

▶ LETTERS

Bravo to Mary Anne Marsh '79

Thank you for publishing the speech that Mary Anne Marsh '79 gave at the Honors Convocation in May. Since I was president of the Alumnae Association in 1987 and was more than casually aware of the TOWEL organization to which Mary Anne referred, I read the article with great interest.

Mary Anne, thank you for your honesty, your intellect, your beautiful insights into life and for sharing all of that with the students at Wheaton today. I hope you felt that the students you spoke to that day in May were no different from the students you attended classes with a couple of decades ago, except that there were both young women and young men present. I know that I am thrilled with the Wheaton of today. I am also thrilled that the talent with which you and your fellow students and alums led the TOWEL organization in 1987 is obviously still a part of your being today. It's what a Wheaton education is all about. Bravo!

—Hope H. Pettegrew '61, P'87,
P'89

"Race Day" connections

Hats off to Emily McHugh '94 and Barbara Stephens for bringing to us the story of Emily's "Race Day" in Lake Placid (fall 2003 *Quarterly*). In the category of "it's a small world," it turns out that I was volunteering at the event as a member of the lead boat riding in Mirror Lake with the swimmers. My job was assisting ESPN with the filming of the event and bringing a live feed that was shown on the Jumbotron television in Times Square. A second responsibility

we had was to look for any swimmers who were in "trouble." Luckily, there were none. I felt the story really captured the moment and the joy we all felt being part of this Ironman event.

—Jason Hawthorne Petty '92

President Marshall's legacy

When our president, Dale Rogers Marshall, leaves Wheaton at the end of this academic year, she will have left a remarkable record of accomplishment of which she and the college can be proud. As the wife of the president of Lafayette College, I am in an unusual position to compare and to judge the relative success of college presidents and I can easily list Dale among the best of small-college leaders.

Dale has done an amazing job at Wheaton. She has energized the campus, instituted many physical as well as programmatic changes, put real life into athletics and has made many of her presidential colleagues jealous of Wheaton's remarkable success in helping its students win prestigious fellowships like Rhodes and Fulbright.

A college president can also be judged by her success in obtaining alumni support—which is, believe me, an ability that cannot be easily learned, and Dale has it. The physical changes on the campus speak for themselves. The well-run development office at Wheaton impressed me so much that I increased my contribution this year—and felt really good about it. And I am not alone.

Dale Marshall has rekindled my interest in Wheaton and I suspect that she has had that

effect on many alums. Happy memories keep surfacing, reminding me of those days which my mother correctly described as among "the happiest time of your life." For this, I thank you, Dale. Have a wonderful time in California.

—Barbara Sarnoff Rothkopf '59

Holcombe Austin remembered

The article in the summer *Quarterly* about Professor Holcombe Austin brought back memories of a very special learning experience I had at Wheaton. I registered for one of Dr. Austin's philosophy courses and went to Mary Lyon Hall at the appointed time. The brand-new professor was there, but no one else. I quickly retreated. When I returned a few minutes later—still no one else had arrived—Dr. Austin called out, "Miss Wright, we have an unusual situation here; you're the only one who signed up for this course." After checking with the higher-ups about this unique situation, he told me we would proceed as scheduled. We did our philosophical discussing while strolling around campus. I cannot recall a word uttered and am grateful no tape exists, but I have a lasting memory of an interesting and understanding teacher and an extremely enjoyable experience.

—Carol Wright Ashwell '42

Arab-Israeli conflict

Mary-Lou Leiser Smith '68 presented an extremely one-sided view of the Arab-Israeli conflict. She sees the Israeli occupation of the West Bank as the "root causes of violence." If one is looking for "root causes," how about starting with the

implacable Arab hatred of Israel and attempts to destroy it, starting with the Arab states' invasion of Israel at its founding? Israel is in the West Bank because in 1967 Egypt declared war by blockading Israeli ports. Israel reoccupied parts of the West Bank because two years ago Palestinians began a campaign of suicide bombings of Israeli civilians after Arafat rejected Barak's offer of a Palestinian state.

—Professor Gerald Zuriff

Recommended reading

I have been looking at Wheaton's curriculum and particularly at the History Department's faculty members and their publications. As a non-stop reader of history (and former student of Ernest Knapton), I have always hoped that the *Quarterly* would publish a "reading recommended by faculty, seniors and alumni" list. It helps to know what teaching faculty and serious readers are in fact reading and would like to recommend. We were taught at Wheaton that learning never ends. This helps us "stay the course" after graduation. I actually read more history now than I did in four years at Wheaton, thanks to the great and inspiring professors I had. I enjoy the *Quarterly* every time it arrives.

—Pat Comanduras Christopher '59

Editor's reply: Pat, you're on to something. I've been asking faculty members for reading recommendations for years, and then selfishly keeping their suggestions to myself. When space allows, I'll try to find a way to publish a list of recommended books. Many thanks for a great idea!