

## *On the Road with Laurice Hwang* **AN INSIDER'S VIEW OF CHINA**

by Jeffrey Stanley

For the past five years, Middle School teacher **Laurice Hwang** has taught the story of *Red Scarf Girl*, a memoir set during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, to her fifth graders. This summer she experienced China firsthand with the author herself, **Ji-li Jiang**. This wasn't an official professional development excursion, but a spontaneous trip that Laurice fell into on her own. She knew from Ji-li Jiang's website that the author organized group tours to China. "The fifth graders read Ji-li Jiang's book every year. When they finish, they are always curious to find out more about her," she explained, "so we look at her website and write her letters."

Last spring Laurice included a letter of her own, inquiring whether space was still available for Ji-li's summer 2009 trip. "It was kind of a wild hope, and I wasn't really expecting her to reply, but a few days later I got a phone call asking if I was serious about wanting to go." Ji-li also

explained that she could spare Laurice the extra expense of a hotel room by sharing a room with her. It was a golden opportunity, so Laurice bought a plane ticket. "I don't think I've ever made a decision about traveling that quickly before." She admits she was a little intimidated about sharing a room with a famous author whose work she admires, "but she's so down-to-earth, friendly, generous, and funny, and such a lovely person, that I got over it pretty quickly."

There were ten people from all over the United States in the group, "mostly school people," said Laurice, whose family is from Taiwan. "We got to swap a lot of curriculum ideas and book recommendations. By the end of the trip it almost felt like we were a family," she said, adding that Ji-li was like their surrogate mom. "She was so thoughtful and accommodating and wanted us to have a great time and took really good care of us, ordering the food at every meal, helping people bargain in the market, let-



*Fifth grade teacher Laurice Hwang (center) with Ji-li Jiang and another travel companion in China this summer.*

ting me borrow her camera when mine ran out of batteries."

The trip, Laurice's first to China, wasn't all about sight-seeing. She explained that Ji-li is "totally fearless and always wants people to know the truth." When, during their trip, ethnic riots between broke out in north-western China resulting in some 160 people killed and 1,700 injured, "Ji-li kept trying to find out information about what was going on there, even though reports were being censored," Laurice recounted. "While we were watching the news on TV sometimes the screen would just go black and a few seconds of the news would be missing." Social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook were also blocked. "I had heard about this before, but experiencing it in real life was kind of disconcerting," she said.

In her quest to show all sides of life in China beyond the tourist attractions, Ji-li took the group to visit a school, hospitals, an elder care center, and a home

for children whose parents are in prison. They also visited a few families in their homes. "Ji-li loves people," Laurice said. "Wherever we went she was always talking to people, asking them questions, trying to find the 'real story,' finding out about their lives. She got us invited to lots of places tourists wouldn't normally go to."

In the end such experiences confirmed some of Laurice's assumptions about China – a lot of people live there; Beijing and Shanghai both have populations over 17 million, and the Chongqing municipality has a population of about 33 million people – but she also discovered little surprises along the way, like the fact that not everyone in China owns a bike. "Even though there were a lot of bikes with people carrying all kinds of craziness on the back, there were more cars than I expected." She also was impressed by the modern skyscrapers and the scale of new construction.

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*Laurice in a snapshot with members of the family she stayed with in Shanghai*

## MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL MICHAEL NILL

**F**or educators and students alike, the beginning of a new school year is a time of excitement and promise. It signals a fresh start, an opportunity to reinvent oneself, a time when possibilities seem infinite. Optimism abounds. Academic excellence is achievable.

However, as I remarked to the Middle and Upper School students on the opening day of school, there's a competing vision, involving attitudes that hinder achievement. It is captured in the idea that intelligence, including one's own, is fixed. Your IQ is what it is and will always be. You are either smart or not, and that's the end of the story. How often, for example, students can be heard saying "I'm a terrible writer, I'm no good at math, I'm not good at drawing" – the list goes on and on. We can sometimes be heard praising someone for being smart – and if one can get that grade of A without studying, students will often see that as a sign of superiority.

What's ultimately behind these attitudes is the belief that our intelligence is genetically determined. Are you a bad writer? You have "bad-writer genes." Are you a good writer? Ah, you have "good-writer genes." Although one rarely hears this attitude expressed so blatantly, it is an attitude that does play a role; and if it is not acknowledged and addressed, it will have a negative effect on the achievement levels of students and their view of themselves as learners. Much is at stake.

It was thus refreshing this summer to read Richard Nisbett's *Intelligence and How To Get It*, a recently published book that seriously tackles the genes

and IQ issue. It is not that genes count for nothing, but they do not fix intelligence to the extent that is sometimes supposed, and their importance is gravely exaggerated. To begin with, over the last few generations, in all developed nations, people on average are doing steadily better on IQ tests. An IQ score of 120 is now the equivalent of about a 138 fifty years ago. That's a huge increase in regard to IQ – much of it attributable to increased schooling and cultural changes. Also, one's environment affects IQ scores. Typically, being raised in a home environment that is literacy-rich and conducive to learning translates into a gain of 15 - 18 IQ points. On average, one's social economic status matters. Schools also matter: attendance in schools that have markedly high expectations and a strong, nurturing faculty also significantly influence IQ.

**Many studies have reached similar conclusions: motivation, effort, and hard work are the key pieces for academic success. And that includes experiencing setbacks and failure, for these are needed to nurture resilience and perseverance.**

However, while these factors counter the view of intelligence as fixed, motivation is what counts for more than anything else. For example, the correlation between IQ and good grades is a mere .32, whereas the correlation between motivation and good grades is double that at .67.

Studies of the effectiveness of different types of praise are also telling. Say you give two groups of students the same intellectual task to perform; and upon successful execution, you praise those in Group One for being smart, and those in

Group Two for their effort. When you present a more difficult intellectual challenge to these two groups, those in the first group who fail at the task now see themselves as lacking sufficient intellectual ability – a view of themselves that will inhibit future learning. On the other hand, those in the second group attribute their failure to insufficient effort. These students will likely continue to take risks and challenge themselves. One can see from this just how thoughtful we need to be with children in developing their attitudes about learning.

Many studies have reached similar conclusions: motivation, effort, and hard work are the key pieces for academic success. And that includes experiencing setbacks and failure, for these are needed to nurture resilience and perseverance. Of course, if a student has poorly developed writing skills, even significant efforts to improve will not pro-

duce radical changes in a short period of time. Success has to be viewed over the course of years-and of course, in many ways, learning is a lifetime project. Aesop's tale of the tortoise and the hare incorporates the same message: the former, not the latter, is at the finish line-and that is due to its determination and consistent effort.

In his recent address to students, President Obama said no one is born being good at something, one only becomes good at something by working hard at it. In our society, this is sometimes believed, and sometimes



not. Our task, though, is to ensure that our children internalize that message and are consistent in their belief that in the long run their intelligence and academic success are substantially within their control. With that outlook in place, they will be prepared to make the most of this school year, and all the ones to come.

*Michael*

### PLEASE SUPPORT THE BROOKLYN FRIENDS FUND

**A**t Brooklyn Friends there is a unique relationship forged between faculty and student that makes this a one-of-a-kind educational experience. Contributions to the Brooklyn Friends Fund directly support the dynamic faculty and ensure that their tradition of excellence is kept alive. The key areas supported by the Brooklyn Friends Fund are faculty salaries, financial aid, and the educational program. Ten percent of each gift this year will go towards the newly established Michael Nill Endowment for Faculty Development. Income from this fund will support the professional development of our teachers, strengthening the academic program and curriculum.

The 2008-09 Brooklyn Friends Fund set a record at BFS, exceeding \$500,000. This is an excellent foundation on which to build. Please help by contributing to this year's Brooklyn Friends Fund. Every gift counts and participation by all community members is key.

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## PROFILES IN GIVING: ROXANNE ZAZZARO

Head of Upper School Roxanne Zazzaro has been at BFS for 15 years. During that time she has served as middle and upper school learning specialist, head of guidance, upper school dean of students, sixth grade humanities teacher and upper school study skills and English teacher. Her devotion to the school doesn't end with professional duties. She has served on the Board of Trustees and two of its subcommittees, giving her an up-close and personal knowledge of the school community and a profound commitment to its health and ongoing success.

Roxanne also is a regular donor to the school. "Giving symbolizes my belief in the school's mission. Even though I

can't give thousands and millions, giving something allows me to feel that because I give, the school in turn is able to offer outstanding programs for our students; giving also helps the school to offer financial assistance to students who will benefit from a BFS education."

In fact this generous soul gives regularly to all of the schools and colleges she has attended, and even to schools at which she taught briefly before coming to BFS. "I give to say thank you," Roxanne said, and "to allow others to have the meaningful and significant educational and personal experiences that I was able to have. It's sort of a pay it forward." She also volunteers at her church as a lector and greeter.

For Roxanne giving is also a family tradition. "My parents always taught me and my brothers to give of our time and energies to charities and special causes. We were always actively involved in community service work as a family and were taught that you helped those who needed it," she said. She grew up running errands for neighborhood families and performed community service in school, "at a time when you didn't need to count hours," she added.

"We were taught to feel blessed for what we had and to share with others." These are virtues she never questioned growing up. "I give not because I am required to, but because it's part of me."



A lifelong learner, Roxanne has a passion for books and learning. In May 2009, she received a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies (CAGS) in Educational Leadership from the University of New England, "so now I am just happy to be able to read for enjoyment." She also loves cooking, traveling, and the creative arts.

## ON THE ROAD WITH THE RED SCARF GIRL IN CHINA

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"Manhattan looks tiny compared to what's going on over there," she observed. She was struck by the city-dwellers' seamless balancing of tradition with modern living, particularly in Beijing, where the ancient Forbidden City sits in the middle of town and is surrounded on all sides by the hustle and bustle of a thriving city. "Regular people hang out by the Temple of Heaven and barely notice it," she said. "When you go to the antique market, you see statues of Chairman Mao right next to statues of the Buddha." On the other hand, there was Shanghai, which "seemed like a city that was never looking back to the past. Ultra modern, ultra clean, with lots of rules."

Laurice was impressed by the strong sense of community she observed in China's cities. "When we went to the park in the morning there were groups of people all over the place



doing activities together – tai chi, ballroom dancing, playing hackysack, singing, playing instruments, playing dominoes, practicing calligraphy." She was struck by the fact that these groups included lots of senior citizens. "I liked how the elderly people seemed to have a more active and public life than what I see in the U.S."

The Chinese people's organizational prowess seemed to apply not just to social activities but to the work ethic as well, she said, pointing out a particularly memorable encounter. "When we first got to Beijing a bunch of

uniformed people came on the plane and took everyone's temperature before we were allowed to get off." They were checking for swine flu. "Can you imagine the amount of organization required to take the temperature of every single person coming into the country? . . . Not to make sweeping generalizations, but I feel like the Chinese have a great history of getting big projects done by people working together cooperatively."

Lest you think she bypassed the major attractions and only sought the offbeat, Laurice also visited the Great Wall, the Terra



*At left and above, Laurice at the terra cotta soldiers site in Xian.*

Cotta soldiers, the Great Mosque in the Muslim quarter of Xian, and took a three-day trip down the Yangtze River to see the Three Gorges Dam. In Shanghai the group also saw where Ji-li lived as a child during the Cultural Revolution.

Despite her action-packed schedule, Laurice considers her two-week stay a mere whirlwind tour. "Something that I am starting to understand is how huge a country China is, and how diverse it is," she said. "I barely scratched the surface. I definitely need to go back."

# ALUMNAE/I CLASS NOTES

by Susan Price '86

## 1930s

News of the most recent gathering of the Stubbs Sisters – **Louise '30, Edith '31, Elizabeth '33, Jean '36** – came from Jean's son **Frank Stubbs Sterrett '67**: "As they have tried to do on an annual basis, the four Stubbs Sisters gathered in Dublin, Ohio at the home of Edith's daughter **Joan Chinsley Bownas '56** and son-in-law Bill in early August for several days of visiting and reminiscing. They were joined off and on in the festivities by eight of their children and two grandchildren. We all enjoyed hearing stories of growing up in Brooklyn, going to BFS, raising children (grandchildren and great-grandchildren) here and there, attending Quaker events, traveling the world, and so on! Memories, laughter and love, which these remarkable women evoke by the ton wherever they go, were shared! Before heading to their respective homes, they set a date for next year's gathering."

## 1960s

After finding the BFS Alumni Facebook group, **JoAnn Black Chase '60** wrote, "This brings back so many memories, all of them good. Class of 1960, there were 25 of us. We got a GREAT deal of attention all the time – this was good and bad. NO chewing gum! The photo for the Facebook group – I can still feel those very steps which led to the playground under my legs on chilly days when, because I could not do the algebra, they wouldn't let me have recess. I loved Mr. Vaughan and Miss Richard (now Mrs. Person) and

Mr. Roach, the finest teachers I ever had – including those at Sarah Lawrence, which had amazing teachers. If you are interested in life in California through the jaundiced eyes of someone who grew up in Brooklyn and went to school on Schermerhorn Street, take a look at [southofrincon.blogspot.com](http://southofrincon.blogspot.com) – it also contains the fictional *Diary of Ruthie (Madoff)*. I still recite the Canterbury Tales in Middle English, and lots of Shakespeare to fall asleep at night here in Paradise."

Photographs by **Spencer Grant '62** were on display this summer at the Duncan-Miller Gallery in Los Angeles. His show, "Spencer Grant: Vintage Prints," offered beautiful photographs, and opening night was well-attended with plenty of moments in which Spencer found his vision anew.

**Judith Cohen '65**, interior designer and owner of Judith Cohen Design, published her first Newsletter, which offers her views on current trends in Home Design and, of course, helpful tips. The first issue focused on "green" design – flooring, fabrics, reclaiming and repurposing. Sign up for Judith's newsletter at [judithcohendesign.com/contact.html](http://judithcohendesign.com/contact.html).

## 1970s

**Debra Fox Diamond '72** who delighted us at Alumni/ae Day this June, coming all the way from San Francisco, wrote us: "Lately, I've been a foster parent for San Francisco's Animal Care and Control, so I have many, MANY kittens. I've finally turned into a crazy woman with lots of cats. My son Eli is 15 and in his first year of high school. It's been an interesting year for him (and us)."

**Michelle Loewinger '74** wrote, "I have been living in the Washington, DC area since graduating from the University



*The Stubbs Sisters: Edith Stubbs Chinsley '31, Louise Stubbs Williams '30, Elizabeth Stubbs Cooper '33, and Jean Stubbs Sterrett '36 at their annual reunion this summer*

of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine. I have been a practicing dentist for the last 28 years. I have two sons, Collin (21) and Chase (15). I married my husband Howard Gutman after we both graduated from Columbia University in 1978. We are now embarking on a new adventure in our life. My husband has been appointed to be the US Ambassador to Belgium, so we will live in Belgium for a few years."

## 1980s

Congratulations to **Paula Marie Seniors '81**. An assistant professor of Africana Studies and Sociology at Virginia Tech, she just received the Letitia Woods Brown Book Award for Junior Faculty from the Association of Black Women Historians for her book, *Beyond Lift Every Voice and Sing: The Culture of Uplift, Identity, and Politics in Black Musical Theater*. Published in June by Ohio State University Press, the book "explores the realities of African American life and history as refracted through the musical theater productions of one of the most prolific black song-writing teams of the early twentieth century." Paula Marie has unearthed material once thought lost and her book questions how roles and representations in black musical theater both reflected and challenged the dominant social order.

It was great to hear from **Romeyn Nesbitt '84** this spring. While she regretted not being able to attend Alumni/ae Day, see old friends and congratulate Martin Moore, Romeyn is doing well and sends everyone her very best. Romeyn has been living in France since 1993, and is currently in the South of France. Listen to her jazz stylings at [myspace.com/romeynnesbitt](http://myspace.com/romeynnesbitt).

Also in France sending regrets for Alumni/ae Day was **Colette Ballou Lamotte '85**. Colette wrote, "I was only at BFS through 4th grade when we moved to Vermont, but I have such great memories. I am determined to make it to the 30th even though people probably don't remember me well. However, I plan to cut my hair and wear a green velour two-piece – that should jump-start the memories. Please tell everyone that Coco sends her very best."

## 1990s

Congratulations to **Jesse Soll '95**. Jesse's *Baseball America* cover photo of Stephen Strasburg, baseball's number one draft pick of the year, came out in June. More of Jesse's work can be seen at [jsollphotography.com](http://jsollphotography.com).

**Jazelyn Montanez '98** is happy to be singing again. Jazelyn is performing with the band Acoustic Onset in NYC and her beautiful voice can be heard at [scottcornwell.com](http://scottcornwell.com).

### PLEASE SEND YOUR CLASS NOTES TO:

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375 Pearl St. Brooklyn, NY 11201  
[alum@brooklynfriends.org](mailto:alum@brooklynfriends.org)  
718.852.1029 ext. 208

## 2000s

**Edson Elcock '03** signed to play professional soccer in the USL, this year with the Virginia Kickers. The Kickers won the USL Second Division Championship in August, 3-1 against the Charlotte Eagles, and in the 62nd minute Edson scored to tie the game 1-1. Edson is currently with BFS, coaching our Girls' Varsity Soccer and Boys' Varsity Basketball teams. Attending a recent Coaches Clinic in Brooklyn were **Kyle Neptune '03** and **Ryan Fischer-Werner '04**. Kyle is the video coordinator for Villanova Basketball and Ryan is the first assistant coach of the Skidmore College Men's Basketball Team.

We hear through his mother, Cheryl, that **Eric Gushee '04** received his B.A. from Marlboro College in 2008 and that Eric is attending the School of the Art Institute of Chicago to complete his B.F.A. Congratulations!

Congratulations also to **Sarah Blakeley '05**. Sarah wrote, "I thought I'd update you on my plans now that I've graduated Bryn Mawr with a double major in Child Psychology and East Asian Studies. I'm putting my education to good use. In July I'll be going over to Japan as an English teacher through the JET program, which is sponsored by the Japanese government. Upon my return I plan to get my Master's in Learning Disabilities Education."

## FORMER FACULTY

**E. Lawrence Gibson**, *Upper School Head, History, College Guidance, and Librarian*, sends his best to his students and col-

leagues. Lawrence, as many know, is the author of *Get Off My Ship: Ensign Copy Berg vs. The U.S. Navy*. His first novel, *Escaping Dark Places*, was published this year; it is a moving story of the importance of deep friendship in healing and rebirth.

Re-connecting with BFS after many years, **Susan Hamelin**, *Lower School Music*, is in Colorado, happy, a great-grandmother, and reports that her family is also doing well. After BFS, Susan moved out West and she is a music therapist. After her own lung transplant in 2002, Susan was inspired to establish The Lung Connection, a non-profit providing affordable and comfortable housing and support services for University of Colorado Medical Center organ transplant patients and their caregivers during the lengthy pre-and post-recovery process. Having worked with over 150 "family stays," in Denver, TLC is working to open similar recovery centers in San Francisco and Phoenix. In honor of her work with TLC, Susan received a "7 Everyday Hero" award from Denver's ABC Channel 7. Learn more at [thelungconnection.org](http://thelungconnection.org)

## In Memoriam

*Frederick Fansher '33*  
*John Barnewall '35*  
*Louise Gray Bertsche '36*  
*Paul Windels Jr. '39*  
*Hugh Rumball-Petre '40*  
*Elizabeth Haug Kearns '41*  
*Seymour Waldman '43*  
*Ralph Elliott '44*  
*Lisbeth Greenberg Greenfeld '55*

## THE STRATEGIC PLAN IN ACTION



When school resumed this September, BFS became that much closer to achieving several more goals as outlined in the **Strategic Plan** of 2008.

■ *Context*, the school's first faculty anthology, was published with writing and art from 25 teachers and staff. This effort helped to broaden the faculty's professional development and appreciation of one another as educators of depth, perception, and dedication. Also in the realm of professional development, the preschool and lower school faculties spent a day with the nationally renowned educator **Paula Lawrence Wehmiller**, reflecting on their vocations as teachers.

■ As part of the Strategic Plan's goal of systematic enrollment growth from the bottom up, a third section of Four Year-Olds was added to the Preschool. We now have a **Purple Room**, led by veteran teacher **Yasmin Kudrolli** and assistant **Tomomi Iwamoto**, and a total of seven classes in the preschool.

■ In the Lower School, Spanish teacher **Myriam Juarbe** has joined the faculty, and Spanish language instruction began for students – and their classroom teachers – in grades kindergarten through 4.

■ To provide students with the greatest accessibility to technology at the point of learning,



Top, Fifth graders opening their netbooks the first week of school; above, netbook and textbook side by side in an IB Spanish class.

the school has instituted a netbook (laptop) program. Students in grades 5, 11, and 12 have been given **Dell Netbooks**, much in the way they receive textbooks, to use in their classes and for study. This is just one of several initiatives to successfully integrate technology into the curriculum.

■ To continue fostering global perspectives through international travel, plans are underway for students and faculty trips to **Costa Rica** and **Morocco** during spring break, 2010.

■ To strengthen the bonds between Brooklyn Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends and the school, Quakers are sponsoring a **Conscientious Objector Workshop** at BFS for students in grades 8 through 12, and BFS families and alums are taking part in the annual fall work day at the **Quaker Cemetery** in Prospect Park, both taking place in November.

## JOIN US IN 2010

**January 5** Young Alums Day: The Classes of 2006 to 2009 return to BFS to visit teachers and friends, join the Upper School for lunch, and share their college experiences.

**April 30** Brooklyn Friends School Gala: "Celebrating Excellence and Leadership: A Gala Tribute to Michael Nill" at Stage 6 at Steiner Studios in the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

**June 5** Alumni/ae Day: Visits to our present and historical campus, Meeting for Worship, a fabulous awards luncheon, basketball, special reunions, and more. *Details at [www.brooklynfriends.org/alumni](http://www.brooklynfriends.org/alumni)*

## SPURRING GROWTH: CURRICULUM GRANTS

by Jeffrey Stanley

"I started thinking about it last year while looking through my classroom library," third grade teacher **Sarah Gordon** recalled. "I was looking for a book for a student who happened to be African-American. She liked funny, silly chapter books and I wanted a book with people who actually looked like her. I couldn't find one. I was surprised and disheartened."

To help remedy the situation, Sarah applied for and received a **BFS Summer Curriculum Grant** to begin integrating chapter books into the second through fourth grade curriculum that better reflect racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and religious diversity.



Third grade teacher Sarah Gordon with student Anna Polo, reading one of the Alvin Ho series of books by author Lenore Look. The books are already a big hit in the classroom.

"As I looked around the classroom I realized that the books most kids were reading, *Harry Potter*, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, *Horrible Harry*, *Judy Moody*, the Roald Dahl books, were similarly homogeneous with predominantly white, middle to upper class protagonists, and a lot of male characters, too." She doesn't feel that these books should be abandoned, "but they need to be accompanied by similar quality books that reflect the diversity of BFS, Brooklyn and the world."

Sarah realizes this isn't just a BFS problem, it's a cultural problem with a wide scope. "In an ideal world these would be

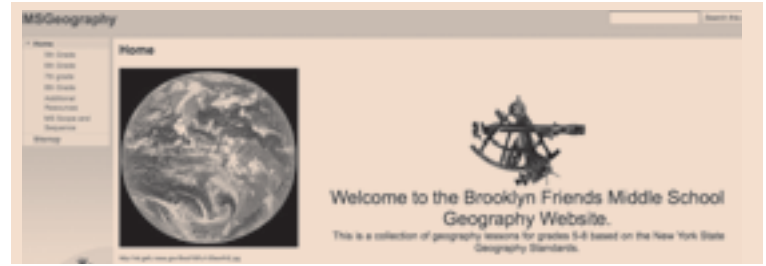
the types of books that would be readily available, popular, turned into movies, lining everyone's shelves," she said, "but I think we can create a culture where these books are everywhere."

Sarah has spent the past few months "reading, reading, reading" and talking with other teachers and librarians all over the country; she is still researching the best books to use. Among those she consulted was her 90-year-old great aunt, who suggested the book, *Drita My Homegirl* by Jenny Lombard. Other books Sarah has brought into the classroom are *Gloria's Way* by Ann Cameron; *Alvin Ho: Allergic to Girls, School, and*

*Other Scary Things* by Lenore Look, and *The Toothpaste Millionaire* by Jean Merrill. Meanwhile a few of Sarah's teaching colleagues have begun a book club for students using books with a greater diversity of characters.

"Information-sharing and support is the real purpose of my work," she explained, calling her project an ongoing effort. "Teachers are doing a lot in isolation, but there needs to be a central mechanism, a structured time, or clear goals to make large-scale changes."

Dance teacher **Jesse Phillips-Fein** and fifth grade teacher **Laurice Hwang** received



a grant to further develop a middle school anti-bullying curriculum, which they initiated in 2008-09. For several years prior to that in the middle school, teachers had volunteered to run diversity groups (open to all students) and affinity groups for students of color. "We talked about a range of topics from family structure to gender and racial stereotypes, able-ism and what it's like to live with a disability," Jesse said. "We also were concerned about language use and name-calling, and we wanted to address this issue."

The teachers looked for ways in which these topics could reach the entire student body. In summer 2008, they developed an anti-bullying curriculum based on the documentary film *Let's Get Real*, which shows real students talking about their bullying experiences. After BFS students watched the film, they engaged in conversations in their advisory groups. "Teachers discussed strategies for talking about bullying and issues related to diversity," Jesse said. "We developed a common language to use with students. Parents who watched the film were excited about our new approach to this challenging issue, and gave us feedback from their perspective." With the feedback they received from students, teachers, and parents, Jesse and Laurice fine-tuned the curriculum over the summer; it is being unveiled in advisory groups this fall.

Also in middle school, three teachers – **Ed Herzman**, **Tony Soll** and **Ticia Vreeland**, received a grant to develop a website that will serve as a teaching database for geography. "We've been try-

ing to augment the geography curriculum for the past few years to give our students a better sense of how cultures interact and how geography plays a part in our history," said Ticia. "We found that we were doing a great deal of geography in our classes, but the curriculum grant allowed us to share our work with each other and to fill in any gaps." Added Tony Soll, "We had planned to compile the old 20th-century binder of worksheets and give one to each history teacher." Instead they joined forces with History Department Chair Ed Herzman to create the website.

"The NYS AIS review of the history department indicated a need for a clear geography scope and sequence," explained Ed. "We felt that we did a good job of teaching certain geography concepts in context, like how geographical factors affect the development of cultures. The new lessons address practical application of rote geography skills." These include latitude and longitude, directionality, natural resources, and identifying countries on maps.

The group worked over the summer, conducting web research and gathering materials. "Each grade level is provided with eight lessons with follow-up worksheets and assessments," said Ticia, who created the bulk of the site with help from media teacher **Andy Cohen**. "The website format allows us to adapt the lessons to our students and to add more as time goes on. It allows all students at a particular grade level to practice essential geography skills."



## ALUMNI/AE PROFILE: RICHARD FROST, CLASS OF 1947

*Emeritus Professor of History, Colgate University*

by Jeffrey Stanley

**One of my early memories is that my parents allowed me to go to school alone from age seven or eight.** – Richard (Dick) Frost '47 said it was part of their plan to encourage personal responsibility and independence, and that it worked. “To get to Brooklyn Friends I had to take a trolley down Flatbush Avenue,” he recalled, painting the sepia-toned scene. “I’d get off at Court Street and walk to Schermerhorn.” His brother Tom and sister Betsey took the same route. “There were three of us. All three of us went through from kindergarten through 12th grade,” he said. “We’re talking about 39 years of Friends education in the Frost family.”

Dick grew up in Lefferts Manor, a New York City landmark neighborhood now known as Prospect Lefferts Gardens. “It was one of the last farms in Brooklyn. I think it was subdivided and developed in 1910 into single family houses,” he said, the inherent historian in him working at full throttle. “It was unique in being the only single-house family area where the restriction was in the deeds, not the zoning. There was no subletting, no businesses permitted. It’s across Flatbush Avenue from Prospect Park.”

His parents had come from Michigan because his father, an electrical engineer with a degree

from U. Michigan, had taken a position with Brooklyn Edison. Several of his father’s Michigan classmates had done the same, so from the outset “there were close associations with some other families.” The Frosts wanted their kids to have a private school education and they had heard about Brooklyn Friends from the Fairman family. “Jim Fairman, who was a year younger than I, went through Brooklyn Friends; we were also in the choir together at St. Paul’s Church.”

Recalling his days as a BFS lifer, Dick feels the most important moments were “at either end,” as he put it. First there was Kindergarten. “From the very outset, I had a crush on my kindergarten teacher, Marian Gove. I used to get my folks to invite her over for dinner when I could.” Young Dick’s courtship

had a profound influence on my intellectual career. He knew that my strong subjects were English and science. I won a science prize when I was a junior, in physics,” Dick said, adding humbly, “I’d gotten the best grade.”

Mr. Burdsall, a practicing Quaker, was a graduate of Swarthmore College. As a loyal Swarthmore he was always interested in steering good students to his alma mater. “He was disappointed again and again by an admissions office at Swarthmore when they ignored his recommendations,” as Dick tells it. Fortunately the tide turned in 1947 when Swarthmore heeded Mr. Burdsall’s recommendations and admitted no less than four BFS students that year, Dick Frost among them.

Mr. Burdsall believed history to be a solid middle ground

got my varsity letter. I was not a great player but I was good enough to make the team.”

Quakerism had an impact on him as well. “There was no evangelical effort whatsoever to convert staff,” he said. “It’s not part of the Quaker way, which is to try to influence people by example, peace in particular.” He remembers the time during a Meeting for Worship when Head of School **Warren Cochran** stood and made the reflection that students, and indeed the entire community, needed to keep their priorities straight, to put first things first. “A very simple idea, but one needs to be reminded of the significance of that. First things first.” Dick still cherishes the Quaker value of respect for personhood.

“Individuality and community need to go hand in hand,” he explained, “and for Quakers they do. While cliques existed they were not willfully exclusive or prideful. That simply did not exist at Brooklyn Friends.”

Dick also recalled his friend **Frank Elliot**, who was student body president both his junior and senior years and one of the four students admitted to Swarthmore at the same time as Dick. While a graduate student at UC Berkeley, Dick sought Frank’s advice on his then-unpublished manuscript. The Mooney case, based on Dick’s doctoral thesis about an infamous 1916 terrorism case in California, eventually found a home at Stanford University Press in 1968.

*The Mooney Case*, Dick explained, focused on the so-called preparedness movement, a primarily conservative effort that sought to pressure the US Government to bolster its borders from foreign invaders.

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**“Individuality and community need to go hand in hand, and for Quakers they do.”**

plans were coming along nicely until his father launched a plan of his own. “Dad had a young engineering friend by the name of Walter Fisk from Alabama, a new arrival in New York.” Mr. Frost introduced Walter to Marian and they were soon engaged. “Dad was their best man, and I was their ring bearer at the age of 6. . . . Walter and I became friends and he taught me how to play ping-pong. We maintained our friendship with the Fisks for decades. They had three girls in time. It was a grand family.”

Then there was senior year and a more formative kind of attraction that would impact the rest of his life. “**Benjamin Burdsall**, who was head of the high school and our English teacher in 11th and 12th grade,

between English and science and encouraged Dick to major in it. “Mr. Burdsall saw an opportunity to draw on both of my inclinations or talents, and he was right. History is much more of an objective direction than literature, but less objective than science.”

That’s not to say there weren’t crucial moments in his middle years at BFS, too. “A physician had decided that I had rheumatic fever (later proven wrong). He said I needed to stop competitive athletics so starting in 7th and 8th grade I began reading more books.” Dick already loved to read but the loss of sports was a blow to him. “I had played football in sixth grade. I was a quarterback. That came to an end. I did play baseball later on in high school and I

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## DICK FROST '47

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During a San Francisco Preparedness Day parade in 1916, a bomb killed ten civilians, and radical labor activists were immediately blamed, among them anarchist Tom Mooney, an activist and fund-raiser for the Industrial Workers of the World. Mooney was tried, found guilty and sentenced to death despite a gaping lack of evidence against him, false testimony and manufactured evidence. The Mooney case became a *cause celebre* for labor activists around the world as an example of repressive, anti-working class sentiment in the U.S. courts and government and their pressure resulted in Mooney's sentence being commuted to life imprisonment and, finally, a pardon in 1938.

Dick's interest in history extends far beyond labor. "When I put the Mooney case to bed in 1968, what I decided on realistic grounds was that first of all I didn't particularly like labor history," he confides. He had begun teaching at Colgate in 1966, and was at a history convention in 1970 in Austin, TX when he picked up an autobiography by a Native American, and began to consider the daunting task any white historian must have faced in documenting the Native American culture. White historians had all gone to this community with an agenda to convert them or make money from their resources.

"I thought about this," he said, "and the methodology and problems fascinated me. I began to make inquiries about the Pueblo," he explained, due to some time he had spent teaching in New Mexico. He was instrumental in developing both Colgate's Native American Studies program and its Native American Off-Campus Study Group in Santa Fe.

He started researching the archives in Washington, DC, and over several years gathered much primary source material, which he intended for articles or a book on the Pueblo people. That was scaled back when in 1979 he was asked to be an expert witness for Pueblo communities with natural resources claims against the U.S. and the state of New Mexico, the Aamodt Case. "I became an historical witness, which involved research and testimony. I participated in what has become a notorious natural resources rights dispute brought by four tribes who had lost their water in the early 20th century to Anglo and Hispanic settlers," he said. "This case began in 1960 and it still has not been settled."

Dick's interest in Native American culture spilled over into one of his chief hobbies, photography. "I have enlargements hanging in my living room in Santa Fe of some Navajo ceremonies, which are now illicit, because the Navajo in recent years have prohibited photography in their cere-


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monies." Ever-mindful of not encroaching anew on Native American confidentiality, Dick purposely did not conduct any interviews with Native Americans for his recent article in the Spring 2009 issue of the *New Mexico Historical Review*. Entitled "Photography and the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico, 1870-1930," the article explores cultural respect for Native Americans and their passive and active resistance against Anglo photographers.

Dick also likes to sing, and is a member of the vocal group Tapestry. His passion led to his compiling the newly released book of 146 madrigal introductions, *I Never Saw A Silver Swan: Poetic Introductions to Madrigals of the Renaissance, 1530 - 1630*.

Dick and his wife Barbara have two daughters, Caitlyn and Heather. In thinking about BFS' impact on his life he mentioned that Caitlyn had attended a public school in Hamilton, NY and was "kind of a loner" who excelled academically, "but not

until she enrolled at the George School (a Quaker boarding school in Pennsylvania), did she truly thrive. In one year she blossomed and it was Quaker values that did it." Caitlyn chose to go on to Earlham, a Quaker college in Indiana. "She is not a Quaker. Neither am I. But we have a high regard for Quaker values."

Today Caitlyn lives in Santa Fe, and Heather lives in Erie, Colorado. The Frosts reside primarily in Hamilton but they still have a winter home in Santa Fe.

"Students need to appreciate their privilege," he said of BFS today. "Their parents have provided it, the previous generations have provided it. They have outstanding teachers there now because we had them. There's a continuity. And it would be well for kids at BFS to understand that they are beneficiaries, and their own efforts are an integral part of their education, but so have been the efforts of others to bring them to these opportunities."