

# Teach your parents well


"I can do it, Dad!" I had nudged my 10-year-old daughter aside—gently—to reveal my tricks for cooking a perfect omlette. It was not a shining moment in parenting, I realized before handing over the spatula and stepping away from the stove. Learning how to be a parent is a lifelong process.

The cover story and accompanying illustrations play with the phrase "helicopter parents," a not-so-kindly term for adults who hover over their college-age sons

and daughters. But we mean no disrespect: writer Hannah Benoit and her husband Bob Lavelle have two children at college as does illustrator Mark Steele. Inside, Wheaton parents and students share how they make the transition successfully; administrators and faculty at the college offer advice, too.

Homeless families face far more serious problems. Thankfully, Sue Heilman '75 runs a unique non-profit that provides care for children, and training and counseling

for their parents. Safety and security on a national level is the subject of the article written by Tom Sanderson '92 and Elaine Dezenski '92, experts on those topics.

This issue marks a change at the *Wheaton Quarterly*. In November, we said goodbye to editor Jayne Iafrate, who left for a position at Harvard. And at press time, we welcomed our new colleague and editor, Sandy Coleman, who joins us after 18 years reporting and editing at *The Boston Globe*. 

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**Power in diversity**

I very much enjoyed the Winter 2007 edition of the *Wheaton Quarterly*. I was pleased to see that the collection of articles and alumnae/i profiles really showcased Wheaton's strength—the ability to take an amazing education and to make a difference in the world.

The article about Janet Tiebout Hanson '74 was terrific. I enjoyed reading about her journey as a trailblazer in the financial industry, and as a woman who recognizes the value of reaching back for those who follow. Reaching back and being a mentor to younger women and men is both a responsibility and a joy, and Janet's life story makes that

clear. I also enjoyed the article about James Hirni '95. He has used the passion he found sitting in one of Prof. Goodman's political science classes to take him to the heart of Republican politics. While he may have worked for members of Congress that I was delighted to see defeated in November, I am appreciative of his contributions to the political process. I am also delighted to see that he has found a meaningful way to use his Wheaton education. The juxtaposition of the two articles was also a great example of how Wheaton values true diversity. Not just of color or culture, but of thought and belief.

The Greek philosopher, Archimedes, once said "Give me a lever, and a place to stand, and I shall move the Earth." As Wheaton grads, our lever is our wonderful education. Each of us travels away from Norton to find our own place to stand. And as evidenced by the latest edition of the *Quarterly*, we are clearly moving the Earth (...even if there were no Wheaties elected to Congress THIS time!)

*Kerin E. Stackpole, Esq. '84*

**Thanks for the memories**

I enjoyed your article about my former student, James Hirni '95, now a successful Washington lobbyist. I'm very proud of James. He went from a Wheaton-arranged policy internship

at the Heritage Foundation to being a top Senate staffer to being a prominent lobbyist. I have done lobbying myself, in Rhode Island. James describes the challenges and the juggle quite accurately in his candid interview with the *Quarterly*. Private interests all seek a voice, including colleges and universities, and governmental relations specialists and private lobbyists do that hard work of contact and communication with public officials. Many Wheaton poly sci majors have gone on to these endeavors, as well as being campaign consultants. I am a bipartisan mentor and send out into the world all shades of Republicans and Democrats. This was not James' year at the ballot box, but his causes will rebound.

*Jay S. Goodman, Professor of Political Science*

**Lobbying? No, thanks**

You put out a wonderful magazine, which I read with great pleasure. But I was puzzled by your decision to profile James Hirni in the Winter 2007 issue of the *Quarterly*. Past profiles have featured Wheaton success stories whose work is notable for a desire to serve the greater good. Mr. Hirni's work includes the promotion of smokeless tobacco, a product described by the American Cancer Society as "a significant health risk."

Even more troubling are the friends and role models he has chosen. Senators Frist and Santorum have been named by the Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics as two of the 13 most corrupt members of Congress. Senator Frist is also notable for describing the NAACP and ACLU as "un-American" and "Communist-inspired." He opposed recent anti-torture legislation designed to uphold the Geneva Convention.

Wheaton is notably an oasis of civilized discourse in a world gone mad. What were you thinking?

*Linda Garberson P'08*

I had a visceral reaction to the interview with James Hirni, in the Winter 2007 *Wheaton Quarterly*. While Mr. Hirni is very successful, I was baffled by Wheaton's decision to feature him so proudly and prominently. I'm dismayed that success alone, particularly considering the nature of his work, was enough to earn such recognition.

Mr. Hirni works for multi-billion dollar corporations to help increase their massive and disproportionate influence on our government. His clients include Wal-Mart, which is facing charges of paying women less than men and has a history of violating labor and environmental laws. This accompanies their

*Continued on inside back cover*

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famously low wages and pathetic healthcare coverage, which has forced many employees to seek coverage from tax-funded public health programs. Another of his clients is UST, maker of smokeless tobacco products, which have been proven beyond any doubt to cause cancer.

We all live by our own morals and beliefs and there are two sides to every argument. However you didn't even ask about the moral issues related to promoting corporations that break environmental laws and profit from cancer causing products. Does Wheaton find this work to be meritorious? How else would one explain this article?

When I picture this magazine in thousands of homes, I am for the first time embarrassed to be a Wheaton graduate.

*Jonas Allen '97*

I was disappointed to read the profile of James Hirni in the Winter 2007 issue of *Wheaton Quarterly*.

I am all in favor of throwing a spotlight on the well-heeled successes of our storied school, but lobbying is a profession of mixed

opinion, at best. Your magazine should have either reflected this division or decided against interviewing Mr. Hirni. The glad-handing of Mr. Hirni read as an unstated endorsement of lobbying and an indication of what we expect to see from our graduates.

Let's be clear, I enjoy reading about Wheaton graduates and have no illusions that we all ended up working for Greenpeace or PETA, but if we did, it would be nice if our illustrious college, which presumably, in SOME way, prepared us for such a position, would have the guts to ask us how we felt about eco-terrorism or throwing paint on someone's fur coat.

*Luke Farrell '96*

### **A leader by another name, please!**

I trust and fervently hope that I am not the only alumna to be truly appalled by the use of the demeaning phrase "Top Broads" to reflect the success of one of our number. I salute [Janet Hanson's] accomplishment, I wonder would she refer to successful males as top pricks. And if not, why not? Most of all, however, I fault the *Quarterly* for

picking up on and publishing the phrase. Perhaps Ms. Hanson finds the term flattering, but it can only be insulting to the truly educated woman, which presumably Wheaton female graduates are.

*Monna Dingman Fauteux '47*

### **Critical to emphasize care**

I enjoyed reading your article "Get Me a Student STAT." Clearly, Wheaton is assuming a stronger role introducing students to the realities of a health care career. Professor Ed Tong's commitment to bringing the next generation of caregivers into Sturdy Memorial Hospital to expose them to the complexities of emergency room medicine is commendable. I am struck by Tong's premise that: "Everything students learn in a book is two-dimensional; in an actual healthcare setting, the experience is multidimensional. Even if students are just keeping patients company, they are providing a valuable service. This experience completes the link between the textbook and the person." I would argue, however, that the experience does not complete the link as much as it begins it.

I have seen Wheaton change tremendously over the past twenty years. As a member of the first co-educational class of 1992, I experienced one of the major transitions of the college firsthand. What I value most in my alma mater is its commitment to a truly liberal arts education. Professor Tong's students are experiencing this kind of education, and I hope that Wheaton continues to emphasize the importance of the art of health care. My experience at the Schwartz Center has led me to believe that compassion, like physiology or anatomy, can be taught, and the best time to teach it is early in a secondary education.

*Sarah Levenson, '92*  
Program Coordinator

*The Kenneth B. Schwartz Center  
Massachusetts General Hospital*

**Letters to the editor: The *Quarterly* welcomes letters to the editor on topics you've read in these pages or on other topics concerning the Wheaton community. Please address your letters to: Sandy Coleman, editor *Wheaton Quarterly* Wheaton College Norton, MA 02766 or send an e-mail to [quarterly@wheatoncollege.edu](mailto:quarterly@wheatoncollege.edu).**