

# Continental Drift

BY JAYNE M. IAFRATE, EDITOR

It's March 2003, but it feels a lot like 180 million B.C. Our overheated Earth seems, figuratively, to be coming apart at the seams. Iraq pulls in one direction, North Korea in another, effectively cleaving America from many of its allies and Americans from each other—continental drift, 21st-century style. And “Are You Hot?” continues to dominate the news.

What is it that leaves Americans so cold to international issues? The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press offered a provocative theory last summer when it published its biennial survey on news consumption in America. The survey reported that 61 percent of Americans follow international events *only* when major developments occur. Far fewer (31 percent) regularly engage in international news coverage. The reason? “Roughly two-thirds (65 percent) of those with moderate or low interest in international news say they sometimes lose interest in these stories because they lack the background information to keep up,” the study said.

It seems as if education has failed at least one generation of world citizens, according to the Pew Research Center. Without the context of international history, politics, arts and culture, too many Americans are at a loss to understand contemporary issues. They lack, as Dr. Harvey Charles, director of Wheaton’s new Center for Global Education says, “global competency.”

Wheaton reinvigorated its longtime commitment to global education in 2001 when the faculty thrust globalism and non-Western ideas into the spotlight of the new curriculum. Built on the strong foundation of previous initiatives—the overseas faculty internship program, the Davis Fellows program, Worldfest and others—the new curriculum demands global competency of every student. The world is hot, so they say, and getting hotter every day.



## Be Part of a *Wheaton Quarterly* Article

We’re always looking for people with special interests or experiences to play a role in *Quarterly* articles. If you believe have experience relevant to any of the pending article ideas below, please contact editor Jayne Iafrate at [jiafrate@wheatoncollege.edu](mailto:jiafrate@wheatoncollege.edu). Of course, all story ideas are also welcome.

### What’s Wrong (or Right) with K-12 Education?

Lately teachers have been the target of ire usually reserved only for lawyers and the media. Is there something fundamentally wrong with K-12 education in the U.S., or is education reform just the buzzword *du jour* of aspiring politicians? If you have experience in the education reform movement as a teacher, administrator, parent or political leader, we’d like to hear your story.

### Ethics in America

Corporate scandal, clergy sex abuse, plagiarism in the literary world—the regularity and scale in which we violate the social contract is often staggering. What role should ethics play in daily life? How should we teach our future leaders to make the best decisions when they face an ethical challenge?

## LETTERS

Wheaton’s Turtle Researchers Professor Barbara Brennessel was kind enough to share a copy of the winter *Wheaton Quarterly*. Your story on the terrapin project, “Summer of Survival,” is masterful. Your words are inspiring; your images compelling. In combination they prove an insightful window not only into the terrapin research program out here at the end of the universe, but into the power and the beauty of field research as a tool in saving endangered species and conserving threatened habitat, and the critical role Wheaton students play in this life-and-death drama.

—Don Lewis

‘UpClose’ and Personal Another marvelous *Quarterly*. What a challenge to put this large issue together, but full of good information and enjoyable reading. Thank you very much. Of course, I was particularly pleased to see the “UpClose” on classmate Joan Leavitt, but I had another nice surprise: the UpClose on Sherry Reed ’82. While I’ve never met Sherry, her mother and I were very good friends from kindergarten through high school, and are still in touch to this day!

—Jane Rowe Mraz ’57

### Physical Education Requirements

Considering the mass of excess mass that is a problem in our country, I believe it is wrong for Wheaton to drop P.E. There will always be a need for physical activities, especially for those students/people who say, “I’m too tired or I can’t play ball or I don’t like to swim, play field hockey, run, etc.” It seems odd now when the new athletic center has been built. I hope Wheaton reconsiders for the health and safety of all the students, not just the jocks.

—Janet McClure Lyman ’47