saga, her great-grandchild, and she says nothing can stop them from playing, mostly on FaceTime. "I feel privileged living in Norway. I pray that all my Milton classmates and their families will manage through this difficult period." She looks forward, more than ever before, to the next reunion.

PHIL KINNICUTT and Marcia Schoeller put together a family Christmas card for 2020 with the headline "Quite A Year!" As they were sending the cards out in late November, they were somehow exposed to, and tested positive for, COVID-19. They were put in quarantine for several weeks with mild symptoms, and when Phil wrote (in early December), they were hoping for a speedy recovery for Christmas.

MARY PROCTER and her husband, Bill, have enjoyed retreating several times to their house in southern Vermont, "where it's beautiful and calm." They describe their home in D.C. as calmer than before the pandemic—streets are often empty, and kids are bicycling with parents everywhere. Mary and Bill had a brush with COVID in April, and then tested negative in May. They have been giving blood plasma with antibodies through the Red Cross.

RICO TUDOR is in Hawaii, where the pandemic has shattered the local tourist-based economy. He and his wife, Marcia, are hunkering down with masks

and experiencing what he calls Social-Distancing Syndrome. Marcia has suffered from Parkinson's for the past five years, and Rico is a full-time caregiver, but despite it all, he writes, "Hawaii remains the most beautiful and livable (without politics and the economy) place to live."

DEBORAH WEBSTER ROGERS collided with another dancer in late 2019, fell hard, and broke her pelvis. "Not hip-joint, no surgery, phew!" She has since moved into a retirement community and says that her daughters, "bless them, nearly split a seam helping me. The staff members are aces, and bend every effort for our health and sanity." She sends her greetings from Iowa to all.

FAITH MORROW WILLIAMS lost her husband of 54 years, Stephen, when he got the coronavirus in May and passed away in August. "I feel very lucky to have lived with him that long, but very sad not to have him now."

FRED BUTLER is usually busy as a docent at the Metropolitan Museum of Art with two biweekly tours: "Highlights and Art of India" and "Himalayas and Southeast Asia." All tours have been canceled since March, but Fred writes, "I feel like an 86-year-old friend of mine, though I am 78." He is working on his memoirs and has already come up with the opening sentence: "I was born lucky, and things got better after that." Last summer and weekends



SPOTLIGHT

Glass Exhibition Depicts 21st-Century Challenges

In *Walking the Void*, glass artists **PHILIP BALDWIN '66** and Monica Guggisberg confront some of today's most pressing global challenges. The exhibition, which opened in June 2020 at the Glasmuseet Ebeltoft in Ebeltoft, Denmark, represents, says Baldwin, a shift in their artistic practice "from exploring the aesthetic possibilities of glass to a focus on more symbolic content and a profound commitment to the political and environmental challenges of the 21st century." Continuing until April 2021, the exhibition presents a series of thought-provoking installations, which include a timeline in objects of mankind's time on Earth, from the last Ice Age to the present. "This is probably the most cutting-edge effort we have made in our 40 years of art and glass making," says Baldwin, "and, as it happens, the exhibition relates directly and unequivocally to the issues facing our civilization as we speak." A book about the exhibition, published last fall by the museum, includes more than 100 images, along with an essay by thinker and environmentalist Dougald Hine.

In Memoriam

1940–1949

Frederick T. Ernst '41
 Rosemary Kunardt Lang '43
 Nancy Thayer Hilton '44
 Sidney M. Burwell '45
 William B. Carey '45
 Garrison N. Valentine '46
 John Codman, Jr. '47

1950–1959

Grace Farrar Knowlton '50
 Alice Hoag Kurland '51
 Roger S. Cortesi '52
 Russell S. Beede '53
 Lindsey H. Durant '54
 C. S. Heard, Jr. '54
 Harold Janeway '54
 Daniel J. McSweeney, Jr. '54
 John L. Adams '55
 Lawrence I. Grinnell '55
 G. A. Marlow '55
 Frank S. Yeomans '57
 Francis S. Hill, Jr. '58
 Helen Rogerson Haddad '59

1960–1969

C. D. Bergfeld II '61
 Benjamin H. Gannett '61
 Julian C. Hartzell '61
 David W. Lewis, Jr. '61
 Elizabeth K. Manny '64

1970–1979

Kevin J. Curtin '77

1980–1989

Andrew M. Bodman '83

2000–2019

Joshua B. Pressman '00

Faculty & Staff

Nancy W. Faulkner
 Richard L. Griffin
 Joy Hoffman
 Philip H. Tobey '58

ALUMNI, FACULTY, AND STAFF WHO PASSED JUNE 16, 2020–DECEMBER 15, 2020. TO NOTIFY US OF A DEATH, PLEASE CONTACT THE DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS OFFICE AT ALUMNI@MILTON.EDU OR 617-898-2447.

are spent in a compound in Dutchess County, New York, in the mid-Hudson Valley. Fred and his wife, Marie-Claude Gervais (MC), stay in one residence, while their two daughters and their families stay in the main house. They also spent time in Maine last summer before returning to New York City in the fall. Fred is unsure when tours will resume at the Met, but he looks forward to celebrating his 50th wedding anniversary in October with family and friends. They also look forward to more of the same: tennis, golf, book club, and work on several non-profit boards.

CHRISTOPHER BARINA KAISER and his wife, Martha, moved to Kalamazoo, Michigan, a few years ago for better access to trains and planes after spending 40 years living and raising their three sons in Holland, Michigan. With COVID, they are “sheltering in place” and go out only for weekly church services, medical appointments, and trips to the grocery store. “The downer is not feeling free to meet with friends for dinner or even just beers and conversation. On the plus side, however, we are catching up with gardening, home improvements, and—for me—publishing a few articles that I hadn’t gotten around to finishing before.”

L. DAVID BROWN is recovering from the 2019 replacement of both knees. He returned to the tennis court last summer and is currently fantasizing about ski-



ing this winter. He and his wife, Jane, continue to walk in the woods, volunteer, and work with local government.

JOHN COBURN shares that in Florida, they have experienced a slightly different impact from COVID than others. John and his wife, Stephanie, are still busy in real estate sales in Bonita Springs, with increased business he attributes to flight money moving from the high-taxed states of the Northeast to their tax-friendly state of Florida, with the bonus of great weather for outdoor living. People have discovered that they can successfully conduct business from home and avoid the hassle of commuting. “Personally, I feel it can add a few good years to one’s life!” John plays tennis three times a week, shorter ses-

sions than usual to allow for the courts to be cleaned between matches. His book club, consisting of seven men, now conducts its monthly meeting on Zoom for most members, while some attend in person—all masked. John and Stephanie’s normal trip to Aruba was replaced by a trip to Gatlinburg and Asheville for a week. John sends his hope that all his classmates stay safe from COVID’s harm, and they welcome visits. They are eagerly awaiting Red Sox spring training; **PHIL KINNICUTT** and **ACE AMES** have promised to attend a game or two.

1962

DINA ROBERTS works as director of advancement, and is involved in a million dollar campaign to

Opposite: William Marks '71 (right) advises civil rights attorney Ben Crump (left) on the Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Jacob Blake cases.

raise a barn to house English sheep. She is also reviving her well-trained Milton French skills in a French cinema class at UMass Boston and finishing a third book, a novel about the healing power of friendships. Her husband, **BOB BRAY '56**, will celebrate his 65th reunion with classmates in 2021.

JUDY PERRY GUGGENHIME is still on the West Coast, though sometimes wonders why, with the empty city streets, the absolute rush to buy houses, the fires, electricity shutoffs, and air quality. Judy still can't get fire insurance on their house in the country. Through it all, she shared it has become obvious which parts of our government and communities need better leadership and which ones are functional. She and Rich are still working full-time and their 14 grandchildren are thriving. She sends her best wishes to all.

1963

FRED "DERIC" JENNINGS is still writing, thinking, consulting, and fishing. "Indeed, I plan to die with my (wading) boots on!" Fred had six essays published in the *Journal of Philosophical Economics* recently and is working on an economics treatise he started writing more than 30 years ago. He still does litigation work, mostly for independent collision repair shops that still have the courage to resist auto insurers' abuse of market power

against them. His practice as a saltwater fly-fishing guide in Ipswich is still flourishing, although he's scaled back in recent years. Given the recent election, he's been thinking a lot more about the School's motto, "Dare to Be True." "What does it say about our social culture that being honest takes courage?"

1968

DOUG HENDREN, MD, MBA, and his wife, Nancy, are weathering COVID at home in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. It's hard being so far from their children, Saragrace (Bellingham, WA) and Jeremiah (Munich), but they are fortunate to have plenty of room and natural beauty. Retired from orthopedics, Doug describes himself as a climate activist. "We've just gotten our city council to pass a clean energy resolution for our municipal electricity. And I keep recording original 'climate music' on musicalscalpel.com. Painless education! Let's pass on a world worth living in!"

1969

Many of the Girls' School graduates of the class of '69 sent well wishes to former music teacher **JEAN MCCAWLEY**, who turned 94 in November. The class remains grateful to Jean for the impact she had on their lives. The Development and Alumni Relations office heard from a neighbor of Jean's, who reports that she was

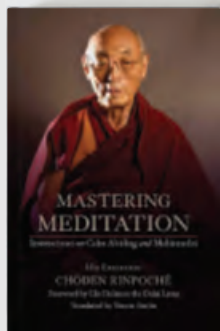


SPOTLIGHT

A Family Celebrates Its Musical Legacy

Three Tributes is perfect for anyone who appreciates the euphonious sounds of a chamber orchestra. The recently released recording features three original scores from award-winning composers performed by world-class musicians. The works were commissioned by musicians and brothers **JAMES FREEMAN '57** and **ROBERT FREEMAN '53**. Both have had long careers in music—in recording, publishing, and teaching. Robert earned his PhD in music history at Princeton and went on to teach at MIT. He also served as director at the Eastman School, president of the New England Conservatory, and dean of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Texas at Austin. James taught at Swarthmore College for 37 years, serving as departmental chair for 16 years. He founded Orchestra 2001 in Philadelphia and currently serves as artistic director at Chamber Orchestra First Editions.

The Freemans commissioned *Three Tributes* to honor their family's musical legacy, which spans three generations. They hope it will inspire others to undertake similar projects for future generations to enjoy.



TENZIN GACHE '01
(BRIAN ROITER)

Mastering Meditation: Instructions on Calm Abiding and Mahāmudrā

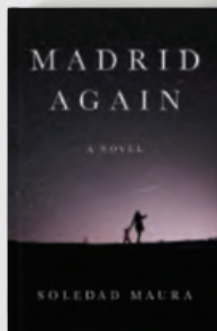
Tenzin Gache translated *Mastering Meditation*, which is a compilation of the Buddhist teachings of Choden Rinpoche. Rinpoche was a celebrated scholar, a debate partner with the Dalai Lama, and an accomplished yogi. Gache also wrote the introduction and did the annotations. The Dalai Lama wrote the foreword. Gache is a student of Choden Rinpoche and Lama Zopa Rinpoche and a Western International Mahayana Institute monk in the geshe studies program at the Sera Je Monastery in India.



CLAIRE MESSUD '83

Kant's Little Prussian Head and Other Reasons Why I Write

Claire Messud turns from fiction to writing about her life and thoughts in her latest book, *Kant's Little Prussian Head and Other Reasons Why I Write*, a collection of 26 personal essays. Messud reflects on a childhood move from her Connecticut home to Australia; the complex relationship between her modern Canadian mother and a fiercely single French Catholic aunt; and a trip to Beirut, where her father had once lived, while he was dying. Messud is a recipient of Guggenheim and Radcliffe fellowships and the Strauss Living Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Author of six works of fiction, including *The Burning Girl*, her most recent novel, she lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with her family.



SOLEDAD FOX MAURA '86

Madrid Again

In her debut novel, *Madrid Again*, Soledad Fox Maura presents a modern-day bildungsroman. The story features a young woman on a quest to discover her family history as she is torn between Spain and the United States, the old world and the new. Told with humor, candor, and grit, *Madrid Again* is a highly original novel and an homage to the haunting power of history and how it shapes the identities of two generations of women. Fox Maura is a professor of Spanish and comparative literature at Williams College. She is a former Fulbright Senior Research Scholar and has published three books and many articles on Spanish and French literature, culture, and history. Her research interests include memoir, biography, the Spanish Civil War, exile, and Spanish-American relations.



ARTHUR ULLIAN '57

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John...and Me: Growing Up Jewish in a Christian World

Following a successful career and a life-changing bicycling accident that left him paralyzed at age 51, Arthur Ullian realized that not only did life in a wheelchair make him feel "different," but he had always felt like an outsider. This sent him on a multi-year research project investigating anti-Semitism from the New Testament to the Inquisition to the Holocaust. He saw that over the course of his life, he had, paradoxically, internalized the prevailing Christian view of the "Jewish character" and unconsciously attempted to replicate the social and material trappings of those who excluded him. Following his accident, in 1991, he used his business and entrepreneurial skills to advocate for increased federal funding of biomedical research, including testimony at congressional hearings. He has received numerous awards and honors for his service. He is married with one son and two grandchildren.



EMILY FRANKLIN '90
P'17 '22

Tell Me How You Got Here

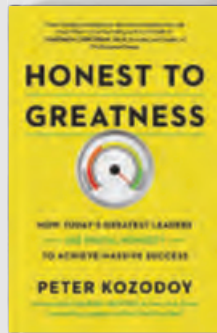
This is Emily Franklin's debut poetry collection. She's the author of more than 16 young-adult books, including *The Half-Life of Planets* (nominated for YALSA's Best Book of the Year) and *Tessa Masterson Will Go to Prom* (named to the 2013 Rainbow List). A former chef, Franklin wrote the cookbook-memoir *Too Many Cooks: Kitchen Adventures with 1 Mom, 4 Kids, and 102 New Recipes* to chronicle a year of new foods, family meals, hilarity, and heartache around the table. Her work has appeared in the *New York Times*, *The Cincinnati Review*, and *Shenandoah*. She lives with her husband and four kids outside Boston.



ANNIE JEAN-BAPTISTE '06

Building For Everyone: Expand Your Market With Design Practices From Google's Product Inclusion Team

Establishing diverse and inclusive organizations is an economic imperative for every industry. Any business that isn't reaching a diverse market is missing out on enormous revenue potential and the opportunity to build products that suit their users' core needs. Google Head of Product Inclusion Annie Jean-Baptiste writes about the inclusive design process used at Google to create user-centric, award-winning, and profitable products. She outlines how those practices look in industries beyond tech with fascinating case studies. Readers will learn the key strategies and step-by-step processes for inclusive product design that limits risk and increases profitability. Jean-Baptiste currently serves as an intrapreneur-in-residence at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education.



PETER KOZODOY '04

Honest to Greatness: How Today's Greatest Leaders Use Brutal Honesty to Achieve Massive Success

In *Honest to Greatness*, Peter Kozodoy describes why honesty is always the best policy in running a business. He cites examples of how the decisions made at major companies led to the firms' success or demise. "Honesty is a practice you undertake as a lifelong pursuit of being, rather than an ad hoc criterion weighing on a certain decision," writes Kozodoy in the introduction. "Honest leaders are able to pivot on a dime, recruit the best talent in their industry, create innovative products and services, earn outsized profits, create raving-fan cultures, scale their revenues, and create drool-worthy market returns. By contrast, those who brush honesty aside as a nice-to-have soft skill or dandy core value are risking millions or billions of dollars, public disgrace, and even jail time, as we'll see in some high-profile cases of dishonesty."



SARAH SHUN-LIEN BYNUM '92

Likes

In *Likes*, a short-story collection by Sarah Shun-Lien Bynum, readers are provided an up-close look at contemporary life and the richly drawn characters who inhabit it: the struggles of a television scriptwriter, a woman's response to her best friends' divorce, and a father's desire to connect with his 12-year-old daughter. Bethanne Patrick writes in the *Washington Post*: "Shun-lien Bynum allows her characters to believe they've seen the truth but shows her readers that the characters—like us—rarely get it right. *Likes* is a short-story collection you should read slowly, but it's so good, each story at such a high-wire level, that you'll wind up tearing through it and wishing for more."



DAVID SCLAR '98

Workplace Strategies for Technology Lawyers: 36 Practical Tips on How to Communicate More Effectively, Work More Efficiently, and Give Better Advice as In-House Counsel at a Tech Company

Workplace Strategies for Technology Lawyers provides on-the-ground tips for in-house lawyers, outside counsel, and law students considering work in-house, especially at a tech company. Recently featured in an article in *Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly*, Sclar's latest publication covers everything from giving good advice to managing workload to being an excellent partner to various key business teams. Natasha Kohne, a partner at Atkin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, writes: "After 20 years of practicing law, I found myself nodding my head at every turn. This is exactly what law school doesn't teach you and is not intuitive. This is so much more than a 'what they don't teach you in law school' book."



SAMUEL MYERS '83 P '23
CO-AUTHORED WITH HOWARD FRUMKIN

Planetary Health: Protecting Nature to Protect Ourselves

Planetary Health: Protecting Nature to Protect Ourselves introduces its readers to an emerging discipline that shows how climate change, biodiversity loss, scarcity of land and fresh water, pollution, and other factors are degrading Earth's natural systems. The book addresses the wide-ranging ill effects of these threats—from food insecurity and poor nutrition to dislocation and conflict—and provides strategies for combating them, from controlling toxic exposures to investing in clean energy, improving urban design, and more. According to Gina McCarthy, the White House National Climate Advisor, "With digestible science and a wealth of historic and political context, this book ... leaves us with a sense of hope given the solutions in hand and the proven resilience of the human spirit."

delighted to receive messages from her former students.

1971

FRED AMES became a grandfather on March 22, 2020, to Lucy Peabody Gardner Lydon, who shares a birthday with her uncle, **SAM AMES '11**.

WILLIAM MARKS is chief marketing officer and the senior advisor to civil rights attorney Ben Crump, and works with him on the Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Jacob Blake cases. He also seeks justice for the children of Flint, Michigan, victimized by toxic water and environmental racism.

► **SYLVIE PERON** is co-editor of *Ultimate Jet* and *Helicopter Industry* magazines. A former editor-in-chief of *Altitudes*, a lifestyle magazine dedicated to business aviation, Sylvie joined the *Ultimate Jet* media team in September 2019. Previously, she was editor-in-chief of *Yachting World France*, in Cannes. "I live on the French Riviera, up in the hills in Fayence between Cannes and St. Tropez, a scenic area well-known for its gliding. I am still active in journalism, co-editing *Ultimate Jet*, an online luxury lifestyle business aviation magazine." Unfortunately, in early November 2020, France was again put under lockdown, so she is super careful. With asthma, Sylvie is limiting her trips to shops and the farmers' markets. She misses visits with



Left to right, Don Brennan, Jay Williams, Ed Giandomenico, Doug Lamont, and Paul Varney, all Class of '73, at the first annual Varney/Wells tournament at the Southers Marsh executive course in Plymouth, Mass.

friends and hopes this is behind us soon.

1973

▲ **DON BRENNAN, JAY WILLIAMS, ED GIANDOMENICO, DOUG LAMONT,** and **PAUL VARNEY** gathered on a mid-October day with a clear sky and light breeze for a round of golf at the first annual Varney/Wells tournament at the Southers Marsh executive course in Plymouth, Massachusetts. They noted, "Five of the top athletes from the Milton class of 1973 getting together for the first time in quite a while, what

could possibly go wrong?" Well, plenty, actually.

Doug Lamont writes: "It all started on the first tee when Donnie Brennan skulled his first drive and then an illegal mulligan, both hard left, and the ball went into a bright red cranberry bog. 'I don't get it, I was playing great last week,' Don blurted, as his foursome partners looked on in horror. To add insult to injury, Paul Varney gave him the business from the deck overlooking the tee.

"It didn't get much better as Eddie dribbled his first shot into the pond on the right. 'If you're drinking your cranberry juice

at Thanksgiving and find a ball in it, it's probably mine,' Eddie joked later, when several of his and the group's balls landed up in the Ocean Spray. Eventually the team got it together and started hitting most of the par threes on the back nine, including Eddie rolling in a 35-foot putt on the 18th hole. Doug says it was a humbling experience for the guys who were on teams that routinely routed Nobles in football, soccer, hockey, basketball, baseball, and lacrosse. (Then again, he says, Milton didn't have a golf team back in those days, so that's their excuse and they're sticking to it.)"

Sylvie Peron '71 is co-editor of Ultimate Jet and Helicopter Industry magazines.

A great time was had by all, and they offer special thanks to Paul for putting together a memorable afternoon.

1975

JONATHAN FOSTER has lived in Los Angeles since 1999 after 20 years in NYC working in finance after graduating from Penn in 1979. He's been married to Laurie for 34 years, and they have three children: Michael (32) is a renowned experimental jazz musician in NYC, Charlie (30) is a lawyer in LA, and Elizabeth (25) is a schoolteacher in NYC. Jonathan is the president and CEO of Angeles Wealth Management, a bicoastal wealth management firm. His lifelong passion for playing squash (high school, college, and World Professional Tour) has opened doors for him his whole life, both personally and professionally, as well as kept him in good shape. Jonathan is actively involved in supporting the arts and social justice causes, including the founding of the Angeles Art Fund, which supports Los Angeles nonprofit arts organizations and artists with a social justice bent.

1979

WILLIAM LOBKOWICZ shares that they are all doing well in Prague, where they have lived for the past 30 years and raised their three children, William (25), Ileana (23,) and Sophia (19). They continue to make the Lobko-

wicz Collections available to students and scholars through their museums and expanding educational programming (now virtual, including tours of the palaces and castles with family members every week). Their current project is to reconstruct and create the Antonin Dvorak birth house museum in the town of Nelahozeves, just north of Prague. They are also creating a library and study center there on the grounds of a 16th-century castle of the same name. William and his family have been pleased to welcome many Milton grads and especially the Glee Club and Milton Orchestra in the past, and look forward to more opportunities in 2021.

1984

NICK ULMAN is working on augmented-reality electronic contact lenses at Mojo Vision in Saratoga, California.

1987

ROBERT YOUNG has been guiding his New York City-based architectural firm, Robert Young Architects, through COVID-19 by adapting his studio's design process, using technology to maintain collaborative energy among architects, clients, and consultants. The design requirements for new projects are reflecting a new reality, with people sharing spaces in new ways, with a tension between separate and communal activities.



1990

LAWRENCE SCHWARTZ shares that a 2020 bright spot is their son, Jacob, starting as a Class IV student this year. Highlights include Jacob's participation on the football team and the Class IV play (Lawrence is thankful for that Milton tradition). He and his family moved closer to the School and are enjoying weekend hikes in Blue Hills. He looks forward to seeing everyone for their postponed 30th reunion.

ALEXIS GREEVES is living in Minneapolis with David and their two daughters. They share a duplex with their best friends, who have four boys; the six kids get to play a great deal, "the high point of

this dreaded pandemic." Alexis continues to provide mental health support to children and now also adults. "Being fluent in American Sign Language and immersed in deaf culture for many years, we do quite a bit of trauma and relational work for the deaf community, as well as our local communities. Staying in touch with my Milton friends has been a saving grace during this difficult year. Can't wait until we can go back to giving hugs again!"

EMILY FRANKLIN P'17 '22 began publishing poetry at Milton. "While I have published lots of fiction, I am thrilled to announce that my debut poetry collection will be published February 2021 by Terrapin Books."



JD Jaramillo '16, left, with Revere Mayor Brian Arrigo

SPOTLIGHT

Our Man at City Hall

Following his 2020 graduation from Columbia University, **JUAN DIEGO “JD” JARAMILLO '16** returned to his home city of Revere, Massachusetts, to serve on the staff of Mayor Brian Arrigo. During his summer and winter breaks from college, Jaramillo had interned in Arrigo’s office. Revere is a small coastal city located five miles north of Boston.

Now a full-time public servant, Jaramillo, the son of Colombian immigrants, told the *Revere Journal* that Arrigo’s administration is working to modernize city services and better serve the city’s diverse population. “There’s definitely a deficit in terms of what aspects of the population are represented at the government level, and that’s ideally not how it should be,” he said. “Anyone from the city should feel comfortable coming into City Hall the same way that some people are already empowered to do so.”

Hannah Lerman '91 and her children, Spencer (11) and Piper (4), are riding out the pandemic on Kaua'i.



1991

▲ **HANNAH M. LERMAN** writes, “Aloha! I hope everyone is doing as well as can be these days. I am riding out the pandemic on Kaua’i, and doing real estate development here. I hope to see many of you at our 30th Reunion!”

1994

▲ **KWAKU ASARE** has spent the past nine years as a traditional ruler living in Ghana, West Africa. He visits the U.S. regularly, usually once a year. He also has published two books, *The Redemption of Africa* and an autobiography, *The Grooming of an African Monarch*.

▲ **THERESA CONDUAH** has relocated to California and joined the law firm of Haynes and Boone, LLP as a partner in its Orange County office. Theresa focuses her practice on intellectual property and brand protection

matters. Prior to joining Haynes and Boone, Theresa was in-house counsel at Toyota and United Airlines. She lives in Los Angeles and would love to hear from Milton folks in the southern California area.

▶ **LAURA NEWMARK** has connected with Milton alum **TAD HILLS '81**, author and illustrator of *Duck and Goose* and other children’s books, over her son, Milo, and his love of art. In fact, Tad gave Milo his first commission at age four: a brownie from the cookie shop where they met in exchange for a portrait. Last summer, Laura’s family launched “Portraits by Milo,” in which people could submit photographs for Milo to draw in exchange for a modest donation to an arts education nonprofit run by Milo’s art teacher. Fifty portraits and \$1,400 later, Tad commissioned Milo to draw a picture of MSNBC’s Steve Kornacki at his U.S. map. The profits of all Kornacki prints sold were sent to support Democrats in the Georgia Senate runoff election.

STEVE 'ELECTION 2020



MIL



Laura Newmark '94 and her family launched "Portraits by Milo," to which people could submit photographs for Milo to draw in exchange for a modest donation to an arts education nonprofit run by his art teacher. Left, Milo's depiction of MSNBC's Steve Kornacki at his U.S. election map.

1997

PETER CURRAN has worked at Blair Academy, a boarding school in New Jersey, for the past 10 years and was recently named Blair's 17th Head of School. He and his wife, Sarah, have 12-year-old twins, Toby and Grace. He is looking forward to connecting with classmates at upcoming alumni events.



1998

▲ **GABRIELLE A. JACQUET, MD, MPH**, sends her thanks for wearing your masks, social distancing, and flattening the curve. She works hard on the front lines as an emergency physician at Boston Medical Center and at the Boston Healthcare for the Homeless HOPE Hospital.

ETHAN KERR has been busy working as an anti-racist



facilitator and consultant. He's grateful to be useful in plugging so many white people into the BIPOC-led movement for collective liberation. For more information, visit EmbodiedEquityProject.com.

REBECCA WANGH is living in Newton, Massachusetts, with her husband, daughter, and son. She teaches English language learners remotely in the Martha's Vineyard school system. As a family, they're building a gallery and teaching space to bring art to the local community. She also co-founded and runs a program called EveryBody Signs, which provides American Sign Language classes to people of all ages and abilities.

1999

CAROLINE KINSOLVING put her acting career on pause in March, when she retreated to the woods of Connecticut. Since then, she has taught one to five hours of yoga every day. Her CK Yoga for Good classes have no fee, but a suggested donation. Students unable to pay for a normal class in a studio pay what they can. All donations are pooled at the end of each class and donated to charities. As of December, Caroline has donated more than \$28,000

through her CK Yoga for Good classes and offered more than 350 free classes. When Caroline is not on the yoga mat, she's appreciating her rescue dog.

Twins **JOANNA OSTREM** and **KRISTIN OSTREM DONELAN** both welcomed new babies last winter. Joanna's daughter, Sophie, was born December 19, 2019, and Kristin's son, Lawton, was born January 30, 2020. Lawton joins his brother, Tommy, and sister, Winnie.

2001

▼ In her new book, *Thoreau's Religion: Walden Woods, Social*



Milton Magazine

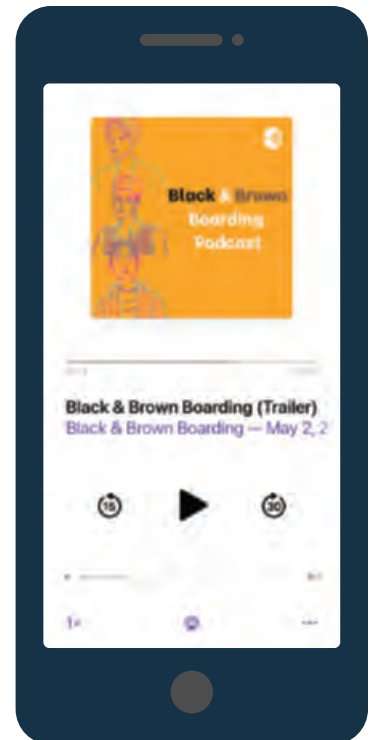
Justice, and the Politics of Asceticism, an interpretation of Henry David Thoreau's most famous book, *Walden*, **ALDA BALTHROP-LEWIS** does not treat Walden Woods as a lonely wilderness but demonstrates that Thoreau's ascetic life was a form of religious practice dedicated to cultivating a just, multispecies community. The book makes an important contribution to scholarship in religious studies, political theory, English, environmental studies, and critical theory by offering the first sustained reading of Thoreau's religiously motivated politics. The environmentalist and author Bill McKibben writes of *Thoreau's Religion*: "This beautifully written volume offers a wonderful depiction of Thoreau as a person and a thinker for this time and place; really, everyone who's interested in his story, and in the American story, should read it and reflect on it."

2002

ELSIE WHITE writes that she is now a biodynamic craniosacral therapist and teacher and astrologer. In 2017, she married Peter Madsen, and this summer they had a baby girl, Anna Rose Cole Madsen.

2003

LAUREN MURPHY and her husband, Scott Pullen, welcomed their first child, Jacob Evan Pullen, to the family on May 24, 2020.



2005

COURTNEY STOCK and **RACHEL KAY '08** were included in a recent issue of *Boston Art Review*. They shared different perspectives on the arts and how the pandemic has impacted the field.

► **JASON YEAGER** has been weathering the pandemic inside his Harlem apartment with his fiancée, Julie Benko, and their cat, Thelonious Monk. He has been giving weekly livestream concerts from his apartment on Instagram and Facebook on Mondays at 8:30 p.m. East-

Milton Academy Board of Trustees 2020-2021

ern, playing increasingly chilly outdoor gigs around Manhattan, and continuing to teach piano (remotely for now) at Berklee College of Music and the New York Jazz Academy. His album, *New Songs of Resistance*, appeared on the first-round Recording Academy ballot for the 2020 Grammy Awards. Jason and Julie will be wed (finally!) in June 2021.

◀ ELISE LOCKAMY-KASSIM

launched a pandemic podcast, *Black and Brown Boarding*, which features highlights from her experience at Milton. The podcast is currently available on Spotify, Google Podcasts, and Apple Podcasts. Visit black-brownboarding.com to learn more.

2006

SAMUEL GREENUP and his wife, Logan Fleck, welcomed their first son, Silas Harrison Greenup, on April 2, 2020.

2008

During the pandemic, **MOLLY KRAUSE** and **IAN HALPERN '06** achieved an impressive 152-day streak playing *Words With Friends*.

MADDY HOBBS and her husband, Andrew Alspaugh, welcomed their first child, Asher Cecilia Alspaugh, in San Francisco on July 11, 2020. **Alyson (Friedensohn) Watson** is her godmother.

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Luis M. Viceira P '16 '19		Belmont	MA
Dorothy Altman Weber '60 P '04		Boston	MA
Sylvia P. Westphal P '18 '21 '25 '27 '27		Boston	MA
Ronnell L. Wilson '93		Jersey City	NJ
Kevin K. Yip '83 P '16 '23		Hong Kong	China

NKOTQ*

*New Kids on the Quad

2009

WILLIAM YU was recently selected by the Sundance Institute as an Episodic Makers Lab Fellow for his half-hour dramedy pilot *Good Boy*. Based in Los Angeles, he continues to advocate for greater Asian representation in media. He is represented by Bellevue Productions and the Agency for Performing Arts (APA). Connect with him on Twitter at @its_willyu.

2010

BEVERLY LEON, CEO of Local Civics, shared that her organization has worked with more than 1,000 middle and high school students and engaged more than 50-plus educators in civics learning and action. Fellow Milton Academy grad **NIA ATKINS '17** has been a strategy intern with Beverly since last April.

2012

GORDON BATCHELDER writes from sunny San Francisco, where he counts the days until he can snowboard again in snowy Tahoe. In the meantime, he keeps himself active by participating in global, national, and local happenings as well as by working from home as a user experience analyst at Facebook. He also taught college students about the tech scene for a semester at

the start-up Adjacent Academies, specifically focusing on UX design and career development. If you read this and ever feel compelled to (re)connect, do not hesitate to contact him! Until then, he hopes you are taking good care of yourselves and your loved ones during these unusual times.

JONATHAN FRANCO is currently living in the Boston area and attending Harvard Medical School. He is excited to announce he will be graduating in May of 2021 with a doctor of medicine degree, and is currently applying to orthopedic surgery residency programs, where he will train for five years. Stay tuned for the location!

2013

OLIVIA ATWOOD accidentally created a matchmaking service for Millennials called Liv's Love Pool after losing all of her (six) odd jobs; the theater industry going up in flames; and her beloved spin studio, Flywheel Sports, sinking like a ship in the COVID ocean. She would love to see some more Milton folks in the Pool, so dive in! She'll match you with the "creme de la creme." Olivia also appeared in several animated shorts, most notably in the video *Vulture*, named as one of the funniest videos of June 2020. Olivia says she hopes to return to New York City soon and to start performing again, on the streets if she has to.



Anna Rose Cole Madsen, born to Elsie White '02 and husband Peter Madsen last summer



Rupert Hitzig '56 and granddaughter Bridget

ALUMNI SHARE PHOTOS OF
ADDITIONS TO THEIR FAMILIES



*Asher Cecilia
Alspaugh, born to
Maddy Hobbs '08
and husband
Andrew Alspaugh
in July*



*Jacob Evan Pullen
born to Lauren Murphy
'03 and husband
Scott Pullen in May*



*Samuel Greenup '06
with Silas Harrison
Greenup*



*From left: Sophie, daughter of Joanna
Ostrem '99, with Tommy, Winnie, and Lawton,
children of Kristin Ostrem Donelan '99*

The Joy of Creating

ADVICE RECEIVED AS A YOUNG GIRL HELPS **GRACE CHAN MCKIBBEN '86** WEATHER THE HARD TIMES.

I PULLED OUT THE basket of chunky yarn tucked into a corner of my living room and began to knit. My mind, still reeling from a full day of Zoom meetings, soon began to settle into the rhythm of the stitches I was forming with my giant knitting needles: knit, purl, knit, purl. The repetitive motion quieted my mind and focused my attention on the blanket I was making.

After adding a few rows to my knitting, I set it aside and went back to work on my computer.

One of the strongest memories I have of growing up in a Catholic school in Hong Kong is Friday morning assembly. Sister Jeanne Houlihan, the school principal, always had a word of wisdom to share with the students. Tough and inspiring, but warm and caring, Sister Jeanne would have made a great priest or politician in a different life. But for several generations of students at Maryknoll Convent School, she was mother, leader, counselor, and confidant all rolled into one.

A Friday assembly address that I remember most vividly was Sister Jeanne telling us that whenever we felt alone, or sad, or frustrated, we just needed to do something creative, whether it was writing a poem, baking a cake, or drawing a picture. “Doing something creative activates a different part of your brain,” Sister Jeanne said, “and believe me, you will feel better afterwards, and be able to get on with what you have to do next.”

All these years later, I have taken this practical advice to heart. When I get stuck working on a spreadsheet, or a grant proposal is rejected, or I’m frustrated after a difficult

meeting, I often turn to the various craft projects I have in progress—or I bake a cake or play the piano.

The year 2020 has been challenging for many. For me, the year started with my father passing away suddenly one January morning in Hong Kong. A hard-working and principled man, my dad was my hero. Like other Chinese fathers, he usually expressed his love in practical help. While we didn’t always agree, dad was unwavering in his support of his children. He was a naturally talented artist who could pick up a pencil and quickly draw

anything. When I was little, he was the parent who helped the children finish art projects, especially me, the least artistic of the children. Many times this year I found myself thinking about my dad and feeling sad. Often I would turn to my kindergarten-level doodling to remind myself of him and to try just a little harder to develop my artistic skills.

The year 2020 has been difficult

for my work life as well. I lead a policy and advocacy organization whose mission is to civically engage the immigrant community in Chicago’s Chinatown and to amplify the community’s voice and power. Early in 2020, fueled by fear of the coronavirus and the negative rhetoric from politicians, anti-Asian sentiments resulted in a significant loss of business in Chinatown. As COVID-19 raged on, our office shifted to remote work. This made outreach and engagement even harder, as we struggled to overcome barriers imposed by technology, language, and governmental structures. We needed to help our community access assistance programs, participate in the decennial census, and learn how to vote remotely.

Between Zoom meetings, I made some impressive-looking sourdough bread and cupcakes and also finished more rows of the chunky-yarn blanket.

The pandemic has shown us that the systems we have relied on are fragile. In the middle of being isolated and anxious, creativity provides a way for us to make practical meaning out of life. Whether it’s making music or cooking, the creative process taps into our inner reserves, our human ability to make something beautiful out of nothing. It also takes us away from our immediate concerns and gives us hope. A difficult year, 2020 was also a year when we made new things out of old ingredients, and I look forward to more new creations in 2021.

GRACE CHAN MCKIBBEN '86 IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE COALITION FOR A BETTER CHINESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY, BASED IN CHICAGO'S CHINATOWN.

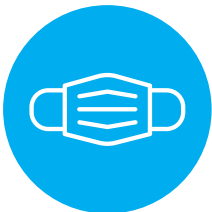


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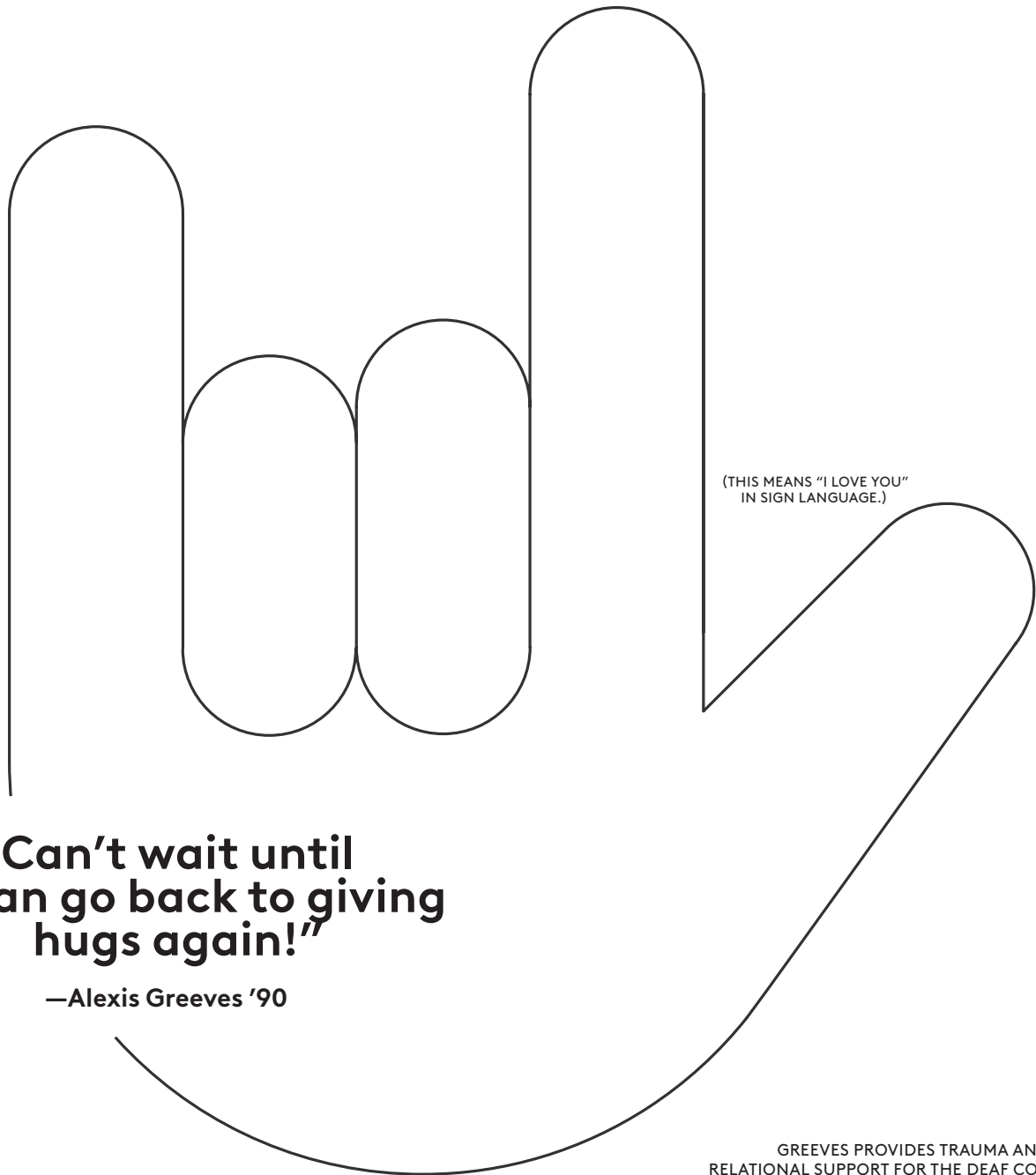


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hugs again!"**

—Alexis Greeves '90

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