DEEP-GREEN ECONOMY
Opinions & Expressions
Interim President Bill Wagner introduces himself. ... Young alums help Iraqi refugee girls reclaim their childhoods. ... Letters from readers.

Scene & Herd
News of Williams and beyond.

Life of the Mind
Psych Prof. Laurie Heatherington unites the academic and experiential. ... Kimerer LaMothe '85 explores what a body knows. ... Books and more.
features

Unplanned Lessons
Williams faculty members share what they’ve learned from students over the years.

Follow the Fish
Spencer Beebe ’68 is helping to build the 21st century deep-green economy in the Pacific Northwest.

Shades of Blue
With human impacts creating a “perfect storm” for the world’s oceans, Williams alumni are working to chart a new course.

Goodbye, Class of 2009
A glimpse of the College’s 220th commencement exercises.

On the cover
Monckton Inlet in Principe Channel, toward Pitt Island, British Columbia. Photo by Samuel M. Beebe.
Unique to Williams

A specialty in Imperial Russian and early Soviet history might seem an odd credential for an interim college president. Leadership transitions in Russia during those periods were nothing to emulate (they often were pretty bloody, in fact), and I doubt the Board of Trustees hoped I would prove to be another Romanov or Lenin.

I find myself in this position not because of my academic interests but because of Williams’ system, unique in American higher education, of filling the positions of Dean of the Faculty, Provost and Dean of the College with members of our own faculty, who serve typically for three to six years before returning to full-time teaching and research.

Colleagues at other schools often look on this system quizically, but I am more convinced than ever that it is part of what gives Williams its special character.

The learning curve can be steep at the beginning of an administrative term, but Williams faculty are nothing if not quick learners.

Meanwhile, surveys have confirmed my long-held sense of there being less division between faculty and administrators here than at peer institutions. At least part of the explanation must surely be our singular system of governance.

The most recent example of this effect has come in discussions of how to respond at Williams to our sudden and dramatic economic challenges. These many, complex conversations have been marked by a broad sense of cooperation and community that clearly has benefited the institution.

This system, I believe, serves the College particularly well during a time of presidential change by ensuring among senior administrators an ongoing understanding of academic matters—the heart of what Williams is about.

I can assure you that Stalin would not have liked it. Collegiality was not his strong suit. But in the list of things that make Williams exceptional, it is worth noting, especially at a point of transition, that this system certainly is one.

—Bill Wagner, interim president

LETTERS

Regarding “A Century of Change” (June 2009), I am the student pictured with the sign “Coeds Go Home.” I remember the photographer snapping the picture nearly 40 years ago. However, two clarifications are in order. 1) I did not place the message in the window. 2) As everyone who knows me will attest, I am constitutionally incapable of such sentiments.

—Jay Haug ’73, Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.

In your review of the 150th anniversary of the first college baseball game (“At the Old Ball Game,” June 2009), I was disappointed there was no mention of the Williams victory in the 100th anniversary game held in spring 1959. This being the 50th reunion for our class it would have been nice to be included. Maybe you will mention our epic feat in 2059.

—Don Lum ’59, Pacific Palisades, Calif., and Williams team co-captain

The article on honeybuns (“Sweet,” March 2009) revealed my ignorance of a Williams culinary delight. For my 50th reunion, I’ll make a beeline to the Paresky Center to sample one. How did the honey bun get its name? It abounds in cinnamon but contains no honey.

—Bill Kieffer ’60, Vienna, Austria

Ed. note: Our mistake! According to dining services, honey is used in the glaze.

The Alumni Review welcomes letters related to topics in the magazine.

Send letters to:
Alumni Review, P.O. Box 676
Williamstown, MA 01267-0676
fax: 413.597.4158
e-mail: alumni.review@williams.edu
Letters may be edited for clarity and space.
Absolutely no soccer. It will affect her fertility,” Fatima instructed us as she grudgingly released her daughter’s hand, allowing Ofal to sprint over to the rest of the girls trying on athletic shoes. It was our third week running sports camps for Iraqi refugee girls living in Jordan, so the request came as no surprise. “Of course,” we said. “Feel free to stay and watch.”

From the other side of the fence surrounding the courtyard where the camps were held, Fatima scrutinized Ofal’s every move through the small eye openings in her black burka. Though Ofal was shy at first, giggling alongside her teammates as they worked on their bounce passes, she turned out to be a natural at basketball.

The next day, Fatima eased up on her restrictions: Ofal could try shooting a soccer ball. By the end of the week, Fatima agreed to let her play in the final game. Fatima tearfully told us that Ofal never before had the opportunity to set goals as she had over the past week. She wanted Ofal to have a career—as a translator or even a professional athlete. She wanted Ofal to have a better life than Fatima herself had been given. “Mafi mushkala, no problem!” she shouted as she wound up to give us high-fives.

The idea for the camps came out of professor Magnus Bernhardsson’s course on the history of the modern Middle East, which brought to our attention the dire consequences of the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Of the 2 million Iraqis forced to leave their country, an estimated 750,000 have relocated to Jordan, a country of approximately 5.5 million people. Most reside illegally, unable to work, with some women resorting to prostitution to help their families get by. Most children do not go to school, and, worse, there is little to help them deal with the traumas they experienced while in Iraq.

We wanted to help. In thinking about the childhood experiences that had the biggest impact on our own personal development, we agreed, hands down, that they involved sports. We applied for a Davis Project for Peace grant to run sports camps for Iraqi girls living in Zarqa, a poor and populous refugee neighborhood outside of Amman, Jordan. We called our project Reclaim Childhood.

After the first set of camps last summer, we wanted to bring the benefits of sport and play to even more girls like Ofal. With the help of professor Robert Jackall, we worked with Williams parent Edward Rosenthal ’10 of Frankfurt Ketum Klein & Selz, who donated his time to help Reclaim Childhood become a nonprofit. Meanwhile, Deborah—who deferred law school for a year to remain in Jordan—established a Saturday sports clinic and an all-girls basketball league in Zarqa.

We recently concluded our most ambitious project to date: four weeks of overnight camp at King’s Academy, an expansive boarding school near Amman, headed by Eric Widmer ’61. With the help of five Williams student volunteers and two alumni-sponsored interns, the girls have seen dramatic improvements in their basketball, volleyball, soccer and swimming skills. Add to that the unending games of samak, samak, hoot (fish, fish, shark, the Arabic version of duck, duck, goose), and we are confident that the girls have had at least a small taste of the childhood experiences so important to us.

Many people question the value of sports programs as a means of refugee relief. Our programs are only a small step toward solving a much larger social problem, but we feel it is an important and often overlooked step. Through sport, we seek to teach these young girls to be strong, to set goals, to be fair and to feel as though they can accomplish anything. The positive social values transferred through sport can help these girls to become future leaders in their region.

Watching Ofal that first summer, we couldn’t help but wonder if one day—with continued work on literacy and sport—she could be scoring goals for the Williams soccer team.

Deborah Bialis ’08, Anouk Dey ’09 and Katherine Krieg ’08 are cofounders and directors of the nonprofit Reclaim Childhood Inc. For more information or to get involved, visit www.reclaimchildhood.com or e-mail reclaimchildhood@gmail.com.
HORN ELECTED ALUMNI TRUSTEE

The Board of Trustees welcomed Joey Shaista Horn ’87 in July. Horn is a director of publicly traded companies in Thailand, Singapore and Norway in the shipping and offshore industries. She was a ranked equity research analyst at a Nordic securities firm in Oslo, Norway, where she lived for 12 years before moving to Singapore. Previously she worked in New York as an investment banker at Smith Barney, Investcorp International Inc. and CS First Boston. She has an MBA from the Yale School of Management and is co-head agent of her Williams class.

Horn was elected by the alumni body to a five-year term as trustee. Paul Neely ’68 and Malcolm W. Smith ’87 stepped down from the board.

Also elected by alumni this year was Tyng Bequest administrator Jeffrey A. Thaler ’74, an attorney and partner overseeing the environmental practice at Bernstein, Shur in Portland, Maine. Tyng administrators help select Williams students to receive funds from the bequest of Juliet Augusta Tyng, widow of Stephen H. Tyng, Class of 1886, to support graduate school education.

WMS CLUB DONATES HQ TO COLLEGE

A new chapter in the long, distinguished history of the Williams Club begins Oct. 1 with a ceremony recognizing the donation of its headquarters to the College.

Williams plans to lease the building to the club in an arrangement that benefits both parties financially. The club will continue its operations at its 24 East 39th St. double brownstone, recently appraised at $21 million.

“A property transaction of this size, especially in Manhattan, is a complicated matter,” Williams Interim President Bill Wagner says.

“I thank the club and its leaders not only for their graciousness but also for their dedication to seeing this matter through.”

The club was founded in 1913 by such noted alumni as Herbert Lehman, Class of 1899, and Francis Lynde Stetson, Class of 1867. Its first contributor was Williams President Harry Garfield, Class of 1885. The club moved to its current location, a few blocks from Grand Central Station, in 1924.

Since then it has been the site of countless College events and has provided a Williams-flavored home away from home for alumni, parents and friends from around the world. Alumni Fund phone-athons have taken place there for years.

“Reaching this milestone is immensely satisfying to the club,” says Jeff Urdang ’89, president of its Board of Governors. “It fits well with the club’s purpose, which since its founding has been ‘to advance the interests and influence of Williams College in New York’ and with the spirit of generosity that has long characterized relations between the College and the club.”

For more information on any of these stories, visit www.williams.edu and enter the topic into the search field.

They Said:

“When this year’s fund closed the books on June 30, more than 14,200 alumni (59.25 percent participation) had generously given, collectively contributing almost $8.7 million to the College’s operating budget—an incredible achievement considering the recent challenging economic circumstances.” — Katie Chatas ’88 and Bill Sprague ’80, co-chairs of the 2008-09 Alumni Fund, in a letter to alumni reporting the year’s results.


“Mostly I see it as a recruiting tool for the computer science major! No, honestly, I view my role very simply: be a supportive, attentive and approachable member of the faculty.” — Brent Heeringa, computer science professor, on his role as faculty adviser to the women’s tennis team. Heeringa attends all home matches and even traveled to Atlanta to see the team beat Amherst 5-2 in the NCAA Championship Finals last spring. Sports Information, 07.24.09
COLLEGE JOINS NEW VA PROGRAM

Williams is now part of a U.S. Department of Veterans affairs program extending educational benefits to those who have served in the U.S. military since 2001.

Under the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational assistance act of 2008, veterans furthering their educations receive from the government the equivalent of the highest public tuition in their state. To help them attend private institutions, where tuition is generally higher, Congress added the Yellow Ribbon Program, in which the government will match, dollar for dollar, any Yellow Ribbon grant given by a participating college or university, up to the full cost of tuition.

Williams has agreed to give an unlimited number of veterans $5,000 (matched by the government) and, as with all students, to meet 100 percent of demonstrated financial need beyond that. In many cases veterans can transfer the benefit to an immediate family member.

“Williams is happy to partner with the federal government to support those who have served in the military,” Financial aid Director Paul Boyer says. “We have long been committed to meeting the full demonstrated need of all our students, and this program will help draw attention to that fact among an important segment of the population.”

IN MEMORIAM

The College marked the passing of Fred H. Stocking ’36, Morris Professor of Rhetoric, emeritus, on July 21. He was 94. An English major at Williams, Stocking received his master’s (1937) and Ph.D. (1946) in English from University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. Clad in a bow tie and occasionally a cape, Stocking was well-known in Williamstown, serving on the English faculty from 1940 to 1983. His writing focused on Victorian literature, history and culture, and he was a frequent contributor to local newspapers. He served on the College’s lecture committee, advised student commencement speakers and was secretary of the faculty.

Stocking had deep roots in Williamstown. His grandfather, William Redfield Stocking Sr., Class of 1869, was minister of White Oaks Church, and his father, William Redfield Stocking Jr., Class of 1905, grew up in the area. Among Stocking’s survivors are his wife Carol, three children, five stepchildren, five grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

WILLIAMS WINS 13TH DIRECTORS’ CUP

A spring-season rally vaulted Williams to its 13th Learfield Sports Directors’ Cup, awarded annually to the best all-around athletics program in NCAA Div. III competition.

The Ephs trailed Amherst by 78.5 points heading into spring but earned berths in six Div. III championships (men’s and women’s tennis, men’s and women’s track and field, women’s lacrosse and women’s rowing) to close the gap. Women’s crew cemented the comeback with its fourth consecutive NCAA crown.

With a 143.5-point margin of victory over runner-up Middlebury, Williams has received 13 of the 14 Directors’ Cups—11 in a row—awarded in Div. III. The Ephs paced NESCAC with 10 team titles in 2008-09 and topped Little Three competition for the 24th straight year with 11 crowns.

ALL-AMERICANS NAMED

Anne O’Leary ’10 was the first golfer in Williams history named to the National Golf Coaches Association All-American Scholar Team for the third consecutive year.

In women’s lacrosse, Elizabeth Burns and Britt Spackman, both Class of ’09, were named to the 2009 All-America team by the Intercollegiate Women’s Lacrosse Coaches association and U.S. Lacrosse. Burns led the team in ground balls (53), draw controls (36) and caused...
BEFORE YOU LEAVE...

Graduating seniors leave behind many things as they depart from campus, from course notes tucked away in library monkey carrels to the odd dorm-room refrigerator. Three members of the Class of 2009 left something else—a website called “Things to do Before You Leave,” which offers advice to the 550 incoming members of the Class of 2013 as well as current students. Some things to do:

- Visit Chapin Library of Rare Books. Its oldest book dates from around the year 800.
- Start a new club.
- Go to a planetarium showing at the Hopkins Observatory.
- Find that special professor who will be your mentor throughout college, especially during your most frantic times at Williams.
- Get trained as a WCFM DJ.
- Try a sport you’ve never considered trying. Better yet, try a sport you’ve never heard of.
- Walk the natural bridge (near North Adams).
- Get into summer theater performances free by ushering at the ’62 Center. All you have to do is wear black and hand out programs.
- “Close” a library.
- Go sledding down Mission Hill.
- Learn a new language.
- Keep a journal so you can remember all this at your 50th reunion.

For more advice, visit http://bit.ly/3qTDW. Compiled by Hillary Batchelder, Donald Molosi and Amanda Montano, all ’09, for the Office of Public Affairs.

“Things was a totally unbelievable team effort throughout. These kids never stopped believing. … I’m so, so proud of this team—their spirit and determination was inspiring.”
— Women’s tennis head coach Alison Swain ’01 after the Ephs defeated Amherst 5-2 to capture the 2009 NCAA Championship. The win avenges the women’s title-match loss to the Lord Jeffs a decade ago.

“Given that she’s a young woman just out of college and from a small program like ours, it has been an absolute pleasure for me to watch Katherine’s trajectory and how she has applied maturity and discipline to her journey.”
— Women’s crew head coach and CRCA Coach of the Year Justin Moore on Katherine Robinson ’09, who won a silver medal with the U.S. lightweight quad at the U-23 World Rowing Championships in Racice, Czech Republic. Moore recently led the U.S. women’s 8 to the gold at the World Rowing Junior Championships.

“It was a weekend of great riding and spectacular scenery, and we navigated more than 150 miles.” — Alumni cycling weekend organizer Lew Fisher ’89, director of major reunion giving programs, on the 30 Ephs who spent three days together in July cycling the Berkshires, southern Vermont and western New York from a base on campus.

Michael Gerbush

turnovers (33), and Spackman led the Ephs in points (77) and assists (37).

Men’s lacrosse goalkeeper Michael Gerbush ’09 earned a place on the U.S. Intercollegiate Lacrosse Association Scholar-All-America Team. The computer science major racked up 169 saves at a .582 clip for the Ephs this spring.

And ESPN the Magazine named baseball shortstop Robin Allemand ’10 to its Academic All-America District I Second Team. Allemand batted .352 for the season, leading the team in triples and sharing the lead in home runs.
Unplanned Lessons

By Zelda Stern

A young man in Ed Epping’s Drawing II class 20 years ago was having a difficult time deciding on an independent project. He would try something and become frustrated. “Nothing seemed real enough to him,” recalls Epping.

A brush with mortality was the cause. Two years before, during his sophomore year, the young man had been diagnosed with testicular cancer and had left midterm to undergo chemotherapy. As a result, says Epping, “A lot of subjects just seemed trivial or irrelevant to him.”

One day after class, the student was telling a classmate and Epping about his experience with chemo. Even after many treatments, he didn’t lose his hair at first. To him it was a sign that he was going to be fine. Then one morning he woke up in the hospital to discover that all his hair had fallen out. He got out of bed and found that the hair formed a perfect silhouette of his body.

“That’s a pretty graphic image,” Epping told the student. “What if you were to use that as a basis for your drawing? Make the viewer know how it felt looking at that bed.”

The resulting work—mammoth drawings, some of which incorporated real hair—were “some of the most beautiful, powerful images you can imagine,” says Epping.

It was a powerful lesson for Epping as well, who realized, “One of the things we don’t trust often enough in students is what it is they already know. Our task is to help them fuse their experiences and truths with what they are trying to learn in class.”

The student became an architect. And even though Epping didn’t stay in touch with him, he tells the young man’s story to his class at least once a year. “It’s one way to communicate to students that what they do know is a resource for how to make images. Because if the feelings are genuine and an image is a truthful expression of those feelings, we trust the image. It can’t be challenged.”
If rainforests are so important, why doesn’t anybody worry about the rainforest of the Pacific Northwest? That’s a question that plagued Spencer Beebe ’68 when he attended the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992. The Americans, he says, were admonishing Brazilians to save their rainforests—and telling them how to do it.

“Yes, only 10 percent of our temperate rainforest was left in the lower 48,” he says. “The Brazilians had 90 percent of theirs. We didn’t know the first thing about sustainable development—what it meant, what it looked like or what kinds of incentives or disincentives might apply.”

The year before, Beebe had founded Ecotrust, a nonprofit think tank, incubator and investor in Portland, Ore., that has collaborated on a dizzying array of groundbreaking innovations in support of a local economy based on environmental stewardship and respect for traditional peoples. Among them: Ecotrust joined with the Chicago-based ShoreBank to launch ShoreBank Pacific, the first bank in the country to include environmental stewardship in its lending practices. Ecotrust is helping fishermen acquire fishing quotas and, with the use of its award-winning web-based ocean mapping software, working with the state of California to create marine protected areas with minimum impact on fishing communities.

Ecotrust has coordinated farm-to-school programs in eight western states and is conducting the first global life-cycle analysis of a food product—salmon, the region’s icon. Unafraid of controversy, it has even helped native tribes repatriate land and establish ecological forestry in a joint venture with a company that environmentalists fought for years.

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shades of blue

Andy Chang ’00 has studied the ecology of San Francisco Bay for the better part of a decade, but his biggest question about it may never be answered. “Every day I wonder what it looked like here before we started adding lots of non-native species,” he says.

Many human activities move living organisms from their native habitats to new locations. Sometimes it’s intentional, as when European explorers brought plants and animals to the New World for food. Other introductions happen by accident: Ships suck up marine organisms in their ballast water tanks, and wood-boring insects cross the oceans in imported lumber. Under the right conditions these visitors can thrive, especially if they have no natural predators in their new locations. San Francisco Bay has been colonized by non-native species ranging from aquatic plants to Asian clams and European green crabs.

“Some invasives have huge impacts. The challenge is to understand why they do and others don’t, and to prevent new invasions from happening,” says Chang, who moved west after designing a marine studies major at Williams and analyzing aquatic invasions with Carlton. This year he completed a Ph.D. at the University of California-Davis, where he studied freshwater flow effects on “fouling communities”—aquatic organisms like mussels and anemones that attach to hard surfaces.

Now, as a postdoctoral fellow with the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, Chang aims to better understand how more frequent and severe climatic extremes (such as fluctuations between wet and dry years) will affect estuaries like San Francisco Bay. “When we shift from wet years to dry years and freshwater flows diminish, the community in the bay changes a lot and can become dominated by one or two non-native species,” Chang says. Initially, he expects, these changes will impact rare species, but even dominant species will be affected as climatic extremes intensify.

Bio-invasions threaten fisheries and marine commerce around the world, but Chang hopes they can be managed. “Research helps us understand the effects of our actions, and we can change our activities to make them less harmful to the marine environment,” he says.
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Ed Epping, art

Professors impart knowledge; students receive it. That’s the basic contract at any institution of higher learning. But sometimes, without anyone being immediately conscious of it, the flow of learning reverses and students teach something to their professors. We asked Williams faculty members to share what they’ve learned from students—and their stories provide some useful life lessons.
LEARNING FROM MISTAKES

Peter Murphy, English

As a relatively new assistant professor at Williams in the 1980s, Peter Murphy was struck by a remark made by a student during a meeting on the subject of teaching.

“You know what bothers me?” the student asked. “Professors are always critiquing our problems and faults, but the professors are so resistant to admitting their own mistakes.”

Murphy remembers thinking, “He’s right. It does seem wrong that I wouldn’t think of things that I say in the same way I think of things that students say.”

It was a moment of revelation for Murphy, who used to feel “panicked” before his literature classes. “You’re so terrified when you’re young,” he says. “You’re thinking all the time that you have to be smarter and faster and assert your authority, when in fact the authority comes not from being right but from running the seminar and allowing the students authority—allowing them to participate in a collaborative way.”

The student’s observation made Murphy realize it was OK to make mistakes; in fact, it made classes more interesting. “I could ask my classes actual questions instead of questions to which I already knew the answer. I could be wrong or the students could be wrong, and together we could figure out what was right.

“If you go in thinking, ‘I must impart this great lesson,’” Murphy adds, “there’s a terrible pressure. Plus you screw it up about half the time.”

BEYOND OFFICE HOURS

Wendy Raymond, biology

W hen a student invited her to lunch in the dining hall one day, Wendy Raymond figured they’d discuss the sophomore’s plan to major in biology. Instead, she learned the young woman’s mother had cancer.

It was the start of a relationship that would extend well beyond the classroom. “I became not quite a surrogate parent,” Raymond says, “but more than a mentor.”

The young woman, who was from Slovakia, “was 19 years old, halfway around the world from her home and didn’t know what to do,” Raymond says. So when the student’s mother took a turn for the worse, Raymond offered to help her find a travel agent to arrange a flight home. (She was on the plane when her mother passed away.)

The young woman returned to campus, and Raymond helped her get extensions on her courses and checked in with her regularly throughout the semester. A year later, the student joined Raymond’s research group. Raymond became her thesis adviser.

“She was in my lab with two other thesis students the year I got tenure,” Raymond says. “I have a photo up on the wall of them holding a walnut cake she had made and brought over to the lab that day.”

In her valedictory address at graduation, the young woman acknowledged how crucial Raymond’s assistance and encouragement had been at a critical moment in her life. It was a very important lesson for Raymond, who for a long time assumed the most significant role she could play for her students was academic. “While it’s great to be a scientist and an educator,” Raymond says, “there is also a human side that I can give.”
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among environmentalists, Ecotrust’s strategy of promoting the unique competitive advantage of a bioregion is equally iconoclastic in the world of development economics—where countries are encouraged to produce commodities for export. Take the Pacific Northwest rainforest, which has a unique set of red cedars, redwood and spruce—trees with very particular characteristics. “They’ve cut it all down and turned it into Douglas fir plantations to produce 2x4s to compete with pine plantations in the South that will always be the lowest-cost producer,” Beebe says. “Why are we degrading our competitive advantage in this particular forest in order to compete with something where we’ll lose?”

It’s not just about preserving a place and culture, Beebe says. “The idea is what kinds of goods and services can you produce in this place that are different than in another place?

“Differentiation is the core fundamental process behind ecological and economic development,” he explains.

And so Ecotrust has supported fishermen in Prince William Sound in differentiating their Copper River salmon in the marketplace, a process that involves consumer education as well as branding. In Clayoquot Sound, Ecotrust has helped to link restorative forestry with green building.

Although it’s a nonprofit, Ecotrust has 13 subsidiaries—some for-profit, others nonprofit, partly due to Beebe’s desire to raise funds for his causes from whatever resources may exist. In 1995, for example, Ecotrust Canada was formed to raise money from the Canadian government, which American nonprofits are not able to do. (Beebe sits on its board, and its president sits on Ecotrust’s.)

Ecotrust’s structure allows the organization to maximize the impact of those funds. In the mid-90s, for example, Beebe helped ShoreBank raise $7 million in capital to create ShoreBank Pacific (2008 assets: $200 million), which in turn raised $70 million in “eco-deposits” from individuals and institutional investors. This in turn could be leveraged to $50 million in initial loans. ShoreBank, Ecotrust and ShoreBank Pacific, along with their affiliates and partners in more than a dozen countries, continue to share a mission of building a 21st-century green economy.

Even so, one of Beebe’s early goals was to create an endowment so that Ecotrust (which now has 50 staff) could live off its income rather than rely exclusively on grants. So through Ecotrust Forest Management Inc., it manages 12,500 acres of timberland in Oregon and Washington. Ecotrust also leases space in its headquarters, the Jean Vollum Natural Capital Center, to organizations with shared values. (The 70,000-square-foot landmark in Portland was the first restoration of a historic building to obtain LEED Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.)

As a result, when the S&P 500 tanked last year, Ecotrust’s Natural Capital Fund, which incorporates the “triple bottom line” of people, planet and profit in all its investments, maintained its $34 million endowment—a true test of sustainability if ever there was one.

Ellie Winninghoff ’75 is a veteran financial journalist with a special interest in the emerging disciplines of sustainable and philanthropic investments.

Follow the Fish

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For more information, see:
www.ecotrust.org
www.conservationeconomy.net
www.realclimateeconomics.org
www.e3network.org
www.salmonnation.com
Every Word Counts
Edan Dekel, classics

Two years ago, two students who had been studying the Vikings in another professor’s history class approached Edan Dekel with a proposal. “We know you’ve done work on Old Norse literature,” they said, “and we’d love to read some of those Viking sagas in translation.” Dekel agreed to help them pursue their interest informally. For the next two years, he and the students met every other week to read the ancient narratives.

“It was not something you’d expect students to do with their free time,” he says with a laugh. What Dekel learned from the experience is that “mentioning something in class, even off the cuff, can often open up new avenues of interest for students: personal, intellectual—even directions for research.” For that reason, he now makes it a point to refer to books he’s reading or ideas he finds interesting, even if they’re not directly related to the course he happens to be teaching.

“You’ll say something a student will take to heart, or you’ll mention a book you like, and they come to you six months or a year later and say, ‘We didn’t talk about this in class, but I’m interested in doing something with that. Can you help me?’ It’s a lesson in the power of the instructor—that everything you say can be taken to heart.”

Changing Misconceptions
Gage McWeeny, English

It was his first semester at Williams, and Gage McWeeny’s Victorian literature and culture course wasn’t going as well as he would have liked. He asked his students to suggest improvements. A sophomore approached him and told him, “Here’s my sense of what you’re trying to do and what we’re trying to do. You gave us too much. You’ve intimidated us.”

“She was the most astute person about pedagogy,” says McWeeny, who asked the student about her plans for a major after she wrote an especially good paper about a poem by Robert Browning. When she said “English,” he told her, “You have a real intellect there. You could do something good in this major.” The student, who ran track, seemed surprised and said, “There have been a lot of times I thought I was here just because I was fast. Maybe that’s not the case.”

For McWeeny, who rowed in college, “It was a reminder to me that there are students here who are dedicated, gifted athletes who do many other things and who might temporarily forget just how good they can be in the classroom.” The student later won a Herchel Smith Fellowship to study at Cambridge. Says McWeeny, “I just happened to be sitting at the table when she got into her stuff.”

A Scientific Partnership
Protik Majumder, physics

Advanced coursework isn’t necessarily a prerequisite for success in the research world—a lesson Tiku Majumder learned from a rising junior who worked in his lab. The young man had fewer courses under his belt than the more senior students he was working with that summer, but it was clear he had a knack for asking the right questions and looking at the big picture. “He was very comfortable talking about every aspect of the experiment, not just the little piece he had been involved with,” Majumder says. “He was able to synthesize the whole project. It’s a process most of us take a long time to grow into.”

Teachers of undergraduate physics tend to break things down into small pieces, each week assigning a problem set on a particular subject, for example. But Majumder’s experience with the young man—who as a senior was named the best undergraduate physics researcher in the country (in part for a half-hour talk he gave about his work in Majumder’s lab to the professional society granting the award)—made the professor realize he wasn’t being ambitious enough.

“I probably came to Williams thinking that having undergraduates involved in our research was more of an exercise in training them how to become scientists, part of our teaching role,” Majumder says. “If they really wanted to, they could go to grad school and become professional scientists.” But “when you encourage students to start being scientists before they leave,” he adds, “with the right students, we can be very ambitious. We can treat them less like students and more like colleagues. We can approach more of a real scientific partnership where they’re publishing papers with us and they’re coming up with ideas that drive the work forward.”
THE PERSONAL IS INTELLECTUAL

Carol Ockman, art

In Carol Ockman’s experience, college was about breadth: Specialization and depth were for grad school. And exploring questions of self-identity was principally a personal, extracurricular activity, not an academic pursuit.

Then Ockman met an Indonesian-American art history major who challenged these views. In her last two semesters before graduation, the student chose classes in a range of subjects—Italian Baroque painting, medieval manuscripts, Islamic art. But in each course, she focused on two themes: gender and orientalism.

“She chose courses or projects within courses that would enable her to pursue an interest that was completely embedded in questions of her own identity as an ‘exotic’ woman,” Ockman says. “Her courses were all over the map geographically and historically, but she was in the same place with the same questions in each.”

Ockman let the young woman take a seminar on Ingres that she was teaching in the graduate program in the history of art. Her in-depth analysis of Ingres’ orientalist painting “The Turkish Bath” won the Arthur B. Graves Prize from Williams for the best essay in art that year. In her senior year, by design and with one exception, the student took courses with female professors only.

Ockman found the approach exhilarating. “She looked for courses that would help her grow personally, not just intellectually. For her, personal growth and intellectual growth became one and the same thing.”

Ockman is still in touch with her former student, who has since obtained a Ph.D. in art history with a thesis on ethnographic cinema, gone to film school, written a book on “exotic” cinema and made films. She now teaches film history, media studies and filmmaking at a university.

THE REALITIES OF RESEARCH

Lara Shore-Sheppard, economics

One of Lara Shore-Sheppard’s thesis students was studying the effect of a school-choice lottery system on housing prices in San Francisco. She went to great lengths to get data to test her hypothesis, but her models gave inconclusive results due to the rise and fall of the dot-com economy and corresponding boom and bust in the area real estate market. The student came to Shore-Sheppard, frustrated.

“But this is normal,” Shore-Sheppard recalls telling her. “It’s empirical research. You can’t control for every factor. What did you expect?”

The student pointed out that she and her classmates had never seen studies that didn’t work out. “All the papers we’re assigned report successful results,” the young woman said.

Shore-Sheppard realized that her students were getting a skewed view of the nature and difficulty of economic research. She has since made it a point to assign a few readings in which either the researchers report unsuccessful results or the successful results reported are based on dubious research.

“It’s important,” Shore-Sheppard says, “that the students see that doing good economic research is not as easy as reading just the successful empirical papers might make it seem.”

The student went back to work on her thesis and realized that the school-choice effect couldn’t be seen in the subsample of her data comprising condominiums. But there was evidence of it in single-family homes, which she argued were more likely to appeal to families with children, who would presumably care more about school quality. Her thesis earned highest honors—“not because she found a result,” says Shore-Sheppard, “but because it was creative and thorough.”
A FRESH EYE
Joan Edwards, biology

During a summer trip to Isle Royale, Mich., to collect botanical data, one of Joan Edwards’ honors students bent down to examine a patch of small, white flowers blooming on the forest floor. “Something just went poof!” the student told her.

Edwards put the flower under a microscope, where she and her team could see that one of its petals held a trigger. When they gently pushed back the trigger, it released an explosion of pollen into the air.

“The student’s eye had caught something I had missed, something that had been in front of me almost my whole life,” says Edwards, who had grown up seeing the blossoms since she was 12.

Edwards brought some of the Bunchberry Dogwood back to her lab at Williams and, with the help of physics professor Dwight Whitaker, photographed its pollinating mechanism with a high-speed camera. Their discovery—that the buds of the bunchberry burst open and fire their pollen into the air three times faster than the time it takes for a bullet to leave a rifle barrel—was published in *Nature* and earned the flower a place in *The Guinness Book of World Records*. She and her student were interviewed on National Public Radio, and the flower opened up a whole new research avenue for Edwards.

“Students bring a fresh eye,” Edwards says. “Bunchberry Dogwood was so familiar to me, I didn’t take the opportunity to look at it closely. When you’re used to seeing something, you tend to think it is ordinary—when in fact it might be extraordinary.”

FINDING COMMON GROUND
Joseph Cruz ’91, philosophy

A first-year student in Joe Cruz’s introductory philosophy class struck up a conversation with him that would continue intermittently over coffee, lunch, e-mail and strolls through town over the next three years—despite the fact that she never took another course with him and went on to major in political economy.

“Usually I’m mentoring a student into my field,” says Cruz. “This student was not going into philosophy or cognitive science, but clearly we had a shared interest in the same questions: What makes us human? What makes our humanistic relationships work? For me, these were questions of cognitive science. For her they were questions of politics.”

Cruz self-identifies as Puerto Rican, urban, East Coast. The student was from the Deep South. Yet they found a way to talk across their differences and disciplines.

“She had a habit, which I admired, of drawing on many different fields in our discussions,” recalls Cruz. “I found myself stepping out of my own discipline to communicate with her.”

They discovered they both had read Faulkner. Finding in Faulkner’s universe an example of Hume’s view that family ties and small-group relationships shape our moral behavior clarified the contrast between the Scottish philosopher’s ideas and those of Plato and Kant. Cruz says his conversations with the young woman reminded him that in order to teach philosophy to undergraduates, “I can’t just stay in philosophy. In this case, I had to think about the South; she had to think about Plato.

“There is something glorious about blending across disciplines insights that will eventually bring you back to the thing you’re interested in,” Cruz adds. “It stretches you as a teacher and as an intellectual.”

The student became Cruz’s teaching assistant in her senior year and, since graduating, has worked in politics and community service in the South. She plans to go to law school. She and Cruz still keep in touch.
If rainforests are so important, why doesn’t anybody worry about the rainforest of the Pacific Northwest? That’s a question that plagued Spencer Beebe ’68 when he attended the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992. The Americans, he says, were admonishing Brazilians to save their rainforests—and telling them how to do it.

“Only 10 percent of our temperate rainforest was left in the lower 48,” he says. “The Brazilians had 90 percent of theirs. We didn’t know the first thing about sustainable development—what it meant, what it looked like or what kinds of incentives or disincentives might apply.”

The year before, Beebe had founded Ecotrust, a nonprofit think tank, incubator and investor in Portland, Ore., that has collaborated on a dizzying array of groundbreaking innovations in support of a local economy based on environmental stewardship and respect for traditional peoples. Among them: Ecotrust joined with the Chicago-based ShoreBank to launch ShoreBank Pacific, the first bank in the country to include environmental stewardship in its lending practices. Ecotrust is helping fishermen acquire fishing quotas and, with the use of its award-winning web-based ocean mapping software, working with the state of California to create marine protected areas with minimum impact on fishing communities.

Ecotrust has coordinated farm-to-school programs in eight western states and is conducting the first global life-cycle analysis of a food product—salmon, the region’s icon. Unafraid of controversy, it has even helped native tribes repatriate land and establish ecological forestry in a joint venture with a company that environmentalists fought for years.

But while Beebe has been called a “venture conservationist,” Ecotrust is more than a constellation of projects and investments. Beebe is developing his own brand of natural capitalism—a blending of environmental, societal and economic interests. He
Ecotrust worked with the Haisla First Nations people to protect the 800,000-acre Kitlope River watershed.
Above: Haisla Nation youth.

talks about bioregion-based economies, and he’s dubbed the Pacific Northwest “Salmon Nation.”

Incorporating a whole-systems (or holistic) approach, his goal is restorative.

Beebe’s vision and leadership have garnered him many accolades, including an honorary degree from Williams in 1996, the year his son Silas graduated from the College. A second-generation Eph (his father Robert graduated in 1934), Beebe was such a passionate falconer that he drove 3,000 miles from campus to acquire a falcon. (Housekeeping discovered it living in his dorm-room closet.)

After graduating with a major in economics, Beebe worked for the Peace Corps in Honduras—fishing, building dugout canoes and helping the local Garifuna culture develop artisan fisheries and cooperatives. He developed tremendous respect for the wisdom of indigenous peoples. The experience “showed me what it meant to survive from fishing and farming against the vagaries of weather and corruption and a culture of poverty,” he says. “That was a pretty dramatic change of perspective for me.”

His next stop was Costa Rica, where he, his future wife Jane Magavern and a friend built a ketch by hand. After sailing the Pacific for a year, Beebe earned a master’s in ecology at Yale Forestry School. He then went to work for The Nature Conservancy in the Northwest and eventually developed its international operations.

Over time, Beebe began to feel that the Conservancy’s actions conflicted with its stated aim of helping local people solve their own problems their own way—a way, he says, built on relationships and a deep interest in the social, ecological and economic concerns of the people. It’s “where I learned the lesson to bring social and economic concerns into the environmental equation,” he says. He and 54 staffers and five board members quit the Conservancy to start Conservation International
(CI) in 1987. As CI’s first president, Beebe helped complete the first ever debt-for-nature swap, buying $650,000 of Bolivia’s government debt at a steep discount and then forgiving the loan. In exchange, the Bolivian government agreed to make investments in a million-acre biosphere reserve.

By that time, Beebe had moved back to Portland, where he is fourth generation. He began to wonder whether the lessons he had learned abroad could be applied to the rainforest at home. He raised money, asked a few friends to join Ecotrust’s board, hired a staff and went to work.

Beebe often alludes to the late urban activist and author Jane Jacobs, whom he initially attracted to Ecotrust’s board and tapped as a mentor. In her book *The Nature of Economies*, which Beebe calls “spectacularly important,” Jacobs argues that economic development will only be reliable if it’s more aligned with ecological development. “She said we need a natural model of development not because it’s a better model,” he says, “but because it’s the only model.”

Or, to put it another way: “The global economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment,” Beebe says, quoting former U.S. Sen. Gaylord Nelson, founder of Earth Day.

How does this apply to the real world? Take the state of wild salmon, an icon of nature’s abundance in the Northwest, where it once traded as currency. Despite investments totaling more than $1 billion, and a lot of good intentions, wild salmon have plummeted. According to Beebe, that’s because the Pacific Northwest’s salmon watershed, with both land and marine components, is governed by hundreds of jurisdictions—and jurisdictions within jurisdictions—the U.S., Canada, myriad states and counties, the Bureau of Land Management, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Bonneville Power Administration. The list goes on and on.

“The way we’ve divided up the landscape makes it impossible to succeed,” Beebe says. “Everything is broken down to its component parts, and we inevitably end up dealing with symptoms, not causes. Ecosystem health declines, and the salmon disappear.”

Instead, Beebe says, economies should be based on the “crooked lines of bioregions rather than the straight lines of colonialism.”

And how do you know where the boundaries of the bioregion are? “Follow the fish,” Beebe says. “If the salmon are doing well, that means our agricultural, forestry and land use makes sense and that our decision making is profoundly right.”

Understanding the natural and social capital of the bioregion is the foundation upon which Ecotrust has based the rest of its work. It began by focusing on the Pacific Northwest, exploring its ecological characteristics and the importance of coastal temperate rainforests.

Ecotrust next surveyed existing coastal temperate rainforests around the world, including those in Chile, New Zealand, Scotland and Tasmania. Using satellite imagery and aerial photography, it zeroed in on British Columbia for a closer look, eventually mapping all 350 coastal watersheds more than 12,000 acres in size and creating a careful inventory, watershed by watershed.

It became clear that the Pacific Northwest’s temperate rainforest, which extends from San Francisco to Alaska, is the largest in the world. Because of extensive logging, however, only one intact watershed of more than 250,000 acres remains in the entire bioregion: the Kitlope in central British Columbia. “It is not just the region’s trees and other natural capital that have been decimated,” Beebe says. “The loss of language and the number of people that spoke those languages has mirrored the loss of forests and salmon.”

After familiarizing itself with the bioregion, Ecotrust worked in four communities in hopes of helping to build local capacity and social, ecological and economic well-being. Of the four communities, Vancouver Island’s Clayoquot Sound is perhaps the best example of a transition from an economy based
on an industrial system to one that is increasingly conservation-based and locally controlled.

It was here that a war in the woods exploded in the early 1990s, after the forest products company MacMillan Bloedel (since acquired by Weyerhaeuser) announced plans to log Meares Island, which was sacred to the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations. The native tribes were just beginning to negotiate a territorial treaty with Canada and were granted an injunction by the British Columbia Supreme Court, which halted logging pending resolution of the land claim. Encouraged by the court’s ruling, environmentalists stepped up their efforts to ban industrial logging in the rest of the sound. Businesspeople from Victoria joined the fight, piling onto school buses to protest the impact of clear-cutting on their tourism-based community.

By the end of “Clayoquot Summer” in 1993, the standoff between environmentalists and industrial loggers in the sound had gotten the world’s attention. More than 800 protesters were arrested—the largest act of civil disobedience in Canadian history.

As the First Nations became sidelined from the controversy they helped spark, Ecotrust quietly worked with them to develop GIS mapping capabilities and to set up research stations in the woods to gain a better understanding of the natural capital there. The organization helped different tribes develop a conservation economy, assisting with restoring clam beds and salmon runs and helping to get several big watersheds protected. And after the provincial government opened the door to joint management of natural resources, Ecotrust assisted the tribes with their restorative forestry work.

Ecotrust’s work in Clayoquot Sound is typical of its commitment to community authority—First Nations in this case, local fishermen and loggers in others. If this approach has caused consternation

among environmentalists, Ecotrust’s strategy of promoting the unique competitive advantage of a bioregion is equally iconoclastic in the world of development economics—where countries are encouraged to produce commodities for export. Take the Pacific Northwest rainforest, which has a unique set of red cedars, redwood and spruce—trees with very particular characteristics. “They’ve cut it all down and turned it into Douglas fir plantations to produce 2x4s to compete with pine plantations in the South that will always be the lowest-cost producer,” Beebe says. “Why are we degrading our competitive advantage in this particular forest in order to compete with something where we’ll lose?”

It’s not just about preserving a place and culture, Beebe says. “The idea is what kinds of goods and services can you produce in this place that are different than in another place?

“Differentiation is the core fundamental process behind ecological and economic development,” he explains.

And so Ecotrust has supported fishermen in Prince William Sound in differentiating their Copper River salmon in the marketplace, a process that involves consumer education as well as branding. In Clayoquot Sound, Ecotrust has helped to link restorative forestry with green building.

Although it’s a nonprofit, Ecotrust has 13 subsidiaries—some for-profit, others nonprofit, partly due to Beebe’s desire to raise funds for his causes from whatever resources may exist. In 1995, for example, Ecotrust Canada was formed to raise money from the Canadian government, which American nonprofits are not able to do. (Beebe sits on its board, and its president sits on Ecotrust’s.)

Ecotrust’s structure allows the organization to maximize the impact of those funds. In the mid-90s, for example, Beebe helped ShoreBank raise $7 million in capital to create ShoreBank Pacific (2008 assets: $200 million), which in turn raised $70 million in “eco-deposits” from individuals and institutional investors. This in turn could be leveraged to $50 million in initial loans. ShoreBank, Ecotrust and ShoreBank Pacific, along with their affiliates and partners in more than a dozen countries, continue to share a mission of building a 21st-century green economy.

Even so, one of Beebe’s early goals was to create an endowment so that Ecotrust (which now has 50 staff) could live off its income rather than rely exclusively on grants. So through Ecotrust Forest Management Inc., it manages 12,500 acres of timberland in Oregon and Washington. Ecotrust also leases space in its headquarters, the Jean Vollum Natural Capital Center, to organizations with shared values. (The 70,000-square-foot landmark in Portland was the first restoration of a historic building to obtain LEED Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.)

As a result, when the S&P 500 tanked last year, Ecotrust’s Natural Capital Fund, which incorporates the “triple bottom line” of people, planet and profit in all its investments, maintained its $34 million endowment—a true test of sustainability if ever there was one.

Ellie Winninghoff ’75 is a veteran financial journalist with a special interest in the emerging disciplines of sustainable and philanthropic investments.

For more information, see:
www.ecotrust.org
www.conservationeconomy.net
www.realclimateeconomics.org
www.e3network.org
www.salmonnation.com

Above: Washington’s Hoh Rainforest is an example of a coastal temperate rainforest. Photo by Spencer B. Beebe.

“Why are we degrading our competitive advantage in this particular forest in order to compete with something where we’ll lose?”
shades of blue

BY JENNIFER WEEKS ’83

WITH HUMAN IMPACTS creating a “perfect storm” for the world’s oceans, Williams alumni are working to chart a new course.

W illiams sits well inland, but oceans powerfully impact our lives even in landlocked places. They produce much of our oxygen and food. They shape weather and climate patterns. And while it’s easy to assume that nothing we do could have a lasting impact on the vast, powerful expanses that cover three-quarters of the Earth’s surface, oceans are “seeing unparalleled changes … set in motion by human activities that commenced centuries ago,” says Jim Carlton, director of the Williams-Mystic maritime studies program.

Helping to untangle what Carlton calls a “maritime Gordian knot” created by habitat destruction, harmful impacts from fishing, marine pollution, invasive species and global climate change are several Ephs whose paths to marine careers ran right through the Berkshires (and, in some cases, Mystic, Conn.).

Andy Chang ’00 has studied the ecology of San Francisco Bay for the better part of a decade, but his biggest question about it may never be answered. “Every day I wonder what it looked like here before we started adding lots of non-native species,” he says.

Many human activities move living organisms from their native habitats to new locations. Sometimes it’s intentional, as when European explorers brought plants and animals to the New World for food. Other introductions happen by accident: Ships suck up marine organisms in their ballast water tanks, and wood-boring insects cross the oceans in imported lumber. Under the right conditions these visitors can thrive, especially if they have no natural predators in their new locations. San Francisco Bay has been colonized by non-native species ranging from aquatic plants to Asian clams and European green crabs.

“Some invasives have huge impacts. The challenge is to understand why they do and others don’t, and to prevent new invasions from happening,” says Chang, who moved west after designing a marine studies major at Williams and analyzing aquatic invasions with Carlton. This year he completed a Ph.D. at the University of California-Davis, where he studied freshwater flow effects on “fouling communities”—aquatic organisms like mussels and anemones that attach to hard surfaces.

Now, as a postdoctoral fellow with the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, Chang aims to better understand how more frequent and severe climatic extremes (such as fluctuations between wet and dry years) will affect estuaries like San Francisco Bay. “When we shift from wet years to dry years and freshwater flows diminish, the community in the bay changes a lot and can become dominated by one or two non-native species,” Chang says. Initially, he expects, these changes will impact rare species, but even dominant species will be affected as climatic extremes intensify.

Bio-invasions threaten fisheries and marine commerce around the world, but Chang hopes they can be managed. “Research helps us understand the effects of our actions, and we can change our activities to make them less harmful to the marine environment,” he says.
ELISE LEDUC ’06 is used to getting wet. At Williams the biology major headed Greensense, the campus environmental awareness group, and worked summers at the New England Aquarium’s Exploration Center in Newport, R.I. After a Peace Corps stint teaching aquaculture in Zambia, her next landing spot was the barrier island of Bogue Banks, N.C.

There, as an instructor in the Sound to Sea Program at the Trinity Center, a camp and conference center owned by the Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina, Leduc taught grade-school groups about the island’s salt marshes, freshwater ponds, maritime forests and ocean beaches. Students typically came for three-day infusions of basic biology and ecology in an outdoor setting. Many lived inland and had never seen the ocean.

Sound to Sea is secular but compatible with the church’s mission. “The idea of respecting the environment and loving all of God’s creations fits into their world view,” says Leduc, who recently started a master’s degree program in coastal environmental management at Duke University.

On the beach, Leduc would talk about the composition of sand, characteristics of different tidal zones and seasonal cycles like sea turtle nesting. Then she’d take her classes beachcombing for sting rays and jellyfish. Sessions at the Sound (the enclosed bay between Bogue Banks and the mainland) took place mostly in the water, wearing chest-high waders in winter.

Leduc also described human impacts on the oceans, such as overfishing and bycatch (accidental take of unwanted species, which destroys millions of tons of fish worldwide annually). “Students were shocked at how it all adds up,” she says. “We also talked about barrier islands and how they shift. Lots of people don’t really realize what force the ocean has and how it can actually move an island.”

Programs like Sound to Sea make Leduc hopeful about raising awareness of marine issues. “There are so many kids going through programs like this now, and a lot of teachers are starting to talk about ocean issues,” she says. “If we start early and instill love and respect for nature in kids, they’ll want to change things.”

Eighty percent of California’s population (about 27 million people) lives within 30 miles of the state’s scenic coastline. To help ensure that coastal resources were used wisely, California created two agencies in the 1970s: the Coastal Commission, which regulates development, and the Coastal Conservancy, which works with public and private groups on projects like protecting land, building trails and restoring wetlands.

“We’re like a Swiss Army knife: we have a lot of different tools, and we look for problems to fix,” says SAM SCHUCHAT ’83, who has been the conservancy’s executive officer since 2001. That can mean funding scientific studies, analyzing policy issues or supporting management efforts like the creation of marine protected areas. A political science major at Williams, Schuchat joined the conservancy after working as a community and union organizer and running several other nonprofits. But Williams gave him grounding in science, plus radio and theater opportunities that he still draws on. “I do a lot of public speaking and arranging events, and that was good preparation,” he says.

Schuchat also directs California’s Ocean Protection Council, a coordinating group created to improve ocean management. The council is studying coastal threats from climate change, which is raising sea levels as ice melts and ocean waters warm and expand. Climate change also is expected to generate more frequent and severe storms in many places. With seas rising, storm surges increasing and erosion intensifying, more Californians soon will live in flood-prone areas.

“There’s a lot of inertia about climate change and ocean impacts … but a lot of changes are going to be forced on us,” Schuchat says. Protecting California’s coastline and moving people out of harm’s way will be a massive undertaking, he predicts, comparable to the state’s multibillion-dollar push in recent decades to make highways and bridges more earthquake-proof. “The question,” he says, “is whether we can start adapting before flood waters start rising.”
As coordinator of the lobster sea sampling program for Maine’s Department of Marine Resources, KATHLEEN REARDON ’00 puts trained observers on lobster boats to measure the catch, check for diseases and document the undersized lobsters and egg-bearing females that fishermen throw back. She also mediates between lobstermen and outside interests that could threaten the unique industry’s survival.

“Biologically the fishery is doing pretty well; economically, not so much,” says Reardon. A national recession and oversupply have driven prices so low that some lobstermen didn’t fish last winter because they couldn’t make money. There’s also pressure from conservation groups who want to reduce lobstering’s environmental impacts through steps like tethering traps with sinking ropes that won’t entangle right whales (but, some fishermen fear, may snag on Maine’s rocky seabeds).

“Lobstering is woven into coastal Maine’s cultural fabric. People fish in territories with limited areas, usually with people they know. Territories are bound in tradition, and fishermen are accountable to the person fishing next to them,” says Reardon. “But they don’t always understand scientific goals or see eye to eye with managers. Their whole livelihood rides on being able to fish with gear that works, and they have no control over decisions.”

After majoring in biology at Williams, Reardon received a fellowship from the Island Institute in Rockland, Maine, dividing her time between environmental education and lobster research. Then she earned a dual master’s degree from the University of Maine in marine policy and marine biology, writing a thesis on a sea crab fishery.

She says Williams-Mystic was valuable preparation for connecting fishermen and regulators. It also helps that she goes out sampling regularly with fishermen (she’s measured up to 3,500 lobsters in a day).

“There’s a lot of mistrust between government officials and fisheries,” Reardon says. “We need more people who can move in between.”

Most human activity involving oceans takes place in coastal areas that are growing ever more crowded. Traditional uses like fishing, boating and shipping compete today for marine space with new activities from whale-watching to offshore energy development. Some states, including Massachusetts, Rhode Island and California, are wading into the fray to draw up rules and recommendations.

“It’s land-use planning in the water,” says BETSY NICHOLSON ’95, a regional coastal management specialist for the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), based in New Hampshire. Nicholson is NOAA’s lead coordinator for New England, a job that requires pulling together the right people from state and federal agencies, industry and academia to address problems that need to be solved on a regional scale, like invasive species and ocean habitat protection.

Marine spatial planning isn’t simple, but it’s increasingly necessary. “You’ve got dozens of actors with jurisdiction, so you need to streamline permits and think about what makes sense to do where in the ocean,” Nicholson says. “We need good data: what the ocean floor looks like, where the fish are and how projects like wind farms might affect the habitat around them. You put it all together in a GIS system and do compatibility analyses to see which activities go together and which exclude others.” Last year Massachusetts was the first state to require a master plan through legislation for managing state waters; Nicholson is representing NOAA in the drafting process.

An art and environmental studies major at Williams, Nicholson says she learned at Williams-Mystic how to apply policy, science, maritime history and economics to ocean issues. She spent six years with NOAA in Washington, D.C., handling Congressional relations, policy and budget issues. Now she focuses on the health of New England’s coasts.

“You’ve got to understand local culture and people’s sense of place to build relationships and solve these problems,” she says. “I get out sailing as often as I can, but my day job is around a table. That’s where you convene people to have these kinds of dialogues and find solutions.”

Jennifer Weeks ’83 is a freelance writer in Watertown, Mass.
Commencement
2009

Photos by Nicholas Whitman
What does it take to fulfill our leadership obligation?” Clarence Otis Jr. ’77 asked the 512 undergraduates and 35 graduate students receiving their degrees during Williams’ 220th commencement exercises June 7. “I’ve come to believe it takes three things: sustained curiosity, the ability to dream big dreams and meaningful expertise, or know-how.”

In his address, Otis, who is chairman and CEO of Darden Restaurants, the world’s largest full-service restaurant operating company, said it was important to note both the people “who have created opportunities for us” and those “who have prepared us to take advantage of the opportunities.”

“Whether the community we choose to make the focal point of our life is academic, corporate, social, artistic or political, we can repay the investment the College, the nation and indeed the world have made in us—the privilege we’ve enjoyed—by providing our chosen communities with leadership,” he said.

Otis, a former Williams trustee, received an honorary degree, as did NPR foreign correspondent Anne Garrels (who gave the baccalaureate address), astronaut and U.S. Sen. John Glenn, Pulitzer Prize-winning nonfiction writer Tracy Kidder, historian James McPherson and singer/songwriter James Taylor.

In addition to bestowing the honorary degrees, Williams President Morty Schapiro presented citations for retiring psychology professor Phebe Cramer and Cluett Professor of Humanities Mark C. Taylor, who were designated faculty emeriti. It was Schapiro’s last commencement as president of the College.

Among the Class of 2009, 11 students, including Phi Beta Kappa Speaker Jeffrey I. Kaplan and Valedictorian Peter S. Nurnberg, graduated summa cum laude. Sixty six, including Class Speaker Aroop Mukharji, were magna cum laude; 106 graduated cum laude; 53 with highest departmental honors; and 80 with honors. There were 63 members of Phi Beta Kappa and 62 members of Sigma Xi.

For complete commencement coverage, including photographs and videos, visit www.williams.edu/home/commencement/2009.
A small group of fourth-grade girls was caught up in a cycle of fighting that could have escalated from the verbal to the physical. But Allison Burkett ’94, then a Williams senior working with a counselor at a Pittsfield elementary school, wanted to involve the girls in another kind of drama, casting them in skits based on Caribbean folk tales she was studying in another class. As they rehearsed for an end-of-semester show for their fellow students, the girls slowly learned to label their emotions, listen to each other and work together without raising their voices—or fists. It was heady stuff for Burkett, a psychology major who would go on to become a vascular surgeon in Atlanta.

Burkett’s experience was made possible by Laurie Heatherington, the Edward Dorr Griffin Professor of Psychology, who for 25 years has been sending undergraduates into unpaid jobs in the field through her “Clinical and Community Psychology” course.

With enrollment limited to 15 majors, mostly seniors, Heatherington interviews accepted students each spring and works through the summer to match each one’s particular clinical interests with an agency serving people with psychological and emotional disorders. The work ranges as widely as the needs of the people the agencies serve and includes helping bipolar and schizophrenic adults with housekeeping and shopping, working in early intervention programs for at-risk toddlers and providing more one-on-one attention to struggling adolescents than their public schools can afford.

“These are hands-on experiences,” says Heatherington. “Our students are closely supervised by the agencies’ professional clinicians, but they all do something helpful that engages them directly with people.”

The fieldwork is an important component of the course, which ties together readings and discussions on theory, methods and professional issues in community and clinical psychology. This particular mode of education, Heatherington says, truly combines the academic and experiential realms of learning, making them accountable to each other. “Students are required to read, critically evaluate, discuss and write about current theory and research,” she says. “At the same time they commit their time, brains and hearts to working outside of academia in hospitals, schools, clinics and other settings. … The key—and what makes this different from more standard ‘service learning’ and ‘internships’—is that these two realms are continually integrated by the students and professor.”

Students who go on to careers in psychology point to Heatherington’s class as the starting point. “We were thinking critically about what we were doing and the broader implications of our work and ultimately positioning ourselves to better address these challenges in the future,” says Justin Lavner ’06, now a Ph.D. candidate in clinical psychology at UCLA.

Maggie McDonald ’04, who is working on a dual master’s program in social work and social policy at the University of Pennsylvania, says the course “stimulated … my ability to observe and intervene in the arena beyond the ‘Purple Bubble.’”

Over the years, Heatherington has observed that students are humbled by the strengths of others who struggle with psychological problems as well as by the commitment of those who help them and the complexity of solutions. “They learn that the academic literature is a resource that contains the fruits of others’ experiences and that using it is essential. At the same time, they learn that ‘real-world’ experience sometimes teaches lessons that just can’t be learned as well by reading about them. And along the way, as their stories attest, they are often privileged to have contributed something useful at their placement sites.”

Heatherington (far left) with Annie Liang ’09 at the Transitions program in Pittsfield, Mass.
Dance isn’t often noted for its contributions to academia, but for Kimerer L. LaMothe ’85, her practice of classical, modern and native dance has been as essential to her scholarship as her years of education. An award-winning author and philosopher with a doctorate in religion from Harvard, LaMothe draws deeply on her study and practice of rhythmic movement as a way of understanding ourselves and the world in which we live.

Her latest work, What A Body Knows: Finding Wisdom in Desire, puts forth a new philosophy of how we become ourselves—and how we can be most true to ourselves—by examining our impulses for food, sex and spirit. It’s a theory she says would not have been possible had she not been a dancer. "Breath," which is so important in dance, she explains, "is the paradigm. Breathing is a movement, taking in resources to support our growth and exhaling those we don’t need. If we start to develop a sensory awareness of the movements that are making us, we can learn to participate more consciously in our own bodily becoming."

For too long, and particularly in Western thought, LaMothe says, our understanding of ourselves has privileged our mental faculties over and against our bodily selves as the sources of truth and knowledge. It’s something that first occurred to her as a political economy major at Williams as she began to challenge the underlying assumptions of the field. In February of her senior year, LaMothe changed her major to religion—taking four religion courses that spring—where she found "critical tools that enabled me to explore these issues in greater depth," she says.

But dance also edified LaMothe’s understanding of the nature of truth and knowledge. Her first book, Between Dancing and Writing (Fordham University Press, 2004), investigated why scholars of religion tend to overlook dance in favor of texts as expressions of religious life. In her second book, Nietzsche’s Dancers (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), she explored how some of dance’s most noteworthy practitioners, including Martha Graham and Isadora Duncan, found justification and guidance in Friedrich Nietzsche’s texts for developing dance as a medium of religious experience and expression.

The idea of developing a philosophy that acknowledges the wisdom of our bodily selves is one that arose organically from LaMothe’s academic inquiries, she says. “I realized that to develop responses to these issues, I needed to move out of the academy and live a life that would enable me to think differently about them,” she says. “The problem could not be addressed simply at the level of ideas. It demanded a change in practice too.”

She and Geoffrey Gee, her husband of 17 years, had always dreamed of moving to the country and creating a place where they could do their work in closer proximity with the natural world. So in 2005 they and their three children (they now have five) left Boston, where LaMothe was a professor at Harvard, and relocated to a 96-acre farm in upstate New York. There they founded Vital Arts, a center for arts and ideas (www.vitalartsmedia.com). The move allowed them each to pursue their creative goals, but it also gave LaMothe the empirical evidence she needed to advance her theories. What better place to live in all of one’s senses than on a farm?

It is our movements at every moment—breathing, walking, playing, working—that make us, she says. And our primal desires for food, sex and spirit impel some of those movements. Because they originate in the body, they can and should be used as “fluid, dynamic instruments of discernment,” LaMothe says. What a Body Knows goes on to explain how to find and move with the wisdom that comes from our need to satisfy our desires.

LaMothe is now working on a companion volume about our primary relationships with family, and she hopes to complete a third book discussing our relationship with the natural world.

“I hope [these books] provide a philosophical understanding of the shifts needed in our culture to sustain life through the 21st century,” she says. “I hope to shift our experience of what it means to be a human being.”
“MY WORK IS ABOUT RECONNECTING WITH THE BODILY SELVES WE HAVE LEARNED TO IGNORE AND FINDING WISDOM WHERE WE HAVE LEAST COME TO EXPECT IT.”
Williams professors and others weigh in on the issues of the day. For a complete listing of media appearances, visit www.williams.edu/admin/news/inthenews

“We saw it! … The diamond rings were spectacular,” astronomy professor Jay Pasachoff wrote on July 21 for “TierneyLab” (a blog hosted by The New York Times) while he was viewing the longest total eclipse this century from an observatory outside Hangzhou, China.

In a June 30 posting of “The Numbers Guy” (a Wall Street Journal blog) discussing statistical techniques used to uncover election fraud, mathematics professor Steven Miller cautioned that the appearance of an anomaly may be the result of lots of analysts running lots of tests: “If you don’t specify ahead of time what you’re looking for, you’d be surprised if you don’t find rare events.”

UMass-Amherst-based WFCR radio’s Field Notes for May 11 featured Joan Edwards, the Washington Gladden 1859 Professor of Biology, who called the oft-maligned dandelion an “amazing botanical engineering marvel” for its unique capabilities, which include reproducing without cross-pollination and its stem’s performance of a “dance” before releasing its seeds.

An April 14 column in The Record of Bergen County (N.J.) discussing the future of the estate tax quoted economics professor Jon Bakija as saying, “If you lower the tax rate, then there’s a lower incentive to leave more for charity, but there’s more left in the estate to give. … The incentive effect of the higher tax rate has the bigger impact.”

FROM THE BOOKSHELF


First Come the Zebra. By Lynne Barasch (wife of Ken Barasch ’56). Lee & Low Books, 2009. Inspired by a Williams-sponsored trip to Kenya led by Rosenberg Professor of Environmental Studies and Biology Hank Art, this picture book pays tribute to the potential of today’s youth to make a difference in the world.

A Fine Regard: Essays in Honor of Kirk Varnedoe. Edited by Patricia G. Berman and Gertje R. Utley. Ashgate, 2008. Through their essays about 19th- and 20th-century art, the late Kirk Varnedoe’s ’67 most distinguished doctoral students pay tribute to his legacy as a dynamic art history professor and chief curator of painting and sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art.
Bad Advice: Bush’s Lawyers in the War on Terror. By Harold H. Bruff ’65. University Press of Kansas, 2009. Through a close study of the legal advice provided to President George W. Bush, a former Justice Department attorney critiques the justifications for the tactics used in the War on Terror.


Gender Games: Why Women Coaches are Losing the Field. By Christina Cruz, former Williams research analyst and former women’s crew coach. VDM Verlag, 2009. An exploration of the intertwining aspects of gender, relationships, coaches’ struggles and the sense of self as coach.


Marine Shells of Northeast Florida. By Harry G. Lee ’62. Jacksonville Shell Club, 2009. An illustrated scientific catalog of 804 species of marine and estuarine mollusks, reported from the coastal region extending from Cape Hatteras to Cape Canaveral as well as the shallow waters of the Gulf of Mexico from southwest Florida to west Yucatan.


Crisis and the Everyday in Post-socialist Moscow. By Olga Shevchenko, assistant professor of sociology. Indiana University Press, 2009. A study, based on more than 100 in-depth interviews, of how post-socialist Russians made sense of and responded to rising unemployment, currency devaluation and political upheaval in the late 1990s.


ON CD
Crunchtime. By Galveston Sand Bar Flies, with words and music by Peter Britton ’56. Galveston Sand Music, 2008. Including songs written before and after 9/11, this Western swing album explores everyone’s “crunchtimes.”

HELP FILL THE BOOKSHELF!
To have your work listed in Life of the Mind, please send information to the Alumni Review, P.O. Box 676, Williamstown, MA 01267-0676 fax: 413.597.4158 e-mail: alumni.review@williams.edu

Those who make a habit of reading Williams’ course catalog (and many folks do) may notice a growing number of listings designated with a (D), courtesy of the Exploring Diversity Initiative. Now in its second year, the initiative requires students to take at least one course that promotes “a self-conscious and critical engagement with diversity” and urges them “to consider the operations of difference in the world.” With 70 courses available in 2009-10 (up from 46 the previous year), there’s a lot to choose from, including:

History of American Childhood (history, Africana studies)
Pictures That Rocked the Nation: Courbet and Manet in Second Empire France (art history, women’s & gender studies)
The Indian Economy: Development and Social Justice (economics)
The Tropics: Biology and Social Issues (biology, environmental studies)
Modern Arabic Literature in Translation (Arabic, comparative literature)
Latinos and Education: The Politics of Schooling, Language and Latino Studies (Latino studies, American studies)

View the course catalog at http://catalog.williams.edu

D-LIST
Lifelong Learning for the Williams Family
Travel-Study for 2010

THE EVERGLADES (Jan. 24-30)
Explore a unique ecosystem and its amazing animal and plant life. Hank Art, the Rosenburg Professor of Environmental Studies and Biology, leads day trips from a hotel base in Naples, Fla.

RED SEA CIVILIZATIONS (Jan. 24-Feb. 7)
Examine antique sites in Egypt, Jordan and Israel, from the Pyramids to Petra (including nine days aboard a small ship), with history professor Magnus Bernhardsson.

CARIBBEAN ISLANDS (Feb. 19-26)
Visit Colonial-era plantation manors and gardens on a cruise from Barbados to Curacao aboard the barque Sea Cloud II with Faison-Pierson-Stoddard Professor of Art History Michael Lewis.

TREASURES OF SPAIN (March 21-April 1)
Partake of the art, architecture and cultural legacies of Granada, Ronda, Seville, Cordoba, Toledo and Madrid with Romance languages professor Leyla Rouhi.

HIGHLIGHTS OF SOUTH AFRICA (March 24-April 6)
Travel via the famous Rovos Rail from spectacular Cape Town to a safari in Kruger National Park with visiting economics professor Michael Samson.

THE WONDERS OF CHINA (April 13-25)
Experience landmark sites and regional cultures, from rural and historic to metropolitan and modern, with China expert Raymond Chang, the Halford R. Clark Professor of Natural Sciences, Emeritus.

ACROSS THE INDIAN OCEAN (April 24-May 12)
Make six fascinating ports of call on a cruise from Singapore to Dubai aboard the Crystal Symphony with John W. Chandler, Williams president, emeritus, who will discuss regional religions.

PORTUGAL’S DOURO RIVER (June 24-July 5)
Sail on a comfortable riverboat from Porto to Spain, making tasty connections between culture and cuisine with Gastronómica editor Darra Goldstein, the Francis Christopher Oakley Third Century Professor of Russian. Two days in Lisbon are included.

RAFTING THE YAMPA RIVER (June 27-July 2)
Enjoy whitewater rafting, camping and spectacular scenery in Colorado and Utah with David Dethier, the Edward Brust Professor of Geology and Mineralogy.

SECRETS OF TURKEY (July 3-16)
Take in exotic Istanbul, Cappadocia, Antalya and a five-day gulet cruise along the ancient Turquoise Coast on a family tour with history professor Magnus Bernhardsson.

SCOTLAND’S LANDSCAPE (July 25-Aug. 2)
Interpret the landscape from Loch Ness to Loch Lomond and from St. Andrews to Edinburgh with bases in Oban and Stirling with Bud Wobus, the Edna McConnell Clark Professor of Geology.

COASTAL NORWAY (Aug. 11-26)
Cruise aboard a comfortable mail boat along this stunning coast with its fjords, harbors and fishing villages, from Bergen to the North Cape, with Markes Johnson, the Charles L. MacMillan Professor of Natural Science.

IMAGES OF IRELAND (Sept. 12-21)
Sharpen your camera skills as you move from inn to inn in the west of Ireland with Winter Study instructor and landscape photographer Peter Cox.

THE CANADIAN ROCKIES (Sept. 28-Oct. 6)
Spend two days in Vancouver and two aboard the Rocky Mountaineer train before enjoying the glories of Banff, Lake Louise and Jasper with John Hyde ’52, the Brown Professor of History, Emeritus.

THE AMALFI COAST (Oct. 6-14)
Immerse yourself in a region of Italy offering classical sites such as Pompeii and Paestum plus the charms of Sorrento and the Isle of Capri. Unpack just once for this Alumni College with Irwin Shainman, music professor emeritus.

THE HUDSON VALLEY (Oct. 8-16)
Learn the many tales of charming historical sites along the Hudson and into Leatherstocking Country with Field Horne ’73, professional historian.

For additional information, visit alumni.williams.edu/alumnitravelstudy or contact Robert V. Behr ’55 Alumni Travel-Study Office, 75 Park St. Williamstown, MA 01267 tel: 413.597.4011 fax: 413.458.9808 e-mail: Robert.V.Behr@williams.edu

REPLENISHING THE CURIOUS MIND
A well-educated person seeks opportunities to learn throughout a lifetime. Williams facilitates lifelong learning for Ephs on campus, at home and around the world. Programs that engage the intellect, enrich the spirit and create ways to enhance good fellowship are open to all alumni, their children, spouses and partners, parents, grandparents, widows and friends of Williams.
Back home, I would lie on my driveway to look at stars. My mom worried about me getting run over, but I insisted; the stars made all my stress seem like small trivial matters.

I’m an average guy with stuff to do every day—everyone like me should try this.

SHUNTU KUANG ’10

We’re one of those crazy Williams marriage stories—despite taking a class together and living next door to one another on Hoxsey Street senior year, we never actually spoke to one another. We met at our 10-year reunion and got married in December 2005. We live in Burlington, Vt. Andrew’s a seventh-generation Vermonter; Betsy is a “Flatlander” from New York. In Vermont, where true natives still regard outsiders with skepticism, this constitutes a kind of “mixed marriage.” But we both love our relaxed, quirky, politically innovative state.

ANDREW ALLEN ’91 & BETSY ALLEN PENNEBAKER ’91