

BY JAYNE M. IAFRATE

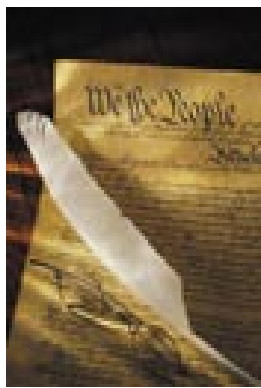
Designs on free speech

A column about the *Quarterly's* redesign has been pre-empted by breaking news. We will return to regular programming shortly.

A colleague of mine was strolling through New York's Union Square in late March with fellow participants from a seminar. As the trio passed an Au Bon Pain franchise, my colleague reached for the door, recognizing a decent cheap lunch when she sees one. Her companions were mortified. "The only way I can show *them* is with my purse," one said. *Them*, of course, meant the French. Au Bon Pain—name aside—is a Boston-based company; it has been for 25 years.

Wartime hasn't exactly been pretty out there on the streets of America. It's pretty on television, where we see toppled monuments and hazy green firefights, but relatively little of the messy stuff of war, like well-lit violence and death; you have to go to the newspapers for that story. The streets have been far more contentious. Americans have been pouring their French wine down the drain while denouncing their neighbors as "terrorists" and "traitors" when they speak out against war. Just when you think, "It can't happen here," it does.

The student residents of 44 Howard Street made news in late March when they hung an American flag upside-down (see story on page 4). In their anti-war protest, they enraged a small group of people who believe free speech is all right as long as the message is acceptable. This message apparently wasn't, and it was answered with a broken window, a dead fish (*a la* "The Godfather") and death threats. Free speech, right back at ya.



To find an upside here is difficult, but not impossible. Violence often travels hand-in-hand with freely expressed opinion; it certainly did in Saddam Hussein's Iraq, and sometimes it does in America, too. The incident on campus challenged Wheaton students to examine the consequences of free speech in a very personal way, and perhaps taught them a hard lesson in democracy. Differences

of opinion, whether over foreign policy or foreign food, offer yet another teachable moment.

But back to design. Thanks to months of tireless work by Wheaton's publications design team of Barbara Dill and Mike Kurgansky, the *Quarterly* has never looked better. Take a look, and let us know whether you share our opinion.

▶ LETTERS

The War and Wheaton

Bette Fauteux '47 e-mailed me today about the American flag flown at Wheaton in protest against the war with Iraq [see page 4—Ed.] and asked me to notify Wheaton of my approval.

I am not all that political, but I think of war in terms of the families who are bound to be victims, thinking of how I would feel if my family were hurt in the fighting. When the bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Americans were exulting while I was thinking of the thousands of people who were killed with one bomb. I have a stepcousin who was four years old in Hiroshima. Her mother and older brother were killed, and she herself had half of her face burned in the ensuing fire, scarring her for life. She is in her sixties now and never married, because those who were in Hiroshima were suspected of suffering genetic damage from the radiation and not considered marriageable. She made a good life for herself teaching physical education and dance in a women's college in Hokkaido and dancing professionally.

I also think of how U.S. soldiers must feel, fighting this war that many of their fellow citizens don't support. Shades of Vietnam. It is an old saying that old men declare war, and young men die. Cynically, I suspect that our sinking economy was in need of a big distraction. There is a school of thought that blames economic factors for the internment of the Japanese Americans during World War II. On the West Coast the Japanese dominated the agricultural industry, including the whole-

sale produce business, which my father and all of the neighborhood fathers were in, and farmers had to leave their ripening crops and their successful businesses to be interned while opportunists took over.

And who are these people who think of these comic-book phrases like "Iraqi Freedom," "Shock and Awe," "Axis of Evil," etc., thinking they will resonate with the public and stir patriotism? The government must have a special department that thinks up these phrases.

Okay, Bette, I put my two cents in to support the Wheaton flag protest.

—Momo Nagano '47

The article "No Blood for Oil" in the spring *Wheaton Quarterly* was a good example of liberal college professors presenting a one-sided, biased and inaccurate view of the Iraqi war. It is not easy to go against the crowd. More power to [junior] Richard Dwight for having the courage to speak his mind and question their assumptions. Too many people accept as fact the distorted information given out by the liberal media and university and college elite...I'm glad there is someone at Wheaton to tell the other side of the story.

—Barbara Rogers '40

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.