

BY JAYNE M. IAFRATE

## Fun in the sun

When it comes to humor, I'm a pretty easy mark. I'll laugh at just about anything remotely funny, and I'll say almost anything to get a laugh. It's autonomic, I'm convinced, so I don't even try to control it.

The researchers at Stanford University say that's okay; they report that a minute of laughter equals 10 minutes on a rowing machine. Other studies report health benefits such as stress release, boosts in the immune system, increased endorphin levels (a natural pain killer), increased lung capacity and oxygen levels in the blood and improved physical fitness. Finally, there's proof—solid science—that watching “Most Extreme Elimination Challenge” is good and good for you!

Satisfied that science endorses my most embarrassing recent vice, I'll make my way back to the *Quarterly*. It's really not that funny, is it? Maybe it shouldn't be. After all, we are charged with telling interesting stories about the Wheaton community, and those stories tend toward the serious and thought-provoking. They might make good reading, and every once in a while they might elicit a giggle or two, but rarely are they David-Sedaris-essay-funny or Carol-Burnett-doing-*Gone-with-the-Wind*-funny or even Fox-News-fair-and-balanced-funny.

The *Quarterly* needs a good laugh as the summer winds down, so we're taking ourselves a *little* less seriously in this issue. Take Professor Betsey Dyer's text on bacteria, for example (page 18). *A Field Guide to Bacteria* topped my summer reading list not only because it's a fascinating look at the everyday field markers of microscopic life, but also because the text is written with Dyer's subtle wit. Who knew bacteria could be fun? Then there's Mary Anne Marsh '79. As a prominent national political analyst, she's seen it all.



Starting on page 28, she tells some of her most honestly funny stories.

And speaking of telling all, you must read the Endpage by Joanne Victory-Broz '82 (page 60). There are the class notes we know, and the class notes we could never even imagine. Well, Victory-Broz has an imagination you'll never believe.

## ▶ LETTERS

### The *Quarterly* redesign

*We received many congratulatory notes from you regarding the new Wheaton Quarterly.*

*Modesty prevents us from running them all, but please know that we appreciate your kind words. Below is just a sampling of your opinions.*

—Editor

I receive two other university magazines: from the University of Texas and the University of Washington. Wheaton's is the best. It is very well written with lots of excellent articles. The report in this issue about how students handled the Iraq war was well done and I always enjoy the faculty publication updates. Please give my compliments to your editor and staff.

— Charles Shelan P'00

I have received this issue and it is the best *Wheaton Quarterly* I have read in some time! Perhaps it was Dr. Austin on the cover. Thank you for so many excellent issues, sharing with alumnae/i Wheaton's involvement both by students and graduates in the world today.

— Barbara Church Alvord '46

Thank you for two great articles about an unusual man, Holcombe Austin, a true “scholar and gentleman” whose avocations as arborist and archivist was a gift to students and their parents alike. I went to Tree Walks on all four Parents' Weekends. Ten years later, my husband and I have started a small arboretum—inspiration!

— Sally Wood P'92

### Wheaton and war

Since Wheaton taught me to defend my beliefs, I feel compelled to add a comment regarding previous war stories. War may not be pretty or nice. It doesn't discriminate. Children will die—infants and teenagers alike. But so will fathers and sons, wives, sisters and mothers—all members of the U.S. military. And to those who question the mind-set and motivation of our nation's soldiers and sailors, I encourage you to ask any member of the armed forces how they feel about war. We voluntarily sign up to give our lives wherever our commander-in-chief sees necessary—hands down.

...Don't ever feel sorry for the military. They do what is asked of them and they do it well. And how do they feel? Proud. If not from the support of their fellow Americans, then at least from the support of their fellow service members. If the armed forces learned anything from Vietnam, it was to be proud of the job they do—the cause they signed up for—and not to expect anything in return.

— Amy Lowe '00

United States Naval Reserve

### Have an opinion?

It's most likely that you do have an opinion, and we'd like to know what you think about what you read in the *Quarterly*. Please send your letters to Jayne Iafrate, *Wheaton Quarterly*, Wheaton College, Norton, MA 02766 or [quarterly@wheatoncollege.edu](mailto:quarterly@wheatoncollege.edu).