College guidebooks: A guide for the perplexed

‘Heavy Wings’ and soaring poems

Donning a life jacket in the world’s information sea
A larger-than-life format

It must have hurt a bit to receive Ernest Bragg, Jr.'s letter [January], with its abrasive tone.

My credentials for writing are (a) I am a parent of an '87 graduate of Mac; (b) I have 42 years as an art director, graphic designer, and marketing executive, with many national and international awards in fields that include type design, graphic design, and book and periodical design; and (c) I have given lectures at nine or ten major colleges and universities on related subjects.

There is no question that the world is sliding towards an 8½x11 module for printed materials, and this is eminently sensible given the information glut of the present era. However, a periodical such as yours—an external house organ—should take advantage of the dynamics of the larger page, because only in rare cases will the reader need to file or store it. Mac is a larger-than-life institution, with qualities that sometimes are conveyed most effectively in graphic and pictorial ways that gain in effectiveness with size. To compare Macalester Today with the New England Journal of Medicine, as reader Bragg did, is crazy.

Did Life, Look, McCall's, L'HJ, and the other shelter books go to the smaller page size because they thought it just as effective? No, they did it because they had to for economic reasons—disappearing into the miasma of vertical 8½x11 magazines that has replaced them. But you are required to visually and verbally reflect the loftiness and worth of the liberal-arts idea, which is not for everybody; it is not vocational training, or state-university training with classes numbering in the thousands.

Your publication should continue to reflect something above the 8½x11 mentality. Keep up the good work.

Ted T. Young
(father of Julie A. Young '87)
Wayzata, Minn.
Our cover shows Lauren Wilson '92 (Seattle) with some of the literature a high-school student might consult in choosing a college. Photo by Ed Bock; Kristen Amundson's story on college guidebooks begins on p. 11.

MACALESTER TODAY
Editor
Nancy A. Peterson
Managing Editor
Rebecca Ganzel
Contributing Editor
Randi Lynn Lyders '83
Art Director
Elizabeth Edwards
Class Notes Editor
Eunice Sandeen Weisensel

MACALESTER COLLEGE
Chair, Board of Trustees
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A. Phillips Beedon '28

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To submit information for class notes section, please write: Class Notes Editor, Alumni Office, Macalester College, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105-1899.

To submit comments or ideas concerning other sections of Macalester Today, please write: Macalester Today Editor, Public Relations and Publications Department, Macalester College, 1600 Grand Avenue, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105-1899.

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Diverse honors projects run gamut: Japanese tea to the deep blue sea

Last year Macalester graduated 19 students with honors and 13 with highest honors, a reward for personal diligence and participation in the college-wide honors program. This year more than 50 seniors have been involved in the program, preparing a wide variety of papers and projects to be evaluated this month. Although the spotlight isn't on them until graduation ceremonies begin, these students have been devoting most of their final year to an intensely individualized academic challenge.

Adopted by the college in 1974, the honors program at Macalester gives graduating seniors the chance to pursue an independent thesis, sponsored by an academic adviser who serves as friend, mentor, and critic. Unlike some colleges which require students to enroll in special honors classes, the Macalester program stresses individual motivation and accomplishment.

During the spring of their junior year, students submit proposals and find a sponsor for the next academic year (two semesters and one Interim term). During that year, students research their topics and may receive one class credit per term. An examining committee (which consists of the project adviser and two other people, one of whom is often from outside the college) receives the final draft of the paper in the spring.

The student must then participate in an oral defense of his or her work after which the committee decides whether to bestow "honors," "highest honors," or "no honors" upon the student. According to the academic-programs office, usually 50-60 applications are received and about 32 students receive honors each year.

These are a few of the proposed topics this year:

- **For Celine Fitzmaurice**, her paper—"Tea Heart, Zen Heart: The Japanese Tea Ceremony as a Religio-Aesthetic Way of Life in Japan," sponsored by associate anthropology professor Anne Sutherland—is the product of a previous ethnography. As part of a Rotary Club student exchange in high school, she says, she learned about the importance the Japanese place on the tea ceremony, where people are extremely polite and speak a higher form of Japanese than usual. Fitzmaurice returned to Japan last year in order to research her ethnography and prepare for her honors project.

- **Sutherland** is also sponsoring a project by adult scholar Peggy Dunham, who says that her honors paper, "And Here I Am: Cultural Life Histories from a Women's Prison," comes out of a cultural life history class she taught in conjunction with Sutherland to a group of inmates. She says that her honors project is a "hopeful" one which will help women inmates who are working towards a college degree.

- **"Deep Sea-Bed Mining: A Political and Environmental Analysis,"** Malcolm Meyn's honors paper, not only examines information regarding the ocean floor, but also provides policy recommendations for an upcoming United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. The project is sponsored by political-science professor Charles Green.

- **Jodi Goldberg** is examining particular aspects of tissue transplantation, sponsored by associate professor of biology Janet Serie. Goldberg notes that "tissue transplantation has become a common clinical approach to disease." Her paper, "Cellular Infiltrates in Rejecting and Surviving Murine Pancreatic Islet Allografts," looks for ways to prolong transplanted tissue survival.

About 250 Macalester students, the largest number from any Minnesota college, joined a crowd of 300,000 in Washington, D.C., on April 9, marching down Constitution Avenue to demonstrate their support of legal abortion. The student government gave $3,000 to support the march, a gesture that met with some protest from other students.
After spending the fall semester of her junior year in Kenya and Tanzania, Ellen Satrom is writing a series of poems, *Water Keeper*, influenced by native traditions of oral literature. "Hearing the literature of the people I was with as well as my own direct experience has influenced the writing," she says. Her project is sponsored by English professor Alvin Greenberg.

"The root ideology of capitalism must be changed to enable effective and important changes in education," argues Erik Anderson. In a project sponsored by assistant professor of philosophy Karen Warren, Erik will appeal to neo-Marxist critical theory in his paper, "The Hypocrisy of Education in a Capitalist System," emphasizing the need to develop valuable human potential.

According to program director and associate provost Ellen Guyer, "It is unusual for a student to be denied honors; what usually happens is that the student decides to drop out of the program, or the adviser recommends that he or she drop out, before the student gets to the point of receiving no honors."

The honors program is not easy—of the 80 applications received for honors projects this year, 14 students had withdrawn by March. Some say the program is too much of a pressure cooker. Associate professor of English Robert Warde, who has served on many judging committees, points out that participating in the honors program "frequently puts unnecessary pressure on students," noting that students can pursue individual projects outside of the honors-program guidelines.

Still, hard work has its rewards. In addition to the prestige of having a paper topic printed in the Commencement program, successful honors students have the satisfaction of seeing their bound work on the Macalester library shelves.

—Kevin Brooks '89

‘Essence Woman’ speaks on being black in America

LaFrancis Rodgers-Rose, president and founder of the International Black Women's Congress and *Essence* magazine's 1985 "Essence Woman," addressed the topic of "Black History: The Real Story and Being Black in America Today" Feb. 27 in Weyerhaeuser Memorial Chapel. Commemorating Black History Month, the free public lecture was sponsored by Macalester's minority program and Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.

A clinical sociologist and part-time professor of Afro-American studies at Princeton University, Rodgers-Rose has lectured extensively throughout the United States and conducts a popular workshop on male/female relationships. She is the author of two books, *Strategies for Resolving Conflict in Black Male/Female Relationships* (Trace Institute) and *The Black Woman* (Sage), acclaimed as the most comprehensive social psychological book written on the black woman. Rodgers-Rose was also a recent Fulbright fellow in Africa.

In her talk, Rodgers-Rose said that leaders in African-American communities are badly needed, and she urged her listeners to become involved in the fight for blacks' civil rights. "When each of you does your part, then I suggest the victory is ours," the March 3 *Mac Weekly* quotes her.

—R.L.L.
Pew grant of $1.4 million to improve science, math

Macalester will coordinate a $1,400,000 grant to 10 liberal-arts colleges and two research universities from the Pew Charitable Trusts, Philadelphia. The group of colleges and universities, formally the Mid-States Science and Mathematics Consortium, will collaborate in improving undergraduate science and mathematics education at their institutions during the next 2 1/2 years.

The program will be directed by Kathleen A. Parson, associate professor of biology and chemistry. She will be assisted by an executive committee composed of a consortium representative from each member institution.

The grant to the consortium is part of a national effort supported by Pew to attract and retain students and faculty in the sciences.

Member colleges include Beloit, Carleton, Grinnell, Hope, Kalamazoo, Knox, Rhodes, St. Olaf, and Trinity University. Participating research universities are the University of Chicago and Washington University in Saint Louis.

"These liberal-arts colleges prepare a disproportionately high number of students to pursue graduate education and careers in science and mathematics," President Robert M. Gavin, Jr., said in January. "The Pew programs will serve as models for other schools around the country."

Through consortial activities, the 10 colleges and two universities plan to increase the number of students who major in and seek graduate training in mathematics and science, to encourage promising Ph.D. recipients in these fields to choose teaching careers at liberal-arts colleges, and to infuse increased vitality into existing programs.

Specific activities include a student-research program, a faculty-development program, a visiting-scholar program, and a teacher-scholar fellowship program.

The Pew Charitable Trusts consist of seven individual charitable funds established between 1948 and 1979 by the sons and daughters of Joseph N. Pew, founder of the Sun Oil Company. The trusts support nonprofit organizations dedicated to improving the quality of life for people and communities and to encouraging personal growth and self-sufficiency.

—R.L.L.

British National Theatre's new and old tragedies play to sold-out crowds

Macalester hosted a week-long residency Feb. 12-18 by the internationally renowned National Theatre of Great Britain. This was the troupe's first visit to Minnesota, its second to the United States.

Performed to packed houses were Apart From George, a new tragedy written and directed by 26-year-old Nick Ward—the second-youngest playwright ever to be commissioned by the National Theatre—and a new production of the Shakespearean tragedy Macbeth, also directed by Ward. The residency also included workshops, seminars, and classes by members of the company for students and the local theater community.

The National Theatre has been one of Britain's leading cultural institutions since its inception before the second World War; the young Laurence Olivier became its first director in 1962. (It is presently under the joint leadership of Richard Eyre and David Aukin.) In recognition of 25 years of achievement, Queen Elizabeth II officially granted a "Royal" appellation to the National Theatre last October.

—R.L.L.

National Theatre actor Matthew Scurfield (who played George in the troupe's play Apart From George) leads a Feb. 17 seminar in Macalester's Black Box theater.
Needleworked birth images fill gallery in February

Macalester hosted the Twin Cities' premiere exhibition of "The Birth Project," Judy Chicago's colossal work of nearly 100 cloth pieces depicting images of birth and creation. Since the artwork (completed between 1980 and 1985) is designed to be shown simultaneously in portions throughout the country, Macalester displayed 12 individual pieces during the February show.

The 24-day Macalester exhibition drew 9,500 visitors—an all-time Macalester Galleries record that approaches the number attending recent "Birth Project" shows in New York (10,000) and Los Angeles (11,000 in an eight-week period). Previously, Macalester's most popular exhibition had been in 1986, when "superrealist" sculptures by Duane Hanson '46 drew more than 9,000 spectators.

"Birth Project"'s panoramic images (ranging in size from 5x9 inches to 90x240 inches) were worked in embroidery, quilting, needlepoint, petit point, smocking, weaving, macrame, crochet, applique, and threadwork, among other techniques.

"The Birth Project" is as ambitious and startling in our time as [Georgia] O'Keeffe's early drawings were in hers," The Miami Herald has noted. "It makes a special contribution to Western art by creating visual representations of childbirth, which rarely existed until now."

The exhibition is owned and administered by Through the Flower Corporation, a nonprofit organization. Although the Twin Cities' large museums and the University of Minnesota declined to exhibit the work, galleries curator Cherie Doyle says she jumped at the chance. Her overall goal in programming exhibitions at Macalester, Doyle says, is "to bring into the community something that would not otherwise be here."

After stirring artistic and political controversy with her earlier group undertaking, "The Dinner Party" (in which each of 39 place settings was dedicated to an outstanding woman in history), Chicago began to study creation myths from around the world, "looking for parallels in iconography," she says. "The Birth Project" grew out of her examination of the role of childbirth in defining differences between men and women, and from a desire to visualize the aesthetic possibilities of needlework—a feminine art form for centuries. —R.L.L.

Series of spring workshops confronts biases head-on

Sophomore Kenny Okumura (Sun Valley, Calif.) and assistant dean of students Tom Levitan (right) led a seven-hour workshop April 6 aimed at bringing people face to face with the preconceptions we all have when meeting someone of a different race, religion, culture, or social group. On the notepad are the names of various minorities with which workshop participants identified. The "prejudice reduction workshop" was one of several held this spring for faculty, staff, and students; leaders had been trained last summer in Boston. The sessions were organized partly in response to an incident last year (Macalester Today May 1988), in which a Native American student received two racist and sexist hate letters.

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"I tend to put down roots and stay there," says David Ranheim '64, retiring this month as chair of Macalester's Board of Trustees. "I'm one of the few men my age I know who've had only one job, one wife, and one house."

Ranheim's rootedness, and loyalty to those roots, has characterized his long service to the college—more than 15 years of volunteer commitment.

Ranheim came to Macalester (breaking with a family tradition of St. Olaf) from a boyhood spent largely in small towns in Nebraska and Minnesota. Like many students Macalester drew—and still draws—from rural areas, he was bright, but without a very wide scope on the world. That is, until he signed up for Professor Theodore Mitau's "Political Science 101."

"Practically my first day at Macalester," he says, "Ted Mitau presented exciting views and possibilities I'd never considered. He encouraged me to become a lawyer and helped shape my academic career. He had a profound impact on what I studied and expected of myself. Mitau groomed me for the Root-Tilden scholarship at [the New York University law school], which I received, and Bill Hempel, who'd preceded me as one of Mitau's protégés, helped me get a job at the Dorsey and Whitney law firm when I returned to the Twin Cities in 1967.

"As soon as I was back in town, I wanted to get reinvolved [with the college], but I was too shy to volunteer," he says. As soon as someone asked him, however, Ranheim started serving on the Alumni Association Board. As the association's president in 1974–75, he served on the search committee that hired John Davis, president from 1975 to 1984. "This was really the beginning of my alumni perspective," he says.

Only 33 when he joined the Board of Trustees as an alumni representative, Ranheim was a little unsure of what he'd find. "I thought everybody but me would be the [chief executive officer] of a company, august and wise. . . . Certainly there's a lot of powerful leadership on the board, but diversity too. After two terms
‘Macalester is in the fortunate position of being able to stay true to these traditions while challenging itself to evolve into a finer and finer academic institution.’

as an alumni representative, I accepted regular membership. There were several jobs I really wanted to tackle for the board: I chaired the South Africa committee in the late '70s, setting the college’s first policy toward investments in companies doing business in that country. And I chaired the academic-affairs committee.

Board service grew on David Ranheim, and he grew with it. In 1983-84, when the college was looking for a president to follow John Davis, Ranheim chaired the presidential search committee.

"Frankly, I think the best thing I ever did for the college was to find Bob Gavin," he says. "If you pick the right person, someone who’s strong and out-front on the issues the college needs to face at any point in its history, it makes the job of the board a lot easier. When we needed an administrator and healer, we found John Davis. When the college had patched itself together again and was fiscally sound, we needed an academic leader who could set and raise standards for what Macalester was now ready to become."

The trustees agreed to aim at gaining national recognition for Macalester as one of the country’s finest liberal-arts colleges, he continues. “We wanted someone with the ability to lead in academics, in fund-raising, and in developing the characteristics needed to make this claim. Robert Gavin, having progressed through all administrative ranks except president at Haverford College, knew what we meant and what it would take to get us there.”

When Gavin came on campus as newly appointed president in 1984-85, Ranheim joined him as newly elected chair of the board that spring. Ranheim looks back on his four years as chair with quiet satisfaction.

College historians will someday note the following among the accomplishments of those four years: The number of applications for admission to Macalester has grown from 1,444 to 2,458, annual private contributions have grown from $3.1 million to $6.1 million, a new library has been built and endowed at a total cost of $15 million, and a planning process has identified a range of new priorities for the college.

“Some people worry that Macalester’s push for excellence is changing its traditional focus,” Ranheim says, “but the board is more committed than ever to seeing continuity thrive. What makes Macalester different is our socioeconomic diversity, internationalism, need-blind admissions policy, and emphasis on community service. Macalester is in the fortunate position of being able to stay true to these traditions while challenging itself to evolve into a finer and finer academic institution.

“Macalester has always been a fine institution. In its second century, we are responding to technology’s impact on the liberal arts, increased competitiveness in the marketplace, the expanded academic experiences that students bring to college, and the need this places on Macalester to adequately respond.

“When I was a freshman here, in 1960, the board held the ‘Stillwater Conference’ to decide [among other things] whether or not to drop the bachelor of science and nursing degrees and grant strictly a bachelor of arts. [The college has offered only the B.A. degree since the mid-1960s.] This willingness to review our academic emphasis is also one of our traditions, a conversation I’ve been participating in since I showed up from the little town of Frost, [Minn.].”

When David Ranheim steps down this May as chair of the board, he will serve at least one more year to complete his term as board member. The highlights of his term?

“I’ve enjoyed the close working relationship with Gavin and the strong support of the board," he says. “The most exciting ceremonial function was the kickoff to our Centennial, when all the living former presidents, five in all, plus President Gavin, came back to campus and I got to introduce them all. And privately, I had the opportunity to listen to recorded tapes of Dr. Turck’s [Macalester’s president from 1939 to 1958] reminiscences about the college, his philosophy of education, the people he brought onto the faculty. He was in his 80s when the tapes were made, but still very lucid, thoughtful, excited—I think—by what he’d accomplished.”

—Christina Baldwin

Christina Baldwin ’68, who chaired Macalester’s Alumni Association Board from 1986 to 1988, is a writer and writing instructor who lives near Minneapolis. She has just completed her fourth book, Life’s Companion: Journal Writing as a Spiritual Quest, to be published by Bantam next January.
Good evening, everyone. Here are the headlines for tonight's newscast... On the screen before my eyes, Xue Fei, the anchorman of China's national TV station (CCTV), is reading the news in Mandarin, and immediately the room is filled with the atmosphere of my Beijing home.

Last year, the Humanities Learning Center of Macalester College (where I am currently studying on a study-abroad program) started a new service: News programs from all over the world are provided every day via international satellite. Among them is the CCTV "Evening News." My parents in Beijing would never think their son could watch the same set of pictures thousands of miles away in Saint Paul, just as, before I came to the States, I could never imagine that I'd be able to talk to them on the phone simply by dialing 11 numbers. The world's flow of information has reached such a level that "the remotest corner is as close as your neighbor"—a famous line from an ancient Chinese poem.

Such is today's information society. Whether you are selling sesame oil or buying a piano, whether you want to hire a housesitter or speculate in foreign currency, you have to know the market. The designers of qipao, a close-fitting women's dress with a high neck and slit skirt, have to take the tastes of Americans and Europeans into consideration in order to export; coastal cities are learning from the experiences of Zhu Hai and Shen Zhen—two cities on the Chinese coast that the government has given greater economic and political freedom so that they can attract more foreign investment—whereas the inland cities must look at the coast. Everything is interrelated—and thus if you close your door and are only concerned about yourself, you will not be able to take care of yourself any more.

Around the world, the amount of information within a country runs always in direct ratio to that country's productivity. Here are a few examples of the vast sea of information available to U.S. residents: Here, major newspapers run at least 50 pages every day, sometimes even over 100, with

Ran Wang is a sophomore at Macalester, majoring in economics and political science. He wrote this article for the Chinese-language People's Daily (overseas edition), where it was published in April 1988. As the accompanying profile shows, this is one of many thought-provoking articles Wang has written as a special correspondent for several Chinese newspapers.
the temperature in Beijing shown on the weather page. The three major U.S. television networks have correspondents stationed all over the world, broadcasting their reports independent of any international news organization (NBC has even had Tom Brokaw anchoring the news in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, and on Waitan Beach in Shanghai). It is quite common here to make long-distance calls for personal matters, and most of the telephones can be connected to overseas countries directly, without even an operator's intervention. Thus in the United States, information from the " remotest corner" flows as if it were truly from the "neighbor." No underdeveloped country can compete with the U.S. in this regard.

Why should a country with financial means invest in the flow of information? At Macalester, the majority of students are from the United States, and satellite television is quite costly; why, then, does the college provide such a service to its students?

This leads us to something more fundamental than a simple answer based on financial strength. When a new development occurs in the States, the first question in the minds of the news media is: Should we let people know this? (Implication: Will they be interested in knowing this?) By comparison, the Chinese way of thinking would be closer to: Should we prevent people from knowing this? (Implication: Will the political stability be affected if people are made aware of this?)

Therefore everything comes down to this: Do people have the right to obtain information? The answer to this question will determine whether the " remotest corner" becomes the "neighbor" — or the other way around.

To our delight, some down-to-earth efforts have already been made by the news media in China, and progress has become visible. The world's tide of democratization is affecting us, too. In this tide, it is difficult to advance, but it is even more difficult to stay still.
Chinese ‘Glasnost’ Gives Student Writer a Boost

by Janet Groat

While the word “glasnost” has become widely known as a symbol of the Soviet Union’s new openness, few people in the West know the Chinese word “toumingdu.” But Ran Wang, a young Chinese journalist studying in Saint Paul, thinks often about “toumingdu,” and for him the word is power-packed with emotion.

It means more articles about the pitfalls of Chinese bureaucracy, more stories that look critically at the country’s educational, political, and employment systems, and more work for Wang, a Macalester College student who is writing for the newspapers back home about life in the United States.

He is 19 years old, one of China’s youngest students abroad. But Wang has been published in some of China’s largest newspapers and already has had a run-in with an official who wanted to change the slant on one of his stories.

That happens even in the era of “toumingdu” (pronounced to-ming-doo), Wang said. But it hasn’t dampened his enthusiasm for contributing to the new, more open dialogue in China and for making the best of his vantage point in the United States.

“One of my principles is to respect the fact, and if it is the fact I don’t think it is appropriate to change it or cover it,” said Wang.

He looks almost Western in his jeans, oxford shirt and athletic shoes. His words could be those of a U.S. reporter: He complains about editors who cut his stories, who change the flow of his language, or who knockle under for fear of disapproval from bosses. But when he writes, he is decidedly Chinese.

He writes of China’s problems and Chinese-style solutions—about how Chinese schools might benefit if classes were less rigid, for example, and about the need for widespread distribution of news reports. A favorite article, published in March in the two-million general-circulation “China Youth,” explored why so many Chinese students studying abroad do not return to their homeland.

That problem has rarely been publicly acknowledged, Wang said.

[Thousands] of Chinese students have gone abroad in recent years, with their government’s backing, for graduate study in business, economics, and other specialized professions. The stated purpose has been for those students to help modernize their country upon their return.

But many have not returned, choosing to stay in Europe and the United States. “We here in the U.S. knew that. And all the people in education circles back in China knew that,” Wang said. He suspects there had been little reporting on the problem because—with exchanges and tourism new to China—the subject was too controversial.

Wang’s article caught the attention of the Chinese embassy magazine that goes to Chinese students in the United States. But Wang said no when an official asked him if he could revise it to focus more on students who have returned to China. No one at the Chinese embassy could be reached for comment.

Wang’s entry into journalism came when he was 16 years old and writing for the student news service in Beijing. His good command of English, much of which he taught himself, made him a natural for studying in the United States.

He went to Hawaii in 1986 as a high school exchange student. His father, a professor at Beijing Teachers College, had helped run an exchange program with the Hawaii school. When Wang left for Honolulu, Beijing Youth ran a front-page story announcing his departure and his appointment as its first foreign correspondent.

While in Honolulu, he decided to stay in the United States for college. A generous financial-aid package from Macalester persuaded him to come to Saint Paul.

Staying busy and making friends has been easy, he says, but he misses the bustling atmosphere of Beijing, where seas of bicycles and open-air markets create constant activity on city streets.

“Going downtown in Minneapolis or Saint Paul in the middle of the day is like going downtown to Beijing after 10 p.m. at night,” he said.

Wang plans to stay in this country for graduate school, perhaps in journalism, perhaps in political science, perhaps in business or economics. Like many of his colleagues, he is concerned that his education may be wasted if he cannot get a good job in China.

On the other hand, the best way “to improve the situation in China and make China a stronger country” is to go home, he said.

“If you have seen the U.S. and stayed here without involving yourself in the rejuvenation of China, I don’t think you will really help.

“You may be able to send back a few dollars to help open a factory, but what China really needs is to change the way people are thinking and to change the way some systems are working,” he said. Those who have been overseas, who have seen the pros and cons of different systems, “are really the people that should go back.”

This excerpted article is reprinted with permission from the July 24, 1988, Minneapolis Star Tribune.
Mapping Out the Future

Shopping for a college these days means doing your homework—and studying the guidebooks.

But how accurate a picture of Macalester are prospective freshmen getting from the most popular guides?

by Kristen J. Amundson

How did you first learn about Macalester? Most alumni would say through a teacher, a friend, a family member, or a good admissions counselor. But if you’re a more recent graduate, your first exposure to Mac may have come through a college guidebook.

Guidebooks are a relatively new phenomenon—although a few date back 25 years or more, most have been in existence only since the early 1980s. Today more than a dozen guides are found in libraries, counselors’ offices, and bookstores. Several, in fact, are perennial best sellers.

Some of the college guides are compiled by respected authorities like the College Board and the New York Times’ education columnist. Others are put together by those whose credentials in higher education are, shall we say, less immediately obvious—for example, Lisa Birnbach, author of The Official Preppy Handbook.

As the guides have increased in number, they have also grown in influence. And they play a significant role in shaping students’ perceptions about the colleges they would—and would not—consider attending.

“Kids today are tending not to trust the glossy professional materials they receive from admissions offices,” says Leonard King, dean of seniors at the Maret School, a private school in Washington, D.C. “The guidebooks seem to them to offer more objective information.”

But do they? Yes—and no. There is a decidedly Eastern mindset to most of the guides. As a result, says Macalester dean of admissions William M. Shain (formerly a regional dean of admissions at Princeton University), “a school like Princeton may be described as tremendously diverse even though 60 percent of its students come from New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania; but a school like Macalester is not because 50 percent of its students come from 20 midwestern states.”

And there are other signals that the authors of guidebooks may be less than entirely objective. For instance, the Yale students’ Insider’s Guide to the Colleges answer to the question “What college offers the best education in the country?” is—well, you can probably figure it out.

Why have the guidebooks become so influential? There are several reasons. Certainly the cost of a college education has made students and their par-

Kristen J. Amundson ’71 is a Washington, D.C.–based writer whose articles have appeared in The Washington Post and USA Weekend. She says her daughter, now in third grade, has declared an interest in Macalester—the chief attraction being bagpipe lessons.
ents think carefully before they select the institution to which they will be writing those five-ﬁgure checks. Students who have seen their parents consult <i>Consumer Reports</i> before investing in a new car will probably be more inclined to turn to a college guide for information on their new college.

Students and families are more willing to consider colleges outside their state or region than they were in the past. “I used the guides a lot when I was deciding where to apply,” says Macalester freshman Anmol Shrestha, who went to high school in New Hampshire. “I couldn’t afford to make a lot of college visits, so I used the guides to help me ﬁgure out places I might want to go.”

Shain speculates that potential students may rely more on guidebooks because people today are “hungry for ratings.” But he points out that relying exclusively on a rating system compiled by someone else implies “that the person doing those ratings has [your] own values. I would say, particularly within the Macalester community, that might be less commonly true.”

The guidebooks can be divided into two broad categories. Several—those published by the College Board, Barron’s, Cass & Birnbaum, and Lovejoy’s, for example—are essentially just lists of statistical data. They can tell a prospective student the average SAT test score of entering freshmen, the percentage of students who receive financial aid, or the sports in which the college ﬁelds a varsity team. The problem with these books, says Shain, is that “none of their data is audited.”

As a result, there are notable inconsistencies. Depending on which book you read, you’ll learn that Macalester either does or does not have distribution requirements (it does), does or does not require students to take the SAT achievement tests for admission (it does not), and does or does not offer a major in education (it does not, although students can be certiﬁed to teach).

A second type of guidebook offers detailed narratives about a smaller number of colleges and universities. Two are particularly inﬂuential: The Fiske <i>Guide to Colleges</i>, edited by Edward Fiske, education columnist of <i>The New York Times</i>; and The Insider’s <i>Guide to the Colleges</i>, compiled by the staff of <i>The Yale Daily News</i>. These, too, include some obvious errors. The Insider’s <i>Guide</i>’s writeup of Macalester was revised this year to add: “Macalester’s recently completed Janet Walsh [sic] Fine Arts Center is sure to please art buffs.” As it has for 25 years. The 1988 Fiske guide, however, does mention that “a huge new library will seat up to a third of the student body.”

Still, the guidebooks do a pretty accurate job of describing the kind of institution Macalester is. Virtually all stress Macalester’s small class size and many opportunities for student-faculty interaction. The Insider’s <i>Guide</i> says Macalester offers students an “intimate education,” and the Fiske <i>Guide to Colleges</i> comments: “Professors make teaching a priority and are more than willing to spend time with students outside the classroom.”

The guidebooks also draw attention to Macalester’s international focus. The Fiske guide notes that nearly 10 percent of the student body comes from overseas, “so if you’re interested in making contacts in Nepal or Bangladesh, this is the place.”

The non-academic aspects of college life play a role in determining a student’s choice of a college. “There’s a whole other range of learning that takes place outside the classroom,” the Maret School’s Leonard King points out, adding that students want a way “to put themselves onto the campus” of a school they are considering.

Again, the descriptions in the college guidebooks seemed to be on target. The Cass & Birnbaum <i>Comparative Guide to American Colleges</i> notes that Macalester students have an “integral” role in setting regulations regarding student life. Many mention students’ active involvement in the community.
How does a student from Nepal who went to prep school in New Hampshire end up at Macalester? College guidebooks are one of the reasons.

Anmol Shrestha (class of '92) was born in Nepal and lived there with his family until 1980, when his family moved to the U.S. while his father completed work on his Ph.D. A summer vacation provided his first introduction to Minnesota, but he didn't give much thought to where he would attend college until late in high school. "And the college guides definitely played a role in choosing Macalester," he says.

"I wanted a school with a strong international emphasis, and that was very clear in the writeups on Macalester," he says. College videos also helped. "And once teachers and friends knew I was interested, they gave me all the information the could find on the college."

Minnesota winters didn't particularly worry him. "I figured it couldn't be a lot worse than New Hampshire," he says. And when he did make his college visit, he found the guidebook descriptions described the college "pretty accurately."

Next year, Shrestha's impressions of Macalester will help shape the writeup in the Yale Insider's Guide. "My prep-school roommate goes to Yale and sent me the questionnaire," he explains.

On the whole, he says, the Yale questionnaire he's completing "seems to ask the right questions. But they sure don't give you much room to answer them."

And what would he like to tell students that the questionnaire didn't ask? "Students applying to Macalester should be interested in other cultures and be ready to explore a lot of new ideas." —K.J.A.
A concern for others shines through in this professor's writing and teaching.

by Chris Waddington

Alvin Greenberg's literary career stretches over a quarter-century, with three novels, four story collections, and more than a half-dozen volumes of poetry to his credit. In fact, this Macalester English professor behaves a bit like the father of a large family—justifiably proud of his literary "children," but a little hazy on birthdays and names.

"It's sometimes hard to pin a date on each book," he notes with a smile. "The order gets a bit scrambled after a while."

Understandably, Greenberg's attention is focused on his works-in-progress. In his home near Saint Paul's Como Park, he rises each day at 5 a.m., logging several hours at his desk before arriving on campus. The short stories he's working on now represent his return to prose after the two-year hiatus during which he wrote the poems that appear in his 1988 collection Heavy Wings.

"I go through stretches where I write either poetry or prose," Greenberg says. "Each answers different needs for me as a writer, though in recent years the poems have begun to behave much more like the stories. Their narrative lines are stronger. They are not as cryptic. In fact, readers will find a good deal more on the page—I've gone from writing 'skinny' poems to longer-lined pieces that let me explore feelings out in the open."

As a writer and as a teacher, Greenberg has given his craft a good deal of thought. He compares the business of writing to the work of a good carpenter, thinking especially of the man who helped him build a geodesic dome at his northern-Minnesota retreat.

"This carpenter would always step back from the job," Greenberg says, "not to rest or waste time, but to see each part in relation to the whole struc-

Chris Waddington is a writer and critic who lives in Saint Paul. His work has appeared regularly in Twin Cities Magazine, Art in America, the Minneapolis Star Tribune, and other publications. Currently he is researching a biography of Italian-American landscape painter Gottardo Piazzoni.
ture. He was a total professional. Each action had a purpose, and he knew how to hide his mistakes.”

Continuing the metaphor, Greenberg recalls how Renaissance cabinetmakers lavished as much care on the back of their pieces as on the front. “They knew that God would see it from every angle,” Greenberg says. “It’s a notion that has become more important to me as I’ve seen our culture slide into shoddiness. Workers have become detached from their product—an attitude that makes for lousy cars and lousy writing.”

Greenberg’s painstaking approach to his craft has paid off in professional recognition. In 1983 he won the Associated Writing Programs’ “Short Fiction” award—a coveted national prize that includes publication through various university presses. His work has appeared twice—1973 and 1982—in the well-known annual collection Best American Short Stories. Greenberg’s poems and stories are a regular feature in scores of literary magazines, while prestigious imprints like Boston’s Godine and Minneapolis’s Coffee House Press have brought out his books. Summing up Greenberg’s achievement in the most direct terms, fellow writer Max Apple once wrote, “Whenever I see an Alvin Greenberg story, I buy the magazine.”

Instilling a sense of craft in students’ minds is one of Greenberg’s primary goals as a teacher of creative writing.

“As with any serious endeavor, writing calls for a long apprenticeship,” Greenberg says. “Chemistry students don’t think that they will make startling discoveries as undergraduates, but writers imagine that they can produce wonderful work from the start. That’s a sure road to disappointment. I try to show my students that the first step is the discipline of daily work.”

When Greenberg first came to Macalester in 1965, he had no intention of teaching creative writing. In fact, he taught only literature, specializing in 20th-century fiction. In the early 1970s, he was
Patience, and Discipline

He compares writing to good carpentry: Each action has a purpose, and you have to know how to hide mistakes.

asked to fill in for a colleague who taught creative writing. "That first class was hard," Greenberg recalls. "At the time, it was Macalester's only creative-writing course. The students had no common ground. They didn't know how to talk to each other, making mutual critique a real problem."

Responding to that situation, Greenberg and his colleagues added new creative-writing courses that introduced students to the workshop method. In a typical class, students exchange manuscripts, learning to critique the work of their peers in regular sessions. The students become better writers by becoming better readers.

Today these classes are both popular and productive. Macalester currently offers seven creative-writing classes each year—four introductory, two intermediate, and one advanced—plus a pair of Interim courses. Greenberg teaches one Interim class in an isolated rural setting that lets students experience the cloistered, work-oriented atmosphere of professional artists' retreats like New Hampshire's MacDowell Colony and Yaddo in upstate New York.

In addition, Greenberg has seen his department evolve (and has had a hand in its evolution) from a traditional focus on white, Western literature to one on literature from diverse cultures. For example, two distinguished minority writers—one a Native American poet, the other a nationally known black writer—are visiting professors this year; another colleague spent 1988-89 in Zimbabwe studying Anglophone-African literature.

Says provost James Stewart: "Al has been able to use the contacts he possesses nationally and internationally in developing a minority component in the English department that is very broad-based and diverse.... [His] academic leadership has turned his department into one of the most exciting programs of its kind in any small college in the country."

"Our writing program—and, in fact, the entire arts program—draws students to Macalester," Greenberg says. "A lot of our graduates have gone on to publish fine books, though I feel that the pro-
gram is equally useful for students who may never sell a story or a poem."

Greenberg points out that any writing course improves one's ability to communicate. Beyond this, he notes, the workshop method helps participants develop needed skills for managing small groups— a common "real-life" situation in business, government, or academe.

"Our students learn how to listen," he says. "They learn how to be honest in an effective manner, making their points without a negative attitude. Perhaps most importantly, our workshops have a way of encouraging strong moral values about the care of other human beings."

A concern for others is always evident in Greenberg's own writing. No matter how oblique or experimental, his work always focuses on recognizable human predicaments. For example, in "Heavy Wings" — the long poem sequence that lends its title to his latest collection — Greenberg poignantly bares the sorrow of losing a loved one to cancer, exposing the many faces of grief and eventually leading the reader to acceptance. In "Where Do Folk Sayings Come From?", a short story from his 1985 book The Man in the Cardboard Mask, Greenberg shows an unemployed man caught by a kind of phenomenological dread; all his reference points — his name, his wife, and even the weather — are shifting. The story is carried forward on a string of half-nonsensical, half-profound folk sayings till the protagonist makes a small-time domestic leap of faith.

Both pieces also demonstrate another important aspect of Greenberg's work: his sense of structure. Each paragraph in "Folk Sayings" is built around a single proverb, a device that gives way only in the more-hopeful concluding paragraph. Each of the 20 poems that make up the "Heavy Wings" sequence

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"Yes, the Experiment Works..."


c = the physics of farewell

nothing we know can exceed the speed of light,
but death, i think, can carry its cargo off
almost as fast. remember einstein's rocket?
life and death are the famous twins, and no matter
how many times we perform this experiment,
i am the one who is always left behind,
growing older, waiting for your return.
far away you go and fast, and the farther
and faster you go, the younger you'll remain.
often at night when i see you, i can see how well
the experiment works: your skin so smooth, your hair
still fine and blond. yes, the experiment works; it
proves nothing more than itself, but damn, it works
and you are farther and faster away than ever
einstein, once again, has been no help.
i understand everything now that's worth understanding
about time and distance. soon i'll be fifty. still
the experiment runs. i don't think i'll be here,
dear twin, for your return, but lucky's the world
that you'll be bringing your youth and beauty back to.

from "Departures"

i must be aware that i am, therefore
i must be thinking, i suppose
slowly the white mask of winter
seeps away into the face of the earth. slowly
the white blizzard that overtakes me in the forest
reveals its warm reality: it is may
and the northern world is reseeding itself.
it is march or april or may and the world is not,
after all, a failure of technique.
every image tells what is and what is not.
the blackboard of philosophy screeches
with presence. in the cold barn
the stall is empty. by day the ice melts,
but at night you have to guess what month it is now.
and this, this poetry thing,
technique aside,
is nothing but a slow course in mortality.
we must not be fooled by how the car spins
gracefully for a moment
on the ice at the edge of the bridge.

from "Departures"

(poems continued next page)
Craft, Patience, and Discipline

standing in the doorway

monday morning and the world is overwrought
from saying goodbye to sunday. 'goodbye,
sunday, goodbye': as if it no longer knows
how to say anything else and there's still
the whole rest of the week to say goodbye to,
easier of course, sunday's like that lover
you just want to lie around with forever
while the rest of the week's a seedy bill
collector: pay the cash, slam the door, good-
bye! ah, what a way to live when either way
it all ends up with that same goddamned word: goodbye.
such a paucity of vocabulary! such a crime
against 'the supple mathematics of language'
not to be able to turn things around, right,
not to be able to set the week in reverse,
not to be able to speak all things backwards,
which is, perhaps, what only a poem can do,
which is maybe the only thing a poem is for:
allowing all those weeks to reopen their doors.

from "Departures"

day-o

there's a sun sits steadily on the eastern horizon
and will not rise, which,
each morning, he lifts his shade to see's still there,
fixing the landscape in place with its orange glue
so the day can't get started.
such a sun! who needs it? let him fold the dark wings
of his blankets around himself and nest awhile yet
before he looks out there again.
let someone else, maybe, peek first, next time: why
is lighting up the earth always his responsibility?
even in this daily dark he
knows the answer to that one: because he thinks it is.
because he thinks, it is. so let him try again: nope,
still there, the unfertilized
yolk of morning, that lumpy toad of day that squats
by his dark pond and won't, because it is, hop up.
such a weight the what-is is!
flightless as a toad, death's own unradiant orange,
no better than a stone wing, does he need to see that
again? what if, instead,
sitting at his desk, folded up in such stone things
as he needed to be folded up in, nonetheless he wrote
that the wings were heavy
but he always managed to fly with them and then
looked out: would he see possibility grunting and
sweating its way up an inch
or two into the, well, not yet, but almost, blue?

from "Heavy Wings"
Renaissance cabinetmakers, knowing that ‘God sees the piece from every angle,’ lavished as much care on the back of their pieces as on the front. Greenberg sees such craftsmanship as an antidote to 20th-century shoddiness: ‘Workers have become detached from their product—an attitude that makes for lousy cars and lousy writing.’

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(from “The Night of the Moving Men”)

stands, one day,
in the window of a very classy furniture store, with its back to him,
his very own dining room table, nearly. you still like this baby?
says the salesman: look how the price has jumped. and the chairs, of course wear a different fabric.
they oughtn’t, he tells the salesman, to make it anymore,
the movers will just come and take it away as soon as you fall asleep.
his he thinks he has never heard a salesman laugh before this: listen, buddy,
we sell all we can get, you want one there’s a waiting list
maybe a hundred years long, maybe more. nor has he ever

given a salesman the finger before
though he thinks he is too kind-hearted to explain
that he has learned to live perfectly well without furniture, and besides,
if he had a dining room table like that, even with the wrong chairs, he would never be able to sleep again.

he would have to stay awake all night and make sure that the movers did not come.
someone always has to stay awake and watch the furniture.
Making career connections

Ask Shelly Collins '87 how she got her job with the Boy Scouts Indianhead Council and she's likely to tell you about Tom Frantzen '85.

After working a year as the Doty Hall dorm director, Collins was looking for a job last summer with a Twin Cities nonprofit agency. She contacted her friend Frantzen, who has worked as a district executive for the council's special-needs division since February 1988.

Collins was hired as an executive by the 12-county Twin Cities-area Boy Scout council in February; she works with Explorer Scouts. And while Frantzen wasn't responsible for hiring Collins, what Collins calls "the Mac contact" was helpful in getting her the job, she says.

"Knowing Tom, he probably did put a good word in for me," Collins says, a fact confirmed by Frantzen. Now they both work in the same office, which is in charge of making sure that scouting programs are available for youngsters with learning disabilities.

It is not unusual for Mac grads to help each other find friends through the informal network of friends and former classmates. But some alumni are not aware that the college's Career Development Center has developed a formal alumni network to help graduates look for work.

The center's "Alumni Career Resource Network" lists the names of some 500 Twin Cities alumni and more than 300 out-of-state alums who have volunteered to share information with Macalester students and fellow alumni about their fields and their employers.

(Other services available to alumni through the Career Development Center—612/696-6384—include counseling; use of the career-resource library; a job-search management group; workshops and handouts; an "alert service," wherein the center notifies alumni of recent job postings in their fields; and a credentials service, putting letters of recommendation on file. The center charges a one-time $20 fee for alumni using the center's services, though modifications can be made for alumni who can't afford this fee. During the first calendar year following their graduation, alumni can use the center's services free of charge.)

In addition to covering the Twin Cities, the resource network lists alumni in Chicago, Boston, New York, Washington, D.C., Seattle, and Denver. There has also been a career survey of alums living abroad and of former Fellows of the Macalester-based World Press Institute.

The information, contained in note-books and on computer, is organized by career field. For example, students or alumni who want to go into finance can check the files for information on alumni who work at banks.

That doesn't mean working alumni can guarantee a job for other Mac grads. But alumni can provide helpful information about a career field, as well as hints on the lay of the land if you're considering moving into another part of the country, says Career Development Center director Nancy Tellett-Royce.

"We've got a theory of loose connection," she says, noting that alumni can help fellow graduates with obtaining job information and career advice, passing along résumés, sponsoring internships, even helping with the honing of interviewing skills. "There are a lot of ways alums can help the job-hunter."

Learning the lay of the land was what Steve Pitkin '82 needed after graduating with a degree in economics and business and international management.

"The only thing I knew is that I wanted to go to Boston and I wanted to work at a bank," Pitkin said. He contacted Barbara Carpenter '72, whose name was on file in the career-resource network.

Carpenter, formerly a vice president and chief dealer with the international money center at the Shawmut Bank in Boston, talked to Pitkin and got him in touch with others at the bank. Pitkin didn't find a job right away, nor (Carpenter says) did she have a specific job in mind. But Pitkin eventually got a job at Shawmut, one he held for two years before going to graduate school in Arizona; he now lives in Brooklyn, N.Y.

While alumni may not directly have a say in hiring, they can, as Carpenter did, help steer the job-seeker to the right person or right department in a company.

"It happens informally, but the impetus has to come from the [person seeking a new job]," said Carpenter, who has talked to about a dozen Mac graduates looking for job connections in Boston.

"As a graduate, they should take advantage of any contact they have," she said. "When you move into a new area, you need those contacts."

The sheer number of Mac graduates who have remained in the Twin Cities is an advantage for those grads who live in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul area, Tellett-Royce says. "Something about the distance," though, makes Mac alums not living in the Twin Cities want "to connect in some way" and help others looking for work, she adds.

Among the best examples of the Mac connection abroad are the 100-plus responses provided by World Press Institute Fellows and graduates living in other countries. Some of the responses to the career-network survey abroad have included requests for internships in filmmaking in India, rubber-farming in the Philippines, and working with a BBC executive in London.

Not only are international alumni looking for internships, they're also willing to help other Macalester alumni and students find jobs in their respective countries, Tellett-Royce says.

"What you're doing is opening doors and making linkages," Carpenter said. "The rest lies with the job-hunter."

—Christopher D. Herlinger '81
Politics, ‘voices,’ arts are alumni-event topics

“Lifelong education” is a recurring goal of alumni programs across the country. Macalester faculty members often serve as alumni-program speakers; on other occasions, alumni may do the honors.

President Robert M. Gavin, Jr., spoke in Seattle in February about the worldwide travels he and his wife, Charlotte, have taken this year under a grant from the Kellogg Foundation. Seattle alumni dined at the Columbia Tower Club with the Gavins prior to the presentation.

Alvin Greenberg, professor and chair of English and a nationally known poet, spoke to Philadelphia-area alumni on “our creative voices,” using as a focus his own poetry and writings. Alumni and parents gathered for dessert and discussion at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Edward L. Heimark ’42.

Cleveland alumni explored “Russian Glasnost: What Does It Mean for Us?” with Macalester history professor and Russian expert Peter Weisensel. Weisensel, who has since returned to the Soviet Union for a research-study project, presented a similar program in March at a Russian tea for alumni in San Diego and Orange County, Calif.

A private showing of paintings by Thomas Gainsborough and Sir Joshua Reynolds was organized by Robert M. Rudd ’84 for Los Angeles—area alumni and parents at the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Participants gathered for an elegant brunch in the rose garden and a presentation by Robert Wark, curator of art collections.

“Political Trends: What’s Going on in America?” was the provocative question addressed by Charles Rund ’65 Feb. 17 for San Francisco alumni. Rund has been national political pollster and consultant for the Reagan-Bush and Bush-Quayle campaigns, and he has worked at electing 45 members of Congress, 18 senators, and a dozen governors. The discussion was hosted by Jeanne and Mark Vander Ploeg ’74.

Twin Cities-area alumni and parents met Macbeth at a private opening-night performance by the National Theatre of Great Britain. The troupe, making its second visit to the U.S., mounted the Shakespearean classic with minimal settings and simple costumes, focusing on the creative power of the actor’s imagination. Members of the President’s Circle and the Wallace and Neil donor societies were special guests at the event.

Recent graduates (1983–88) in the Twin Cities area held a second annual “Sweeney’s Grad Affair” in February. As this issue went to press, alumni events were being planned in Honolulu, Tokyo, Nairobi, London, Tucson, St. Louis, and Atlanta.

Contributions to society bring citations to five

Five alumni will be recognized for outstanding community and social service at the annual alumni awards ceremony Saturday, June 10, held as part of Reunion Weekend.

The Alumni Association’s board of directors has voted Distinguished Citizen Citations to:

- Charles M. Baxter ’69, professor of English at Wayne State University in Detroit and a nationally acclaimed poet, novelist, and short-story writer, often focuses on what he calls “the mysteries of family life.” Last fall, he spoke at the college’s symposium on the “Culture of the Book,” part of the dedication of the new library.

- The Hon. Michael J. Davis ’69, a Hennepin County (Minn.) District Court judge, is known for being tough and fair-minded; he has been a leader in working for human rights and justice through a variety of community groups.

- Douglas Lowe ’41, a retired executive with Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, helped introduce a reading program to schools in the 1950s and has been an outstanding volunteer for his church and community. A leader in the Boston alumni club, he has hosted picnics for alumni and new students, and he provides career advice for new graduates.

- Margaret Wallin Marvin ’39, Warroad, Minn., a retired high-school teacher, has been a leader in her community’s youth and education programs; recently she helped establish a new library for her town. She is a leader in her 50-year reunion class fundraising activities.

- Kathleen Osborne Vellenga ’59, a former teacher and current Minnesota state representative, is active in education, health, and family issues, and has been a leader in community and church activities. A volunteer in admissions, fundraising, and reunion activities, she has actively supported the Macalester minority program’s mentor project.
Get on board—volunteer!

by Julie Stroud '81
Alumni Association President

The number of student volunteers is rising, both at Macalester and across the country, according to numerous reports. Students are organizing their own volunteer-coordination groups (at Macalester, the group is called "Maction"). Colleges are hiring recent graduates to serve as volunteer coordinators (at Macalester, it's Kristin Mishler '88); unofficially, they're known as "green deans."

This rise in volunteerism should warm the heart of any Macalester graduate—all, we hold community service as one of our cherished ideals.

But are we as alumni carrying on the tradition? Certainly many of us are—one look at the recipients of the 1989 Distinguished Citizen Citations provides solid evidence of that. But some of us may have slipped out of the habit. We're busy, we have demanding jobs, we want to spend time with our families and friends.

The Independent Sector—a national group formed to promote volunteer activity—thinks more of us should volunteer more often. In 1985, just about half of all adults and teenagers said they do volunteer; they average about 3.5 hours per week.

Independent Sector is encouraging all of us to get on board, to pledge at least five hours per week to our favorite causes.

An individual volunteer can make a difference—in the life of another person, in the quality of life within a community. We believed that as Macalester students, and we believe it now.

Macalester needs the time and talents of its alumni. Like any private college, Macalester depends on alumni for help:

- Alumni provide career information and networking, both for new graduates and for alumni making career changes;
- Alumni plan programs and organize gatherings of fellow Macalester alums in their own communities and for Reunion weekend;
- Alumni raise funds to help educate today's students. Private contributions support about one-third of the cost of every student's education. In addition, financial aid helps about 70 percent of today's Macalester students.

Let's take up Independent Sector's challenge to "Give Five"—five hours a month in volunteer service—and let's make Macalester one of the causes we support with that service.

To volunteer, call the alumni office at 612/696-6295, or write them at 1600 Grand Ave., Saint Paul, MN 55105.

REUNION WEEKEND
1989
June 9–11

'A heart-warming story,
full of adventure and nostalgia....
Make it YOUR story!'

Join old friends and favorite faculty for three days of new ideas, fond memories, good times. Faculty symposia, alumni presentations, a concert, sports activities, food... these and more await you.

Special class parties if your class year ends in a 4 or a 9... plenty of fun for everyone.

Check the special mailing you received, and make your reservation now. Questions? Call the Alumni Office, 612/696-6295.

A New Kind of Connecticut Yankee

by David Gregorio

The golden arches of a new McDonald's are what most people see on the corner of Washington and Park Streets in Hartford, a few blocks from Connecticut's state capitol building. Juan Figueroa '77 sees a valuable opportunity wasted. "This is the kind of stuff we're going to have to fight," Figueroa says one winter evening as he drives a visitor through the state's third legislative district, which he represents in the statehouse. "This McDonald's went up just recently," he explains, "and what should have gone on that spot was housing. You could have had at least 125 or 150 units of affordable apartments here."

In January, the 34-year-old Figueroa began his first term in Connecticut's House of Representatives, the first Puerto Rican Hartford resident to win a seat in the state legislature. Figueroa and a few other newly elected representatives embody the hope of a new progressive coalition that wants to shake things up politically in Connecticut, the state best-known as the place rich New Yorkers move to escape urban problems and a state income tax. Traditionally, the state has been run by liberal-to-moderate Democrats from the cities and strong minority of conservative Republicans from the wealthy suburbs. This is the home state of President George Bush, who grew up in the posh suburb of Greenwich; his father, Prescott Bush, was a longtime Republican U.S. senator from Connecticut.

Figueroa, as President Bush would probably say, is "outside the mainstream" as part of a small but growing progressive wing of the Democratic party. In the party's primary last year, he beat a four-term incumbent backed by Hartford's powerful Democratic machine by enlisting the aid of a new entity called Democrats for a Change.

Figueroa and his supporters went from door to door in the Third District's poor and working-class neighborhoods and its housing projects for the elderly. They asked residents about their problems and concerns and registered 1,000 new voters. They published campaign literature in five languages, hammering away at the issues of affordable housing, access to quality health care, responsible development, programs and parks for youngsters in the district, and a more serious fight against drugs and crime.

In the session that started in January, Figueroa began working on those issues. As a member of the housing committee, he proposed a bill under which the state would acquire a 9.3-acre parcel in his district for affordable housing. He has also submitted a bill that would require any development fund by state economic development funds to allow participation and input by any families in danger of being displaced by the project.

"Affordable housing," he says, "is a crisis situation as far as I'm concerned. One woman in my district had part of the ceiling in her apartment fall down on top of her. People are paying $600 a month for cold, miserable, rat-infested dumps."

Another crusade for Figueroa is a new statewide effort to encourage more political participation among Puerto Ricans. "Before this session there was only one Puerto Rican in the whole state legislature; now there are three," he says.

Figueroa went to Macalester on a minority scholarship program. He credits Michael O'Reilly (program coordinator for Macalester's minority program, and himself half Puerto Rican) with helping him make the adjustment from a small town of 15,000 in the hills of Puerto Rico to the academically rigorous environment of Macalester and the English-speaking metropolis of the Twin Cities.

"I was the first person in my family to go to college, and the first in my extended family of more than 100 cousins to go to law school," Figueroa says. "It was a confusing experience at first. Michael O'Reilly was more than a counselor; he was a father figure to me, and to a lot of other students who needed to make some big adjustments."

Figueroa got his law degree from the University of Santa Clara in California and worked with public-interest groups in New Hampshire and Connecticut before becoming an assistant attorney general in Hartford and running for the state legislature. He says that if Puerto Ricans and other minorities are to continue their political and economic progress, schools like Macalester must redouble their efforts to continue programs like the one he took advantage of.

Before starting work as a representative, Figueroa took a Christmas trip to Puerto Rico, and he says he was encouraged by what he saw there. "I think I'd like to go back there some day and maybe get involved in politics down there," he says.

For now, however, Figueroa has his hands full in the Third District, where he and his wife, Helene Clement '76, director of a day-care center at nearby Trinity College, live with their six-year-old daughter Taina.

"There's a lot of work to be done here in Hartford," he said. "I like what I'm doing. We'll see if we can move on some of these issues and get something accomplished here."

David Gregorio is staff writer for The Bridgeport (Conn.) Post; he is married to Rebecca Anderson-Gregorio '84. They rent an apartment in Fairfield, Conn.
Lifeguard on the Bay

by Kevin Brooks

On any given afternoon, one might find Lauren Poole '75 in a rundown San Francisco motel room, surrounded by prostitutes and drug users. It's not exactly the most glamorous place for a magna cum laude Macalester alumna. But for Poole, a nurse practitioner at San Francisco General Hospital who specializes in patients with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), it's business as usual.

A woman whose slim, athletic appearance underscores her considerable energy, Poole explains her role as part of a research group called Project AWARE (Association for Women's AIDS Research and Education).

"Every three, four weeks we go out and do fieldwork," she says. Typically, a 5-7-member team (all women) establishes a base of operations by renting a motel room in an area of frequent prostitution, then ex-prostitutes on Project AWARE's staff scout the area and bring women to the motel.

In the motel, the prostitutes receive a blood test, administered by Poole, to check for the HIV virus. During a brief interview, they are given information regarding AIDS and set a date to return for their results. The women brought in from the street are fed and paid $10—to compensate for their lost working time, Poole explains.

The "sex industry" outings are only one part of a larger program that involves women from all levels of society, Poole says. "When we first started, a little more than three years ago, there was nothing like this in the entire country," Poole says. "We started at a time, I believe, when there had been no women diagnosed in San Francisco with AIDS." As of October 1988, 54 female seropositives (women infected with the HIV virus) had been identified in the San Francisco test area.

"People from all over the world come to look at the model of AIDS care that San Francisco has developed," she says with pride. A pioneer in its well-organized methods of physical treatment, emotional support, and educational programs, the clinic helps people with AIDS deal with their symptoms and lead as comfortable a life as possible.

Unlike cancer patients, however, AIDS patients can harbor no illusions about recovery. "Sometimes I feel like I don't want to deal with it anymore," Poole says. "But people who have life-threatening illnesses are dealing with some of the most profound and difficult human experiences that there are. To be part of that in a person's life is really special."

Poole, whose original ambition was to be a social worker, says it was Macalester that directed her to medicine instead.

During her senior year at Macalester, Poole did volunteer work at the Family Tree, a family-planning clinic a few blocks away from campus. "I got very turned-on to the role of the nurse-midwives who worked there," she says. "They weren't physicians, they were nurses who had extra training; they did a lot of the patient care at the Family Tree. So my first kernel of interest in health care really came from that experience at Macalester."

Her present work with AIDS patients combines both her medical and social interests. "AIDS is so much more than a medical illness," Poole says. "It's really a very, very large, encompassing phenomenon that involves public health policy and issues of discrimination."

A Phi Beta Kappa Spanish major, Poole went to New York after graduating from Macalester. There she attended Pace University's graduate division of nursing, receiving the M.S. degree (with distinction) in 1980.

"After I finished that program, I worked for about four years in the Bronx," says Poole, noting that her Spanish fluency was extremely useful there; only about half her patients spoke English. "I moved to San Francisco basically just to get out of New York," she confesses.

At the time of her move, the AIDS epidemic that had just begun to surface in New York was also confronting the San Francisco gay community.

"I was mildly interested in [AIDS work] in New York," Poole says, "but I really didn't know that much about it until I came out here." Now, in her work with Project AWARE and with San Francisco General Hospital's AIDS outpatient clinic, the first of its kind in the world, she is at the forefront of AIDS treatment in this country.

Well published (Poole's papers on Project AWARE studies have been presented at professional conferences around the world), Poole lectures occasionally around the country on women and AIDS-related issues. She says she enjoys her diverse career.

"I have always seen myself as a person who is good at establishing relationships with other people, [and] who is interested in the larger world," she continues. "I suppose I have always tried to find a place for myself where I could do the kind of work that incorporated both of those pieces—that incorporated strong relationships one-to-one, but also had some impact on the world as a whole."

It is hard to imagine that Lauren Poole's place could be anywhere else.

Kevin Brooks is a senior English major from Orange, Calif.
Alumni & Faculty Books

by Mary Lou Burket

Baby Boomers

by Paul Light '75

New York: W. W. Norton, 1988. 319 pp., $19.95 cloth

Are baby boomers, those 75 million privileged souls born between 1946 and 1964, distinctive? Or are they just another generation, passing through the same taming stages of life that all generations pass through, more different from each other than alike?

Paul Light '75, associate dean and professor of political science at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, makes a strong case for the diversity of this highly visible, much discussed group. Far from satisfying the stereotype of yuppies, baby boomers generally earn less than $30,000 a year. (In 1985, four out of ten baby boomers made less than $10,000 a year.) Race, sex, education, and age divide them, creating potential for what Light forebodingly terms "polarization."

However, baby boomers also have much in common. Raised in a time of changing social values, homogenized by television, affected by social crowding, they stubbornly insist that the present is fine despite their poor economic state.

Characterizing this throng is an interesting exercise, but Light does little more. His style is clear but heavily dependent on the quoted views of others, on poll results and academic studies. Rather than build an argument, he tends to repeat summaries of data.

To some extent, "The Baby-Boom Agenda," a later chapter, offsets these weaknesses and gives the book more point. It is difficult to predict how baby boomers will change as their lives progress—will their fertility, important to sustaining Social Security, increase? Will they reconcile their often contradictory views on taxes, defense, and social programs?—but it is useful to suggest directions the baby boomers should take.

Recalling that their fear about the distant years ahead is one of the traits that unites them, Light stresses the need for long-range planning and political initiative. These will not be easy for a generation that prides itself on individualism, that resists party loyalty and mistrusts the federal government. (Vietnam, however, variously it affected veterans, protesters, and observers, demonstrated to everybody that the system and its leaders were deeply flawed.) But poverty, debt, and environmental destruction increase with time: baby boomers, habituated to prompt gratification, will have to "learn to be patient, and in a hurry," if they hope to have a stable, desirable future.

Light is donating 10 percent of his royalties from Baby Boomers to Macalester because "I could not have written this book without the training I received at Macalester."

—Editors


In this picturebook for children, a boy and his elderly uncle sit contentedly on their porch for dinner, day after day.

"I could not have written this book without the training I received at Macalester."

—Editors


Set in 1968, this novel for young adults depicts the senior year of high school for Mandy Smetana, the heroine in Guernsey's Five Summers. After Mandy's mother dies, Mandy changes, seeking more independence from her boyfriend and her father.


These six papers were presented at Macalester's first DeWitt Wallace Conference on the Liberal Arts in September 1986. Contributors include U.S. Supreme Court justice Antonin Scalia and American Civil Liberties Union president Norman Dorsen, as well as specialists in non-legal fields. Stewart is provost at Macalester through this summer; he began teaching history at the college in 1969.

Susan E. Tichy '76: A Smell of Burning Starts the Day. Wesleyan University Press, 1986. 69 pp., $18.50 cloth, $10.95 paper.

While researching a novel in the rural Philippines, Tichy began writing these poems describing the final years of the Marcos regime. "At a P.C. Sergeant's House" was awarded a 1987–88 Pushcart Prize. An English instructor at George Mason University, Tichy has also published The Hands in Exile.

MACALESTER TODAY
LETTERS continued from inside front cover

Charles Turck: A tribute to a southern gentleman

I was professor of religion and chairman of the department of religion at Macalester from 1951 to 1953. I was also the recipient of an honorary degree from the college two years ago.

I have many reasons to be thankful to Charles J. Turck [obituary, March]. For one thing, he gave me my first job in 1951, teaching religion at Macalester College. For another, he offered me the job sight unseen, although I suspect that his knowing my aunt may have had something to do with that. For yet another, he granted me a modified teaching load during my second year at Mac so that I could finish a book for the Presbyterian high-school curriculum materials, entitled The Bible Speaks to You, in the writing of which I learned what became my cardinal rule of communication: if you write for high-school students, maybe some adults will also understand.

More important, during the height of the McCarthy era, when the rabid right wing was attacking all "progressive" educators—among them Charles J. Turck—he responded by ensuring that all members of his faculty felt free to exercise their rights in the public arena without fear of reprisal, no matter how critical they might be of red-baiting and scare tactics in Washington. As one who was working for the election of a Roman Catholic to Congress against a Presbyterian nominee (this was in 1952, before "ecumenism" had become a household word), I had extra reason to be grateful for such support.

But the thing for which I will longest remember Dr. Turck with special affection and gratitude was an episode that took place almost a decade after I left Macalester. In the summer of 1961, I was involved with a number of white and black Protestant ministers and several rabbis in a "Freedom Ride." We traveled the Greyhound bus lines in an integrated group from Washington, D.C., to Florida, trying at each stop to integrate the waiting rooms, restrooms, and restaurant facilities. This involved the deliberate breaking of local ordinances in the name of interstate federal regulations that, we were hoping to demonstrate either on site or in court, made the local ordinances illegal. We were finally arrested in the airport terminal at Tallahassee, Florida, jailed, and then released on bail for imminent trial on the charge of "unlawful assembly with incitement to riot."

No sooner had this item hit the press than I got a long-distance phone call from Dr. Turck, who before being head of Macalester had been a law professor at Tulane and Vanderbilt universities and dean of the law school at the University of Kentucky. "Bob," he told me, "I'm licensed to practice law in the state of Florida, and I would be honored to defend you next week in Leon County Courthouse in Tallahassee."

That Dr. Turck, southern gentleman to the core, long-time resident below the Mason-Dixon line, held up as a model of dignity and probity, would put his lifetime reputation on the line to defend what were being called (in one of the gentler terms of opprobrium) "nigger-lovers and troublemakers from Up North," was one of the most generous acts of which I have ever been the recipient.

As it worked out, CORE (the Congress on Racial Equality), which sponsored our trip, had already made arrangements for our legal defense through the American Civil Liberties Union, so Dr. Turck did not have to appear in court. But I will always remember with gratitude this wonderful offer by a man who put his principles and friends above his reputation.

Robert McAfee Brown
Berkeley, Calif.

Charles Turck, president of the college from 1939 to 1958, died Jan. 12. A memorial service will be held for him during Alumni Reunion Weekend—10 a.m. Sunday, June 11, in Weyerhaeuser Memorial Chapel. —Editors
Warming to the topic...

As the weather warms, student discussions move out-of-doors: What did you think of yesterday's Convocation speaker? This week's class reading? Today's *Weekly* story? Such conversations supplement the more formal learning that takes place at Macalester, underwritten in part by Annual Fund gifts that help pay faculty salaries, provide student aid, purchase educational supplies, and turn on the lights in classrooms and residence halls. The 1988–89 Annual Fund year ends May 31; don't let it wind down without you.