Features

Midwest Foodie  10
Northern Minnesotan Amy Thielen ’97 is the Food Network’s latest star.

A Whole New Ball Game  16
Behind the scenes in Major League Baseball, these Macalester alumni are helping make America’s pastime even better.

Gadget Guy  20
As the college’s scientific instrument technician, Ken Moffett is the Mac man making science work.

Four First-years Grow Up  26
Time for a final visit with our quartet from the Class of 2014

Teacher of the Year  32
By approaching the job creatively, Megan Hall ’00 became Minnesota’s top educator.

Call of the Wild  34
Recording the life of lions is just a day’s work for Nathan Williamson ’00.

We have an app for that.
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ON THE COVER: Kiah Zellner-Smith ’14 (photo by David J. Turner)
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Kudos

I just received the most recent issue (Fall 2013) and although previous issues have been excellent, the latest is really outstanding.

David Coulson ’54
Huntington Beach, Calif.

More on plurals

This is in response to the recent letter to the editor from Frank Cerny II ’68 (Fall 2013). I’m a graduate student in statistics at UCLA, and I’ve been following the is-versus-are debate when it comes to the term data. I agree that Latin pluralization means that datum is singular while data are plural. But with the rise of big data and data science, the phrase “data is” is becoming more acceptable. Many major newspapers have changed their style guidelines, although the statisticians I talk to are still divided. Some believe that because data sets now contain so many data points, data has become a mass noun, like water or air. I’m somewhat convinced by this argument myself. But the older generation of statisticians (especially in academia) stick with “data are.” As someone trying to establish myself in the academic world, I’ve been trying to train myself to say it, although I still think “data is” rolls off the tongue more nicely.

Amelia McNamara ’10
Los Angeles, Calif.

Gender Parity?

In one of his recent columns (“The Capacity for Empathy,” Summer 2013), Brian Rosenberg quotes eight people. I was surprised, especially given the topic, that all eight of those people were men. I hope he’ll write a better-balanced reflection next time.

Heather Crawford ’00
Fairfax, Calif.

Correction

The obituary for Richie A. Olson ’58 (Fall 2013) left out some important family information. Olson is survived by his wife, Marlys Hannay Olson ’59, a sister, three brothers, including Floyd B. Olson ’53 and Mel Olson ’60, a son, a daughter, and three grandchildren. We apologize for the oversight.
I’ve been in the President’s office many, many times during the five years I have served as Macalester’s Provost and Dean of the Faculty, but I never really noticed how big it was until I moved in this fall to begin my semester as Acting President. You could have a decent game of half-court basketball in here (if we raised the ceiling) or I could move in a grand piano and spend my time between meetings getting back in touch with my former life as a music professor.

Of course, the size of the office has symbolic significance. I think I’ve discussed with Brian Rosenberg virtually every big decision he has made for the college since I arrived here in July 2008, but in the end, the decisions were always his to make. That is the most daunting difference between being the President, even the Acting President, and being the Provost. The proverbial buck now stops with me.

Last August we conducted a crisis management exercise built around the possibility of a major fire in Doty Hall. It was August, so Brian was still here. But the event we dealt with during the exercise was said to have happened in October, which caused me to begin imagining what my life would be like if something like that did happen in October.

I didn’t get much sleep that night, but in the days following I reminded myself that we conducted that exercise so our entire leadership team would be prepared to respond to a crisis. I reassured myself the college would have lots of support from a fabulous group of leaders who would help me make good decisions.

The other major difference between the two jobs has to do with the variety of people with whom I interact each day. As Provost and Dean of the Faculty, my main constituency is the faculty. As Acting President I still get plenty of face time with faculty members, but my days—and evenings and weekends—also include students, alumni, trustees, parents, staff members, presidents of other colleges, campus visitors, community groups, and people who recognize me when I’m shopping at Target. The pace is sometimes breathtaking, but it’s also exciting and energizing.

In one three-day period in October, I launched our International Roundtable, met with the Parent Council and the Alumni Board (twice each), did a State of the College Q & A with visiting family members, talked with students about their research during our annual poster session, spoke at the M Club Hall of Fame Dinner, and attended a concert, a soccer match, and a football game. I was very happy to spend a quiet Sunday afternoon at home after the last event, but I genuinely enjoyed every interaction and could not have been prouder of the institution I was representing.

It’s early November as I am writing this, halfway through my time in the big office. So far (knock on wood, cross your fingers, and rub a rabbit’s foot) there have been no major crises, so I recognize that I have experienced all the best of what a college president gets to do.

It has been an extraordinary privilege to serve as Macalester’s Acting President this fall. This is a fabulous community. I knew that when I made the decision to join it back in 2008, and I am even more convinced today.

KATHLEEN MURRAY, Provost of Macalester College, spent the fall semester as Acting President while Brian Rosenberg was on sabbatical.
HOUSING AS IT DOES SOME—but not all—of Macalester’s humanities departments, the Humanities Building’s name has long been a source of confusion for campus visitors. To clarify matters, that building was in October renamed Neill Hall, after Macalester’s founder and first president, Rev. Edward Duffield Neill.

A Presbyterian minister who served in three presidential administrations, Neill also was Minnesota’s first superintendent of public education and the University of Minnesota’s first chancellor. He obtained Macalester’s charter in 1874 and opened the college in 1885 with five professors, six freshmen, and 52 prep students.

The building’s name change was prompted by a campus way-finding project, which this spring will result in better signage and maps around campus. “Our consultants pointed out that it’s confusing to have a building called Humanities when most of those departments are housed in Old Main,” Acting President Kathleen Murray told The Mac Weekly in October. “Changing the name gave us a perfect opportunity to honor President Neill.”

NEILL HALL

First Foray Online

“I HAVE NEVER BEEN SUPER CONFIDENT IN MATH, but I understood why we were studying things in the course, which made it easier for me to master.” That was one student’s assessment of last summer’s applied calculus course that was Mac’s first foray into online education.

The eight-week course, taught by math professor Chad Topaz and St. Olaf colleague Tina Garrett, was offered through the Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM). Barron Koralesky, associate director of Mac’s Information Technology Services, provided extensive technical expertise.

Sixteen students from eight ACM colleges enrolled, including three from Macalester. Topaz aimed for both flexibility and community, with students able to complete their work any time of day or night from anywhere in the world. One student even took the course from India.

The weekly workload included watching instructors’ video lectures, participating in an online tutorial, and contributing to an online community forum.

Although the grades he gave were similar to those in his real-world classes, that doesn’t mean there weren’t challenges. “I learned a huge amount,” says Topaz. “This is some of the hardest teaching I’ve ever done.” The eight-week class was fast-paced, and Topaz felt like he was constantly online checking to see if students had questions. “You have to be very deliberate about connecting,” he says.

Will the ACM offer further online courses? That’s still under discussion, says Provost Kathleen Murray.
GLOBAL CITIZENS IN ACTION

THERE FOCUS ranged from Costa Rican organic agriculture to reproductive health awareness among Indian girls, and thanks to college funding, three students had the chance to see global citizenship in action over their January break.

All three received Live It Fund grants, part of a program created in 2010 by Macalester’s Institute for Global Citizenship. The funding—allocated by the IGC student council—supports students who propose projects to live out their definition of global citizenship. This year’s January projects:

Justine Decker ’14 (Waukesha, Wis.) worked with a community partner in Costa Rica—where she studied abroad last year—to restore its greenhouse and expand its initiative to grow organic produce and medicinal plants. “I feel an obligation to sustain the relationships I formed while in Costa Rica,” she says.

Shruthi Kamisetty ’16 (Bangalore, India) gathered adolescent girls from a government school outside Bangalore for a support group and classes on reproductive and sexual health. “Information can empower young women who are traditionally marginalized in Indian society,” Kamisetty says.

Puleng Moshele ’16 (Leribe, Lesotho) worked in Lesotho together with HIV-orphaned and vulnerable children to open a micro-poultry farming facility as a food and income source. “The goal is to help the children learn to provide for themselves,” she says. “It’s a step toward breaking the cycle of poverty.”

Macalester’s Janet Wallace Fine Arts Center was one of nine projects given awards at a recent competition sponsored by AIA Minnesota. The remodeling/expansion of JWFAC was designed by HGA Architects and Engineers. Winners were picked by a team of national jurors including Ben Gilmartin of Diller Scofidio + Renfro, New York; E.B. Min of Min l Day, San Francisco; and George Z. Nikolajevich of Cannon Design, St. Louis. The award was for the initial phase of the JWFAC remodeling, completed in 2012 with an arts commons and music building. Earlier this month a studio arts building, also designed by HGA, opened on campus.
Whether the syllabus included studying fossils or ancient monuments, students enrolled in Macalester’s January classes got to experience course material in depth and up close. And those classes weren’t held in Old Main or Olin-Rice either. Instead, the students went right to the source, to ancient Roman cities and Caribbean reefs.

This was the Classics Department’s sixth trip to Rome, which had students exploring Roman architecture, artifacts, and monuments from 1000 BCE through the fourth century. “There’s nothing like standing on the actual ground where these events in Roman history took place,” says classics professor Nanette Goldman, one of the trip’s leaders. “The spatial organization of the city, the atmospheric and geographic features of this part of Italy, the textures, sounds, and smells, are all critical to understanding the phenomenon of Rome, past and present. You can’t get that on YouTube or in books.”

Twenty other students studied a Bahamian island’s ecology and geology through its beaches and reefs on a geology department field trip—the department’s fourth visit to the island research center. The trip, led by professors Ray Rogers and Kristi Curry Rogers, included collaborative research along with opportunities for field, lab, and museum study.

Unlike the Rome trip—which drew classics majors and non-majors alike—the Bahamas trip was limited to geology majors and minors. For some it was a first chance to do fieldwork. “Experiences like this are essential to a high-quality geology education,” Ray Rogers says. “Making the connection to rocks and fossils in the field really brings it home for students.”
Under the stadium lights with the season’s first snow falling, the Macalester women’s soccer team won its final home game of the year Nov. 5—an undeniable highlight of a successful season.

“They’re going to remember that game forever,” head coach Michele Cornish says of her players. “It was a semi-final, at home, at night. It was magical, and the fans were just unbelievable.”

The 5-0 win against St. Olaf sent the Scots to the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) playoff championship, where their season ended with a loss to top-seeded College of St. Benedict. The Scots finished second in the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) regular season standings with an 8-3 conference record.

After the playoffs, accolades began rolling in for the Mac athletes. Scoring star Georgia Cloepfil ’14 (Portland, Ore.) was named the MIAC Player of the Year. Cloepfil, Bonnie Bentson ’14 (Minneapolis), and Bonnie Gale ’15 (Anchorage, Alaska) were named to the All-MIAC team, and Maggie Molter ’14 (Cedarburg, Wis.) was named to the All-Conference Honorable Mention team.

* * *

Given that she was the conference’s leading goal scorer for the past two years, it’s not surprising to learn that Cloepfil ’14 plays an aggressive game of soccer. Many fans may not realize, however, that it was American football that helped develop her approach. The only girl on her football team, Cloepfil was a running back until the ninth grade.

She credits her highly physical playing style in part to that experience, although head coach Michele Cornish thinks Cloepfil’s intensity is the true key to her success. “It’s really motivating to our players,” Cornish says. “She is a fierce competitor always looking for an angle to win. She is tenacious, athletic, and fast.”

This year, that intensity contributed to perhaps her best season yet, culminating with the Player of the Year award and first-team All-Conference spot. Cloepfil, who has been on the varsity squad since her freshman year, says her game evolved as her confidence improved. That progress shows in her statistics, too: She scored one goal in her first year, four as a sophomore, 15 as a junior, and 19 in her senior season.

Her leadership skills have also developed; Cornish calls her a “remarkable teammate” who celebrates other players’ successes. “I try to lead by example,” says Cloepfil, an English major who studied in Nepal last spring. “I’m not extremely vocal, but when things get hard, I try to pick people up.”

When the women’s soccer team advanced to the MIAC tournament for the second time in Cloepfil’s four years at Macalester, it fulfilled a season-long team goal. “The whole team was on the same page,” Cloepfil says. “Soccer is a confidence game, and we knew that we had it from day one of preseason: a desire to win and the knowledge that we could.”
LAST SUMMER, when most Mac students were waitressing or packing for college, Gretchen Greene ’17 (Madison, Wis.) was winning first prize in log rolling at the Lumberjack World Championships in Hayward, Wis.

Not exactly an everyday sport, but one that Greene fell in love with at age nine, when she first saw log-rollers compete at the Great Outdoor Games on one of her hometown’s lakes. That’s for me, she said, and immediately started taking lessons at Madison’s Lake Wingra and a local YMCA.

All the hard work and practice that ensued in the years since paid off last summer when she won the top spot in log rolling and second place in boom running (running as fast as you can up and down a log) in Hayward.

Although she loves both events, says Greene, “I like boom running best because it’s shorter and more nerve-racking. If you fall in, it’s difficult to get back up but you still have a good time.”

While at Macalester—a college she shares with older sister and soccer player Ingrid—Greene takes a break from the northwoods sport. She stays in shape by being a member of the cross-country team and working out at the Leonard Center, but leaves her logs back home in Wisconsin. Many of her classmates, she says, especially those from the East Coast, have never even heard of log-rolling. But that doesn’t bother Greene, who hopes to continue in her sport for at least another decade.

There’s not a lot of money in it—that top prize last summer paid just $1,600 and boom running pays even less—but the fun and camaraderie make up for it, says Greene. One of her top competitors is also her longtime teacher. “We all compete against each other but we’re all really good friends.”

ARABIC BY THE NUMBERS

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INSPIRED BY A RUBIK’S CUBE CHAMP he saw on TV as a ninth grader, Dex Nguyen ’17 (Hanoi, Vietnam) took up the sport of speed cubing himself and two years later could solve one in 11 seconds. “I loved how fast they spin, so I bought one and started practicing,” he explains. Soon he’d taught friends, organized competitions at school, and watched the hobby spread throughout Hanoi. In 2010 he was named one-handed and blindfolded speed cubing champion of his country, and at an Asian competition in Bangkok in 2011—with 300 competitors—he was among the top 30. Here at Mac he claims to not practice much, but still carries three Rubik’s cubes in his backpack.

Composting Comes to Campus

Alumni who return to campus may notice the compost bins in campus buildings. We asked Sustainability Manager Suzanne Savanick Hansen how it works.

Why such a big push to compost? According to a 2010 waste sort, 45 percent of the college’s waste is compostable. Removing compostable material from the trash stream will help us attain our environmental goal of Zero Waste by 2020—and save us money. Also there is a 70 percent tax on waste, but no tax on compost. In 2011–12, the college paid almost $20,000 in solid waste taxes.

What can go into the compost? Food scraps, non-recyclable paper products such as napkins, paper towels and plates, fast food wraps, and most things made of once-living material, such as tea bags, coffee grounds and filters—even pizza boxes.

How much is being composted now? We’re currently composting around 1,300 pounds of material a week.

Where is the material composted? Because we don’t have space to process it on campus, a local hauler takes it to the SET/Mulch Store in Empire Township, Minn., where it’s mixed with other material, screened, and aerated until it becomes compost.
Northern Minnesotan Amy Thielen ’97 is the Food Network’s latest star.

BY LEE SVITAK DEAN  PHOTOS BY JENNIFER MAY

AT FIRST GLANCE, Amy Thielen ’97 doesn’t look like a Food Network star. There are no plunging necklines or bleached hair. No wild-and-crazy shtick from this quiet young woman with the engaging laugh, who calls north-central Minnesota home.

She does, however, look a bit like the Midwest, homespun and friendly, with a gentle smile, a little self-conscious about all the fuss that’s swirling around her as she debuted on Heartland Table on the Food Network. The program’s six episodes were shot in her kitchen in the log cabin she shares with her 6-year-old son, Hank, and husband, Aaron. It’s a rustic spot, built on 150 acres outside Two Inlets, a town so small it’s unincorporated.

Pines line the road to the cabin. A massive kitchen garden extends down to a creek, where wild rice grows. Deer, turkeys, grouse and the occasional raccoon hide in the surrounding woods. Berries and mushrooms are there for the picking, though beware of bears—they may be out there, too.

This is home, where Thielen began her search for the roots of Midwestern cooking.

If you don’t know her name, you’re not alone. Even the Wall Street Journal recently referred to her as a “little-known chef” in its description of the upcoming show. Though that may be the case on the national scene, it won’t be for long.

Thielen, 38, grew up in Park Rapids, Minn., a town of 3,000 near the headwaters of the Mississippi, 20 miles from where she lives today. From her earliest days, food has been front and center for Thielen. “I always had good food at my house. We often had a neighbor eating with us. And my mother always talked about food with us. ‘What are you hungry for?’ she would ask in the morning,” says Thielen. “I remember sometimes going to the store twice a day. We lived right in town. She was a good cook, and was consumed by it.

“My grandmother Dion was an excellent cook as well, known for her baking, like many Midwestern women of that generation. She wasn’t afraid to tell anyone that she was good, either. She was self-promotional before it was in.”

Thielen left the North Woods to earn a degree in English from Macalester. Then it was back to the woods, this time with Aaron, an artist, who had built a rustic cabin. They spent several summers there, living without electricity or running water for six months at a time—growing season for Thielen. Three days a week she worked the breakfast shift at a German-American diner in Park Rapids, frying schnitzels and hash browns, basting eggs and toasting bread. “It was a great education. I loved the physical labor. I liked that kind of work,” Thielen says. “In addition to deep-frying fish patties, the owner also made a lot of homemade stuff. I learned to work fast. I learned the culture behind the scenes in restaurants, and I was hooked.”

Off-duty, she settled into the workload of “simple” living: hauling wood, pumping water and preparing garden-fresh food on a 1940s propane-fired Roper stove. Winter months were spent in Minneapolis, until the year they headed to New York City, where Thielen enrolled in culinary school. Soon she found a spot in the kitchen at Danube, an Austrian restaurant run by chef David Bouley.

That was the beginning of seven years working in the finest of New York restaurants, where Thielen learned the culinary techniques of top chefs Daniel Boulud, Jean-Georges Vongerichten, and Shea Gallante and their staffs. She may have been a long way from Bologna Days in Pierz, Minn., where her parents grew up, but she was in her element, soaking up the skills and understanding of contemporary cooking.

In 2008, a year after their son was born, Thielen and her husband moved back to the cabin, where they added electricity and water. While Aaron worked on his art, Thielen began writing about the Midwestern food she loved and the people who created it. Her articles made the pages of Saveur and Men’s Journal, as well as the Star Tribune. Her Midwestern focus led to a two-book contract with Clarkson Potter, and a collection of stories from the Star Tribune’s Taste.
Amy Thielen breaks open a runza, a meat-filled bun popularized by German-Russian immigrants to the Midwest.
section earned her a James Beard award in 2011. Her first cookbook, The New Midwestern Table, was released in September. The TV show serves as a kind of companion, each show focusing on a recipe or two from the book.

It’s a delightful book, full of stories about growing up in a rural community, with recipes for the home cook who is looking for solid Midwestern fare with a contemporary edge (think fried corn, tomato carpaccio with horseradish ice, rosemary-infused brown butter chicken breasts), as well as recipes more familiar to the rural cook who knows fish and game (bear stew, eelpout almondine, sturgeon with a wild rice crust). Throughout the recipes, Thielen uses her own local markets and backyard garden as a guidepost for ingredients.

There are cooking “projects” for the curious: homemade butter and cottage cheese, pickles of all sorts, ketchup and make-your-own braun-schweiger and liqueurs, among them, as well as instructions for preparing salt pork and sauerkraut.

The book’s recipes fall into four types, including classics that have a Midwestern feel, such as chicken pot pie or hot dishes, that she has tweaked. “I made the best rendition I could and gave it a modern twist,” she says. Family recipes find a spot in her book, too: potato doughnuts and her grandmother’s thick white farmhouse bread.

There are dishes she calls hyper-regional that reflect a very specific place, such as chislic from South Dakota (fried cubes of lamb) and Nebraska runza (a meat-filled bun).

And then there are her own creations. “Some things I invented out of what I consider to be regional ingredients; these are more modern. It’s me cooking out of my garden,” she says. “I tend to get creative with my vegetables because I have so many of them.” She has no illusion that this is a definitive body of regional recipes. “This is really just a beginning because there’s so much more to Midwestern cooking.”

As for Bologna Days: It’s not an annual event, but a weekly celebration that takes place over the lunch hour in two adjacent northern

Zainab Mansaray-Storms ’09 had never baked a cake before Valentine’s Day 2012, when she attempted one for her fiancé. That first cake was enough to hook her on baking. Now she fills her blog, Blahnik Baker, with recipes for desserts of all kinds, especially those made with locally sourced, seasonal ingredients.

Mansaray-Storms is one of a group of recent Macalester alumni who have started food-related blogs soon after graduation. Sara Langhinrichs ’08 began Sweets with Sara largely because her friends kept demanding recipes after they tasted her baked goods—recipes, by the way, that frequently include bourbon. “My baking philosophy is to be as over the top as possible,” Langhinrichs says. “If it’s good without bourbon, it’s probably better with bourbon. If it’s good with one stick of butter, imagine it with two.”

For some bloggers, Macalester played a crucial role in developing the taste that would define their blogs. “My love for Manolo Blahnik shoes started at Mac, as my roommate and I pined over the style of the Sex and the City cast,” says Mansaray-Storms. “This obsession never left me.” Despite her blog’s name, she doesn’t bake in her Blahniks. As for Langhinrichs, she honed her baking skills while living in a Summit Avenue bungalow—“though I didn’t discover my love of bourbon until much later,” she says.

Grown in Harlem—the blog in which Jamila Humphries ’11 documents her garden and the meals she produces from it—was partially inspired by Mac friends who lived in Veggie Coop and Eco House. Her experience at Macalester, she says, also showed her “how to integrate writing, art, creativity and politics into a cohesive story.”

Zach Teicher ’07 created one of his favorite recipes—cumin and coriander tofu—in an attempt to replicate a favorite Café Mac dish. “My first real exposure to vegan food was in Café Mac,” he says, although he didn’t become a vegan until after college. Last year Teicher created VegInDC, an online hub for gluten-free and vegan cooking inspired by his gastronomic adventures with wife, Anne, in Washington, D.C.

Blogs, of course, are also a respite from everyday work. Mansaray-Storms has found baking and photographing her creations a welcome break from the biomedical research she does as a PhD student at SUNY Upstate Medical University. The unexpected benefit has been the online community created around the blog.

The community-building aspect of blogs came as no surprise to Langhinrichs, who did social media and blogging for political campaigns before taking on her current job as a social media manager at the AARP. “Sure, adding bourbon to baked goods isn’t as important as say, reelecting a president,” Langhinrichs says. “But the theories behind being successful at it are largely the same, and let’s face it, baking can be more fun.”
Tell us about your TV show.
It’s called *Heartland Table* and all six episodes have already aired on the Food Network. They put me right after *Pioneer Woman* on Saturday mornings, which is good because she has lots of viewers. You can also find it on iTunes.

How did the show come about?
Well, the book came first—it was three years in the making, whereas the TV show only took nine months. To be honest, the show was more of a surprise. My book was in the pipeline at Random House when they were seeking TV and film properties. It was filmed right in my house so we could be close to my gardens. Those six shows took 20 people more than a dozen 14-hour days. It was exhausting. The cold spring last year threw us, too: at one point I couldn’t find any local freshly dug potatoes, so I had to call a farmers market in Bloomington, Indiana [where my sister lives], and have them send me some still in a box of dirt. The raw materials really matter!

How did you choose your recipes?
I wanted them to be Midwestern but more creative, modern, and with more juice. I wanted to tap into that collective food memory we all have. Food has a way of striking a chord; it elicits an emotional response. That’s what Midwestern chefs are trying to do when they put a fancy Sloppy Joe on the menu—it makes people remember home through a better rendition of something familiar. It has the power to summon common experience. I also wanted the recipes to be doable—I don’t think Midwestern food should be intimidating. I test them repeatedly, and if I can get rid of a step that involves dirtying another piece of equipment, I’ll do it. And I make sure I can source all the ingredients in my closest town, Park Rapids, Minnesota.

When did you start cooking?
Back in my Mac days, I often procrastinated by cooking. I was an English major and instead of writing a paper I’d drive down to University Avenue to the Thai and Vietnamese markets, load up on food, then cook a dinner party for 10 friends. Or I’d be up in the middle of the night making squash soup. I was always cooking so I didn’t have to write—and now I have to do both. I was also influenced by a sociology class in which I produced my own cookbook. I put everything into that book—I was obsessive!

What’s your next book?
My next book is more narrative; it’s stories about food. My publishers wanted a food memoir but I have resisted the chronological thing.

How did you start writing about food?
I wrote for *The Rake* [a now defunct Twin Cities monthly] and the [Minneapolis] Star Tribune, where the editor gave me long leash to write whatever I wanted. I also wrote a weekly column for my hometown newspaper, *The Park Rapids Enterprise*, which is where I really found my voice and started to figure out what I wanted to say about Midwestern food.

**Amy Thielen**

*Mac Today* talked with busy cookbook author/TV host Amy Thielen on a grey fall afternoon, just after she’d spoken at Macalester for Common Good Books.

Tell us about your TV show.
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I wanted them to be Midwestern but more creative, modern, and with more juice. I wanted to tap into that collective food memory we all have. Food has a way of striking a chord; it elicits an emotional response. That’s what Midwestern chefs are trying to do when they put a fancy Sloppy Joe on the menu—it makes people remember home through a better rendition of something familiar. It has the power to summon common experience. I also wanted the recipes to be doable—I don’t think Midwestern food should be intimidating. I test them repeatedly, and if I can get rid of a step that involves dirtying another piece of equipment, I’ll do it. And I make sure I can source all the ingredients in my closest town, Park Rapids, Minnesota.

When did you start cooking?
Back in my Mac days, I often procrastinated by cooking. I was an English major and instead of writing a paper I’d drive down to University Avenue to the Thai and Vietnamese markets, load up on food, then cook a dinner party for 10 friends. Or I’d be up in the middle of the night making squash soup. I was always cooking so I didn’t have to write—and now I have to do both. I was also influenced by a sociology class in which I produced my own cookbook. I put everything into that book—I was obsessive!

What’s your next book?
My next book is more narrative; it’s stories about food. My publishers wanted a food memoir but I have resisted the chronological thing.

How did you start writing about food?
I wrote for *The Rake* [a now defunct Twin Cities monthly] and the [Minneapolis] Star Tribune, where the editor gave me long leash to write whatever I wanted. I also wrote a weekly column for my hometown newspaper, *The Park Rapids Enterprise*, which is where I really found my voice and started to figure out what I wanted to say about Midwestern food.
Sweet-and-sour plums in syrup uses small plums, which Thielen calls “a perfect use for our tiny Northern plums.”
A WHOLE NEW BALL GAME

In Major League Baseball, it’s the players who draw the cheers. But behind the scenes, these four Macalester alumni are helping make America’s pastime even better.

BY ERIN PETERSON  ➔ PHOTO BY DAVID J. TURNER

JOSH ORTIZ ’05
Community programs manager, Minnesota Twins

For Twins fans, Joe Mauer is the hometown hero with the sweet swing and enviable sideburns. For community programs manager Josh Ortiz ’05, Mauer is the guy who lights up the room at the local children’s hospital, joking with kids eager for a light moment. Before he departed for the Pirates, Justin Morneau was more than just a homer-slugging first baseman: he was the guy who made time to visit the nearby homeless shelter with an armful of Twins souvenirs and tickets to give away. “In my job, I get to see that so many of the players are more than just great athletes,” he says. “They’re great people.”

Working in community programs for the Twins wasn’t an obvious career step for Ortiz, who double majored in neuroscience and psychology at Macalester while playing first base for the Scots. But even as he dug into schizophrenia research at the University of Minnesota after graduation, he couldn’t shake the feeling that he had to give a career in professional baseball a shot. He applied for—and landed—an internship with the Twins’ ticket sales department and soon moved into community programs.

These days, in addition to his myriad duties working with player volunteer projects, he oversees the Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI) program. The program, which introduces baseball and softball to disadvantaged kids in the Twin Cities, represents one of Ortiz’s biggest accomplishments: In the last decade, RBI has grown by nearly 20 percent and has nearly 6,000 participants annually. Even better, he says, the program allows him to seamlessly combine the things that he loves most—community support and baseball.

Along the way he’s come to appreciate how the work of professional baseball goes far beyond the nine-inning game he grew up watching. “When I was first looking at jobs in baseball, I assumed that the only jobs worth having were in player acquisition, trades, and scouting,” he says. “But there’s so much more, and so many ways for people to combine their passions with baseball.”
Josh Ortiz ’05 at Target Field, home of the Minnesota Twins
Andrew Percival ’06
Video advance scouting coordinator, Seattle Mariners

When Andrew Percival ’06 was playing third base at Macalester, he remembers spending plenty of afternoons sitting around the lunch table listening to fellow players from far-flung states proclaiming that they came from a baseball hotbed. “Everybody was saying that baseball was great where they were, but I thought: ‘It can’t be great everywhere. There’s got to be some relative relationships here.’”

Instead of just expressing skepticism, he decided to prove it. With the help of knowledge he’d gained as a geography major, he built an Excel database packed with data about major league players, including what part of the country they’d come from. He crunched the numbers to prove his intuition right: there actually were places that produced more pro players. “It gave me objective data I could show to those guys to say, ‘The state of Washington [Percival’s home state] is better at baseball than the state of Maryland,’” he says.

But bragging rights were only the beginning: when Percival began looking for a job after graduation, he sent his resume and the data he’d collected and parsed to all 30 big-league teams. The Mariners, impressed, hired him.

Now the video advance scouting coordinator for the Seattle club, he uses his data-mining skills to study and understand the patterns of Mariners rival teams. He passes these tidbits on to the players and coaching staff, and a few times each game, he says, he’ll see that knowledge put into action—a pitcher, for example, might throw an unexpected pitch because of a quirk that Percival has identified in an opposing batter.

All in all, he says, the data he collects can give the Mariners an advantage that might result in a couple of extra wins each season. Though that might seem like a minor edge—it’s not going to make a bad team good, or even average—a game or two can mean everything in a playoff race. “I’m small cog in a very big machine,” he admits. “But when the stakes are so high, teams are doing everything they possibly can to win.”
**TOM GILLESPIE ‘00**
Scout, Pittsburgh Pirates

When baseball scouts evaluate young athletes for their potential to make it to the big leagues, they often refer to the player’s “five tools”: hitting for average, hitting for power, base-running speed, throwing ability, and fielding skills.

But Tom Gillespie ’00, a scout for the Pittsburgh Pirates, knows that there’s a sixth tool that may be a better predictor of success than any other: drive. It’s the most critical skill to hone during a player’s long, slow grind in the minor leagues, where the constant pressure turns some players to diamonds, others to dust. “Is the athlete going to the field early to get in some extra work when he’s playing 140 games in Boise, Idaho, for a few hundred bucks a month? Or is he thinking about the end of the season when there’s still six weeks to go? You’ve got to find out if they’re internally motivated,” he says.

In his first full year as a Pirates scout (the former Mac pitcher has had a range of other baseball-related roles as well), Gillespie has crisscrossed Europe and Africa to find the teenage phenoms who might just make it to The Show. During the season, he spends much of his time traveling and watching practices and games, following up frequently with promising players. So far, he says, he’s signed one French player to a minor league contract, with more on the horizon.

He admits it’s not easy to track down the most promising players, even with two continents worth of athletes to study. Unlike in the Americas, baseball is a bit of an oddity in Europe and Africa. That said, his Macalester international experience often gives him an edge as he scouts for talent. “Having a global perspective is so important,” he points out. “I may be talking to a 16-year-old kid who’s speaking English as a second or third language. I’m working with kids who come from vastly different places financially, socially, and culturally, and I need to understand that a kid from the Ukraine has different wants and needs than a kid from Uganda. So much of this job is about having understanding and compassion.”

**ROB ENGEL ’10**
Software engineer, MLB.com

There may be no sports fans more ravenous for data than those who follow baseball. Every pitch, every swing, every fly ball gets tracked, categorized, sliced, and diced to help baseball fans understand the game in a more nuanced way.

As a software engineer for MLB.com, it’s the job of Rob Engel ’10 to give people what they want in less time than it takes to say, “Play ball.”

With the help of sophisticated cameras that can record the break and velocity of a pitched ball and a cadre of stringers who manually type in what happens on every pitch and play during every game, Engel’s work helps tie together these disparate pieces of data into a neat package. That, in turn, gives those who have MLB’s GameDay apps a vast trove of elegantly displayed information as quickly as possible. “We want that information to be delivered almost instantaneously after the event occurs,” he says. “Our top priority is to make everything faster.”

To that end, Engel and his colleagues are currently working on an update to see if they can shave fractions of a second from the process by having stringers use a text-based language (a home run to left field might be HR/7/L) rather than clicking on “home run” and then clicking on a specific spot on a computer screen to show where the ball went. If a fan with a phone gets that information before the home run cheer begins to die down at the stadium, Engel’s done his job well.

For Engel, the job has been rewarding not only because it allows him to combine his passions for computer science and baseball—he played catcher, pitcher, and first base at Macalester—but because it has allowed him to understand more deeply a game he’s loved his whole life. “My job is essentially to write software rules for baseball, but you can play baseball your whole life and still see something you’ve never seen before and not know exactly what the rule is,” he says. “It’s helped me learn things I wouldn’t have known otherwise. I’m so happy to have the opportunity to do this.”

**ERIN PETERSON**, who lives in Minneapolis, is a regular contributor to Macalester Today.
Ken Moffett’s job is an endless series of questions, and he loves it, really loves it. Moffett’s workshop is in Olin-Rice Science Center, where he invents solutions to quandaries such as how to measure the movement of a glacier or how to collect fragile, microscopic fossils from buckets of Montana “dirt.”

Moffett is Mac’s go-to guy for scientific instrumentation. His shop is equipped for metal machining, woodworking, welding, and lab glass working, and has shelves full of shop-made gadgets. His first step is to ask the professors or students lots of questions about their project so he can fully understand their vision for the end product.

Take, for example, his current project: an eight-armed rat maze in which the door to each segment can be open or closed (see page 22). Sounds simple enough, but then come the questions: Should the doors open manually or by computer? How fast should they move? How quiet must they be? Does the maze need to be portable?
(1) Transducers used to measure the movement of the underside of a glacier. The body of the piece goes on a rock beneath a glacier, and a cable attaches to the underside of the glacier. As the glacier moves, the increasing length of the cable measures and records the glacier’s movement. This tool was developed for geology professor Kelly MacGregor. (2) Variable pulse-width interface modules, developed for physics professor James Heyman. Several of these are used in a student physics lab experiment to analyze the harmonic content of electronic signals. (3) Display case for human spinal cord used in biology classes by Professor Liz Jansen. (4) RF impedance-matching network designed to maximize the input power to a thin-film deposition plasma chamber used in solar cell research. It was developed for physics professor James Doyle.
Once he has a good grasp of a project’s parameters, Moffett searches the Internet to see if an appropriate gadget already exists, and if not, where he can procure the materials to build one. Then he goes to work, designing and constructing with regular feedback from the user. The necessary materials may come from Home Depot, an instrument supplier in Switzerland, Ax-Man Surplus on University Avenue, or an artist friend who does ironwork.

As for what prepared him for this, his ideal job, Moffett explains that the first step was being raised on a small farm in central Iowa by Depression-era parents. “My dad was the guy other farmers came to for help fixing their machinery, so I was always around it,” he says.

The route from junior farm mechanic to college instrumentation specialist first took Moffett to Iowa State University for an industrial arts education degree. Then, about to be drafted, he joined the Air Force and taught English in Vietnam, moving on to graphics work with NORAD in Tacoma, Washington. When he left the service he came to Minnesota for a medical electronics degree, which led to a 23-year job in Biomedical Engineering Services at the University of Minnesota Hospitals. He next joined a software start-up doing customer data analysis, software installation, and user training.

Then 13 years ago, Professor Jan Serie poste job for a creative person with machine knowledge who liked working with students. And it was kismet. “I was ecstatic,” says Moffett. “It’s a wonderful job at a wonderful school. The cooperation among the various sciences is amazing, and the students are so bright.” Most students have barely worked with tools before but quickly pick it up, he says, and are delighted to create—with Moffett’s help—what they need for their projects.

Will the patents on his inventions earn Moffett a cushy retirement? “No, nothing is patented,” says Moffett, smiling. “It all belongs to Macalester.”
The original square-wheeled bike was constructed in the mid-’90s for mathematics professor Stan Wagon, who was inspired to investigate the relationship between the shapes of wheels and the roads over which they can roll smoothly. So many people rode the original bike that it wore out, leading Moffett to develop a smoother-riding version in 2004. It is usually available in Olin-Rice to inspire interest in mathematics.

The two-kayak crane developed for Professor Kelly MacGregor supports a tripod between two kayaks. From here a tube is lowered 100 feet down into glacial lakes to take sediment core samples. It was designed to be light enough to be disassembled and backpacked into remote mountain areas along with inflatable kayaks.
Sediment disaggregator, also known as “the Big Dipper,” is Ken’s current favorite project. His prototype, “Duncan,” is being used by the Smithsonian Institution’s paleontology lab. Through repeated dipping into buckets of water, the Cretaceous “dirt” is gently rinsed away, leaving the fragile microfossils collected and sorted in sieves. This invention was devised to aid the work of geology professors Ray Rogers and Kristi Curry Rogers.

Charles Darwin cutout and frame. The Biology Department annually celebrates Darwin’s February 12 birthday. At the request of Professor Curry Rogers, who also teaches biology, Moffett developed a supportive frame that allows Darwin to stand for photos with students. It can be collapsed for convenient storage.

Instrumentation for a student honors project designed to investigate if a mother rat can teach its baby to perform a marble-moving task for a reward. The top part is a computerized marble dispenser, the other part detects that a marble has reached the goal. It was developed for Julia Meyers Manor ’04, who is currently teaching in the Psychology Department.
This student-assembled vacuum control panel for Professor Heyman's cryogenic lab is used for research on materials at extremely low temperatures.
Our first-years grow up

Three years ago we introduced a quartet of new Macalester students. Now that they’re seniors, it’s time for another visit.

BY LYNETTE LAMB ➔ PHOTOS BY DAVE TURNER

Three years ago Macalester Today profiled four freshmen as they navigated their first year at college. When last we spoke with our Class of 2014 quartet—Ben Bernard, Sam Leopold-Sullivan, Sebastian Martinez Fernandez de Cordova, and Kiah Zellner-Smith—they were still finding their way at Mac. They were making friends, enjoying a variety of classes, and getting used to the Midwest climate, unsure of summer plans, much less life ones.

Half of that group stuck with their original majors: Sebastian and Sam knew from the first that economics and art were for them; they’ll graduate in May with degrees from those departments. The other two, perhaps more characteristically of liberal arts students, changed their minds a few times along the way. Kiah ended up majoring in American studies and educational studies and Ben in economics, having started in French and English, respectively.

Coursework, study abroad, internships, extracurricular activities, and friendships have forged our foursome into different, far more grown-up and thoughtful people than they were when they last appeared on these pages.

Macalester Today caught up with the four during fall semester of their senior year. Following are some highlights from those conversations. See for yourself what a difference a few years can make.
Kiah Zellner-Smith
(Minneapolis)

On finding a fit: During the fall of her junior year Kiah, who was already majoring in American studies, took—and loved—two education classes, that led her to add Educational studies as a second major. “Equity and diversity is my focus,” she says. “Now I’d like to attend graduate school in educational policy or administration.”

On study abroad: Kiah wanted to live in a country where she wouldn’t stand out as a mixed race person and where she could explore race relations as experienced in a country outside the U.S. “I focused on Brazil for those reasons, and was lucky to find a new program that didn’t require Spanish or Portuguese,” she says. “The first semester I was really homesick, but eventually I learned to love Rio de Janeiro for both its darkness and lightness and learned a lot about my own inner strength.” She also worked as a video blogger and last summer was named IES Abroad’s video blogger of the year. She spoke about the Rio program at the group’s national conference in October.

What’s next: “Next year is still uncertain—I’ll probably travel and work. I also just applied for an intensive summer workshop with the Institute for Recruitment of Teachers, which prepares students of color for graduate school.”
Sebastian Martinez Fernandez de Cordova
(Quito, Ecuador)

On finding a fit: “I was always interested in the big questions in economics and international relations but I never expected to find a passion for finance. I just love it,” says Sebastian. “I’ve been especially influenced by two people: an alum named Khaled Habayeb ’03, who has given me school and career advice as well as a tour of his New York office, and economics professor Joyce Minor, who taught me investment banking.”

On taking advantage of the liberal arts: As a senior Sebastian is taking lots of art classes, including acting, “which is amazing,” he says. “I like it because it’s very different from anything I’ve ever done before. I’m also taking ceramics—honestly, it’s great to do something new.”

On failing as a strategy: His biggest accomplishment at Mac, he says, “has been to recognize my failures and grow from them. Most people think failure is bad but actually it’s a great tool for innovation and self-discovery.”

What’s next? Like many seniors, he’s unsure, but speculates about interning in Europe or landing a job in the U.S. Sebastian has no plans to move home to Ecuador. “Eventually I want to earn an MBA, but first I need some work experience.”
Most people think failure is bad but actually it’s a great tool for innovation and self-discovery.

—Sebastian Martinez Fernandez de Cordova
Ben Bernard
[Concord, Mass.]

On finding your major: Ben spent his first two years taking various classes, especially in English and political science because that’s what he excelled at in high school. His advice to new students? “Take classes that terrify you because sometimes those are the most rewarding.”

On study abroad: Spending a semester directly enrolled at University College London, studying entrepreneurship and e-business, was an eye-opener for Ben. “It was amazing to be exposed to a new kind of college atmosphere,” he says. “That school has lots of older students and people from all over the world. I studied with people from Africa and Greece and took business niche classes that Mac just can’t offer.”

What’s next? Ben is working with another Mac student on an Internet startup called One Music Portal, a site designed to help people discover and discuss music. “We’re shopping around for funding right now, and I hope to keep working on this startup after graduation.”

“My advice is to take classes that terrify you because sometimes those are the most rewarding.”

—Ben Bernard
Samantha Leopold-Sullivan
(Tucson, Ariz.)

On study abroad: Sam spent last semester in Copenhagen, Denmark, at the Danish Institute for Study Abroad program, where she especially enjoyed classes in Scandinavian textile design and integrated sustainability. She also traveled to Sweden, Finland, and Scotland.

On art immersion: As co-leader of both ArtAlliance and MacYARN and a member of MacPics, Sam is deep into the Mac arts scene. She also works as a student supervisor in the Art and Art History Department, helping teachers prepare studios for classes and installing shows in the Art Gallery.

On a risk that paid off: “Moving off campus with friends has been great, both for quality of life and for the quality of schoolwork I’ve gotten done. I do better when I have some space.”

What’s next? Sam plans to take a year off to work and make art in the Twin Cities, and then apply for an MFA program. “I hope to make my living making and teaching art—with a focus on sustainability.”


By approaching the job creatively, Megan Hall ’00 became Minnesota’s top educator.

MEGAN HALL ’00 WASN’T NAMED Minnesota’s Teacher of the Year because of the monthly birthday treats she brings her students, though baking is unquestionably part of her teacher’s toolkit. It’s a small way she shows that she cares about their lives. “If I make students cheesecake on their birthday—or let them play dodgeball—they know they’re special to me,” says the science teacher from St. Paul’s Open World Learning Community. “That’s why cheesecake matters. Teachers do a lot instinctively without thinking about pedagogy.”

Being adept at both cheesecake and pedagogy has taken Hall far in her 11 years of teaching. Last April she was named Minnesota’s Teacher of the Year, chosen from 135 top teachers from around the state.

The award isn’t just a title, either: Hall is midway through a year full of dozens of speaking engagements at colleges, education-focused organizations, and conferences around the state. She also represents Minnesota teachers at other events, such as throwing out the first pitch at a Twins game and handing out pencils at the state fair’s Education Minnesota booth.

Then beginning in January, Hall and other top teachers will take part in six weeks of intensive professional training sessions, which will take them from NASA space camp to the White House. During their training one of those 50 state winners will be named National Teacher of the Year.

All of this makes for a busy year for Hall. Fortunately, although she has regular teaching duties all year, a full-time substitute is team teaching with her and can take over while she’s away, ensuring continuity for students. And she’s used to juggling a full schedule at Open World Learning Community, a small-by-design St. Paul public school that features inquiry-based, expeditionary learning. Her teaching course load ranges from seventh grade life science to AP high school biology, and her classroom style is an active one.

Hall noticed early in her career that her students did best with hands-on learning, so she incorporates into her lesson plans activities such as building a Jello salad with fruit to simulate a cell. “Over the years, I’ve stopped lecturing,” she says. “I might talk for 10 minutes to introduce a unit, but I don’t lecture for an hour anymore.”

Each school day also includes students spending time in a small advisory group called Crew (“the kids do as much as I do,” she says, explaining the collaborative spirit behind the group’s name). Crew meetings often include community-building exercises that teach values such as organization, collaboration, or perseverance.

Crew also helps with a school-wide focus on relationship building, which has been part of Hall’s educational philosophy since her time at Macalester. Back in those days her two chief mentors were lab supervisor Steve Sundby and the late Jan Serie, a biology professor. “Every biology teacher I had at Mac was spectacular, but I had special relationships with Jan and Steve,” Hall says. “Similarly, Open’s system is set up so that every student has a special relationship with his or her advisor.”

At Macalester, Hall became a biology major after taking Serie’s cell molecular biology class, and thrived in the department as she headed toward a career in medicine. But once she had medical school admissions offers in hand, she felt dissonance. She had hoped to apply her passion for social justice to a medical career, but the short-term relationships found in most hospitals lacked the connections she sought. “I started to doubt that this would satisfy my need to help make the world a fair place,” she says.

Career inventories she took at Mac’s Career Development Center showed she should pursue a career in teaching. Hall was initially skeptical, but soon realized that the same things that had drawn her to medicine also applied to education. Hall’s mentors, too, recognized in her the skills that would help her become a great teacher. “She genuinely loves helping people learn and celebrates the success of others,” Sundby says. “She was a quick learner of facts who could integrate those into a truly deep understanding of difficult concepts.”

After earning her master’s degree at St. Catherine University, Hall lobbied hard for a job at Open World Learning, where she’d previously volunteered. In the seven years since, her teaching approach has evolved—most notably, she says, when she became a mother (son Dylan is now four). “The force of parental love is so strong,” she says. “Each student is somebody’s baby, somebody whose parents care about them more than anybody else in the world. It made me change how I teach each child.”

Hall likes some of the trends she sees in education, especially the push toward character education and the shift toward using the scientific method. She dreams that someday schools that create meaningful relationships and make all students feel safe will become commonplace. Above all, she works tirelessly to do her part to close the achievement gap, one of her key platforms as Teacher of the Year.

The most fulfilling point in her teaching career isn’t the most obvious, Hall concedes: it’s when she’s not needed. “I can help kids along, but it’s exciting when I see them taking over,” she says. “When you think about how much some students have to overcome—when they say, ‘I can do this,’ when they know in their hearts that they’re capable—that’s the most rewarding moment.”

REBECCA DEJARLAIS ORTIZ ’06 is a staff writer for Macalester Today.
Megan Hall ’00 at St. Paul’s Open Learning Community, where she perfected her award-winning teaching.
Nathan Williamson '00 records the daily life of lions.

BY JULIE KENDRICK 🏷️ PHOTOS BY MICHAEL “NICK” NICKOLAS / NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE

For many people, a challenging day at work might involve a server crash or an overbooked conference room. For filmmaker Nathan Williamson ’00, however, one of the worst days at work meant a near-miss with an adult male lion, who was hotly pursuing a fleeing wildebeest 30 feet away from where Williamson was standing, unarmed, in the African darkness.

“We were out one night, recording the animals. We always say that ‘night time is the right time’ for big cats because that’s when they’re active, but it can be very dangerous for humans. It’s illegal to be outside at night in that area without special permission. Our team was driving a Land Rover kitted out with remote cameras, robots, and a small drone, but the car was open, and we didn’t have a ranger with us. We didn’t carry a gun, not even pepper spray or mace,” Williamson says.

While the arc from Macalester anthropology major to National Geographic filmmaker may not seem like an obvious one, Williamson has no trouble connecting the dots between his undergraduate years and his current work. He points to the support he found to explore his own passions, especially from retired anthropology professor Jack Weatherford.

Reached in Mongolia, Weatherford says, “Macalester attracts some very independent-minded and adventurous students, and Nathan was certainly determined to explore the world.” Williamson’s most interesting project, says Weatherford, was in Bolivia, where he worked with a logging gang in a remote part of the Amazon, seeking to understand issues related to the forest’s destruction and its impact on the environment and the tribal people still living there. Because there was no easy way out when Williamson needed to return to the U.S., he built a log raft and floated downstream until he came to a small settlement.

“Nathan was a great example of learning by doing,” Weatherford continues. “He didn’t merely worry about the problems of the world, he went out to confront them directly, and did so with a cheerful, determined attitude. His education and adventures at Macalester were a prelude to the life he wanted—exploring the world, documenting it, and bringing people’s attention to neglected issues.”

After graduation Williamson returned to South America on a Fulbright Fellowship, where he focused on efforts to curb deforestation in the Amazon. His proven ability to thrive in extreme conditions helped him land a position as assistant to National Geographic photographer Michael Nichols, leading the technical photo engineering and camera operation on wildlife photography shoots across the world.

Williamson has since worked on 15 stories for National Geographic magazine, from the California Redwoods to Kenya. His partnership with Nichols recently culminated in a multimedia project on Serengeti lions, developed through nine months of fieldwork over the course of two years.

Recently Williamson has specialized in shooting and editing short video documentaries for National Geographic. He calls the Serengeti piece “the best work I’ve ever done.” “It has been an interesting ten years,” he says, “just an amazing run in some of coolest and wildest places in the world.”

Now based in Charlottesville, Virginia, Williamson is currently spending time at home with his wife and son while he edits a television show about the lions. In the works is video coverage of a National Parks story for National Geographic magazine and a possible collaboration with National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence Mike Fay on his Gabon Blue Project.

And of course, his thoughts still drift back to Africa. “I learned so many things, large and small. For example, I learned that if you’re close enough that lions are chewing chunks off your jeep’s mudflaps, you’re probably too close.” As he puts the finishing touches on the television show, he expresses relief that the project has successfully concluded, but also notes, “We followed the same pride the entire time, so we watched those cubs grow up. Now I wonder how they’re doing. I hope we’ve been able to communicate something about how amazing those animals are.”

JULIE KENDRICK is a regular contributor to Macalester Today.
Nathan Williamson ’00 in Africa with a drone camera used for taking aerial shots of wildlife. He specializes in remote-camera photography for National Geographic.
My opening proposition is relatively straightforward: The continued health and relevance of small, residential liberal arts colleges will be determined by the extent to which such institutions are prepared to focus on quality, distinctiveness, and social purpose. We need to be positioned to demonstrate as concretely as is feasible—and concreteness in these matters can be elusive—that the education we provide has positive outcomes, that it differs in beneficial ways from the education offered in other kinds of institutions (including the virtual), and that it contributes to the collective good.
Macbassadors*: By the Numbers
FY2013 Alumni Volunteer Report

Active Macbassadors

- **508**
  - Student Connect
  - First-year dinners, campus speakers, host families, MARP readers, athletics volunteers, Explorship hosts, MacMail, MacConnect hosts, internship hosts
- **294**
  - Leadership
  - Board of Trustees, Alumni Board, Reunion planning committees, yMac, M-Club Board, chapter leaders, Mac in the City hosts
- **146**
  - Fundraising
  - Class agents, Alumni Board development committee
- **128**
  - Admissions

**FAST FACTS**

- **912**
  - Volunteered for Macalester during FY2013
- **375**
  - Volunteered in both the spring and fall semesters
- **55%**
  - Live outside Minnesota
- **77%**
  - Support the college financially
- **Class of 2003**
  - Most alumni volunteers by class year
- **167**
  - Sent MacMail postcards to the Class of 2013
- **152**
  - Served on Reunion Planning committees

*Macbassadors are alumni volunteers who donate their time, skills, and expertise to Macalester College*
Oliver Finegold, Liz Schalifer Finegold ’03, Junita Bognanni ’03, and Peter Bognanni ’02 met last fall in London when the Bognannis were on their way to spend the year in Rome.
In Memoriam

1938
William B. Korstad, 97, died Nov. 10, 2013, in Naples, Fla. He served in Europe during World War II, practiced law, and was active in commercial real estate development. Mr. Korstad is survived by a daughter, a son, four grandchildren, and a great-granddaughter.

1940
Arthur E. Bell, 94, died Sept. 8, 2013. He received Macalester’s Distinguished Citizen Award in 1973 and was a generous donor to the college. Mr. Bell is survived by his wife, Frances Tripp Bell ’39, daughters Kathleen Bell Buaug ’70 and Mary Bell Wolff ’76, sons David Bell ’65 and Richard Bell ’68, 11 grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Duncan E. Slade, 95, died June 10, 2013, in South Paris, Maine. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross while serving with the Marines in the South Pacific during World War II. After 25 years working for Uniroyal, Mr. Slade taught art at Oxford Hills Junior High School from 1974 to 1983. He is survived by four children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

1944
Eleanor B. Ellsberg, 89, died June 19, 2013, in Santa Barbara, Calif. She taught high school drama and speech, coached professionally, and participated in community theater. With her third husband, Alan Ellsberg, Mrs. Ellsberg founded the Ellsberg School of Real Estate in Las Vegas. She is survived by four daughters, five grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

Phyllis Bambusch Jones, 90, died Sept. 8, 2013, in St. Paul. She served as assistant Ramsey County attorney, general counsel for the Minnesota Urban County Attorneys Board, and director of the Minnesota County Attorneys Association before entering private practice in St. Paul and Cottage Grove, Minn., in 1975. She was appointed a district court judge in 1983 and retired in 1993. Mrs. Jones also served as president of the Minnesota Women Lawyers Association and as a member of Macalester’s Alumni Board, and received the Distinguished Citizen Award from Macalester in 2004. She is survived by two daughters, a son, three grandchildren, and four sisters.

Harry L. Merrill, 91, died Oct. 25, 2013. He served as a pharmacist’s mate in the Coast Guard during World War II and graduated from the Kent State University College of Podiatric Medicine. Dr. Merrill is survived by a sister.

Margaret Hill Whitmer, 89, died Sept. 5, 2013. She worked as a house manager with the Chimera Theater. In addition to monitoring legislation of women’s issues with the Minnesota Women’s Consortium, Mrs. Kemmer was involved with Minnesota Home Economists in Homemaking and was named Home Economist of the Year in 1995. She is survived by a daughter, two sons, and a granddaughter.

Jean Wefer Scheppman, 90, of Wayland, Mass., died Sept. 9, 2013. She is survived by two daughters and four grandchildren.

Allan C. Torgerson, 90, died Sept. 20, 2013, in Stevensville, Md. He served for many years in the U.S. Army in Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Germany, and Belgium. After retiring as a colonel in 1976, Mr. Torgerson worked as director of development for the Bullis School in Potomac, Md., and at the Army Distaff Hall in Washington, D.C. He is survived by three daughters, two sons, five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Wilbur K. Zaudtke, 88, of La Crosse, Wis., died March 30, 2013. He joined the Marine Corps in 1942, serving in Korea, Okinawa, Hawaii, China, and Vietnam and attaining the rank of colonel. After retiring from the Marine Corps in 1971, he worked for the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Mr. Zaudtke is survived by his wife, Jean, two daughters, a son, seven grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

1947
Eleanor Neilton Swartz, 87, of Grafton, N.D., died Sept. 18, 2013. She was a teacher and principal at Hoople High School, a special education teacher at the Grafton Development Center, and co-owner with her husband of a Dairy Queen in Grafton. Mrs. Swartz is survived by two daughters, two sons, six grandchildren, a great-granddaughter, and a sister.

Jack T. Abbert, 87, of Diablo, Calif., died Dec. 16, 2012. He served in the Coast Guard in the Aleutian Islands during World War II and worked for General Motors. Mr. Abbert is survived by his companion, Betty, as well as children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and a sister.

Lorraine Stevensen Kemmer, 86, of Falcon Heights, Minn., died Aug. 24, 2013. She was a house manager with the Walker Art Center. In addition to monitoring legislation of women’s issues with the Minnesota Women’s Consortium, Mrs. Kemmer was involved with Minnesota Home Economists in Homemaking and was named Home Economist of the Year in 1995. She is survived by a daughter, two sons, and a granddaughter.

Marc C. Shoquist, 85, of Edina, Minn., died Oct. 15, 2013. He served in the Navy during World War II and as an officer in the Army Signal Corp during the Korean War. During a 40-year career as an engineer, Mr. Shoquist worked at Sperry Univac and Alliant Tech, and over 25 years he served as a member of several standing NATO committees. Mr. Shoquist is survived by a daughter and a granddaughter.

Donald C. Borrman, 87, of Edina, Minn., died Oct. 2, 2013, in St. Louis Park, Minn. He served in the Navy during World War II. In 1952, Mr. Borrman began working for the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, first as a finance manager and later as administrative director. During his tenure at the Walker, the museum’s staff more than quadrupled and its budget grew from $150,000 to $5.6 million. He continued to consult for the institution after his retirement in 1986 and oversaw the construction of the museum’s Sculpture Garden. Mr. Borrman is survived by his wife, Marjorie, a daughter, two sons, and seven grandchildren.

Joanne Powell Davidson, 85, died Sept. 15, 2013, in Douglas, Wyo. She taught kindergarten in Douglas and Rawlins, Wyo. Mrs. Davidson is survived by her husband, Clarence, two daughters, three grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

1951
Jeanne Vahda Zimmerman Olson, 84, of Brainerd, Minn., died Oct. 31, 2013. She taught in Atkin and Bagley, Minn., and tutored and worked for AEC in Brainerd until her retirement in 1989. Mrs. Olson is survived by two daughters, a son, two grandchildren, and a sister.

Louise Weigh Hough, 84, died Aug. 29, 2013. She was an elementary school teacher in Winona, Wis., and the Twin Cities. She also taught piano and served as accompanist for the St. Clair Shores Community Chorus. Mrs. Hough is survived by her husband, Louis, two daughters, a son, three grandchildren, and a sister.

Vctor G. “Glad” Novander, 82, died May 14, 2013. He is survived by eight children and seven grandchildren.

Eugene W. Phelps, 83, of Shorewood, Wis., died Sept. 23, 2013. He served in the Army during the Korean War and retired after a 32-year career with Wisconsin Electric Co. Mr. Phelps is survived by daughter Victoria Phelps Coffman ’79, two sons, and four grandchildren.

1952
Donald L. Fox, 89, of Plymouth, Minn., died Sept. 30, 2013. He served in the Navy during World War II and was an administrative manager at Investors Diversified Services in Minneapolis. Mr. Fox is survived by his wife, Christa, a daughter, two sons, seven grandchildren, and a sister.

Roger W. Macker, 90, of Auburn, Calif., died July 14, 2013.

Allyn C. Taylor, 89, of Rotonda West, Fla., died Aug. 29, 2013. He served as a naval aviator during World War II. An avid golfer, Mr. Taylor scored holes-in-one on six different courses. He is survived by his wife, Janice, two daughters, and three grandchildren.

1953
McCubrey is survived by her husband, Everett McCubrey ’53, a daughter, two sons, and five grandchildren.

**1954**
Arthur J. Fredrickson, 87, of Minneapolis died May 21, 2010. He served in the Navy during World War II, taught at schools in Kenyon, Waseca, and Minneapolis, and coached football, basketball, and golf. Mr. Fredrickson is survived by his wife, Donna, two sons, and three grandchildren.

Georgiana McLean, 81, of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, died Aug. 22, 2013. After graduating from Yale Divinity School, Mrs. McLean served on the staff of the campus ministry at Brown University. She was also a psychotherapist and founder of the Counseling Center for Women in Eindhoven, the Netherlands. She is survived by two children.

Beverly Novander Teichmiller, 79, died Oct. 11, 2011. She taught at schools in DeKalb and Riverside, Ill., and was associate pastor at the Stone Church from 1991 to 2005. Mrs. Teichmiller is survived by a daughter, a son, three grandchildren, a sister, and two brothers (including Victor Novander ’52, since deceased).

Donald E. Wilcox, 83, of Rochester, Minn., died Aug. 9, 2013. He worked for Hanny’s.

**1955**
Kenneth S. Barklind, 80, of Edina, Minn., died Oct. 18, 2013. He worked as a school psychologist for various public school systems in Minnesota, taught psychology in Canada and Minnesota, and was an associate professor and secretary of the Graduate Council at the University of Wisconsin. Mr. Barklind took a particular interest in children with intellectual disabilities and emotional and behavioral disturbances and worked with ARC Minnesota to deinstitutionalize intellectually disabled individuals. He is survived by his wife, Annelore, a daughter, a son, a sister, and two brothers.

Allan L. Lidke, 79, of Fairmont, Minn., died Sept. 25, 2013. He was an Army veteran and owner of Unique Cleaners in Fairmont. He also managed the Rolling Green Par 3 Golf Course and worked part time at Interlaken Golf Course until his retirement in 2007. Mr. Lidke is survived by his wife, Clare, three daughters, six grandchildren, and a great-grandson.

**1957**
Keith R. Gunderson, 78, of Minneapolis died Oct. 14, 2013. He was a professor of philosophy at the University of Minnesota for 40 years and wrote Mentality and Machines, a book about artificial intelligence, as well as several volumes of poetry. Mr. Gunderson is survived by his wife, Sandra Riekkii, three sons, four grandchildren, and two sisters.

Keith C. Burns, 77, of Circle Pines, Minn., died Oct. 23, 2013. He was an ophthalmologist. Mr. Burns is survived by his wife, MaryAnn Trangmar Burns ’58, three daughters, 15 grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, five sisters, and six brothers.

Gordana Muskatirovic Rezab, 79, of Macomb, Ill., died Aug. 31, 2013. She taught English as a second language and German at Macalester. She later worked in the cataloging and collections section and archives and special collections section at Western Illinois University’s library. Mrs. Rezab is survived by two daughters, a son, nine grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, and a sister.

Ronald J. Carlson, 71, of Chisago City, Minn., died July 4, 2012. He is survived by a daughter, two sons, nine grandchildren, and a great-grandchild.

Sylvia Dimmick Rich, 75, of Appleton, Wis., died Sept. 12, 2013. She worked as a medical technologist and owned and ran Quilter’s Corner. Mrs. Rich is survived by a daughter, two sons, and five grandchildren.

Margaret Page McCubbin, 75, of Center City, Minn., died July 13, 2013. She is survived by three grandchildren, a great-grandchild, and a brother.

**1963**
Geraldine Rock Mathis, 72, died Sept. 17, 2013, in Edmonds, Wash. She taught in Minneapolis, Seattle, and Coupeville, Wash., retiring in 2001. Her passion concerning social justice issues led her to participate in an anti-segregation protest at a Woolworth’s lunch counter and to work at an inner-city settlement house in Chicago. Mrs. Mathis is survived by her husband, Ross, two daughters, four grandchildren, and a brother.

Michael B. Clark, 73, of Kingwood, Texas, died Sept. 18, 2013. He was a geologist who for most of his career searched for hydrocarbons in the Gulf of Mexico, Alaska, and Texas. Mr. Clark is survived by his wife, Virginia Peck Clark ’67, two sons, four grandchildren, and a brother.

Robert A. Lindemoen, 71, of Paradise Valley, Ariz., died Sept. 5, 2013. He worked as a dentist in Arizona for 45 years. Robert is survived by his wife, Diane, a daughter, a son, two granddaughters, and a sister.

Jean Thompson Malmberg, 70, of Wayzata, Minn., died April 5, 2013. She worked as a schoolteacher for 36 years. Mrs. Malmberg is survived by her husband, Joel, a daughter, a son, two granddaughters, and a sister.

Rabbi Jonathan V. Plaut, 69, died in April 2013. He is survived by his wife, Carol, a daughter, a son, two grandchildren, and a sister.

Gretchen Grashuis Thiret, 70, died in June 2013. She is survived by her husband, Georges, two sons, and four grandchildren.

**1964**
John L. Korpi, 68, died June 21, 2011. He is survived by a daughter and a son.

**1965**
Margaret Page McCubbin, 75, of Center City, Minn., died July 13, 2013. She is survived by three grandchildren, a great-grandchild, and a brother.

**1966**
Margaret Bakke Osterby, 91, of Hopkins, Minn., died Oct. 29, 2013. She retired after a 30-year career as a teacher at Meadowbrook Elementary School in Golden Valley, Minn. Mrs. Osterby is survived by a son, four grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren.

**1967**
Gretchen VanDyken Anderson, 68, died Aug. 30, 2013, in La Jolla, Calif. She taught elementary school in St. Paul, Wheaton, Ill., Philadelphia, Allentown, Pa., and Hartland, Wis. Mrs. Anderson is survived by her husband, Don Anderson ’66, two children, three grandchildren, a sister, and a brother.

Steven Lloyd Bennett, 65, of Woodbury, Minn., died Oct. 16, 2013. He is survived by his wife, Carol Mortensen, daughter Joan Mortensen Bennett ’05, and three brothers.

Joan L. Henderson, 62, of Arlington, Va., died Nov. 18, 2013. She worked as a publishing executive and part owner of the now-defunct Arlington-based newsletter publishing firm Pasha Publications.

Christian R. Hafstead, 57, of Bloomington, Minn., died March 3, 2010. He is survived by his wife, Mary, and two sons.

**1970**
Alice J. McMullin, 57, of Sarasota, Fla., died Sept. 21, 2012.

**Other Losses**

Cathy E. Kaudy, a former staff member in Macalester’s learning center and library, died Nov. 5, 2013, at the age of 65. She worked for the college from 1985 to 2006. Mrs. Kaudy is survived by her husband, Erich, two daughters, a son, and a brother.
Buried Alive

BY LUCY ANDREWS ’14

I'd been a slave to obligation, I was hungry to get some self-determination back. You see, I had cradled a fantasy for most of my life: I would take off on a sojourn into the wild, face the wilderness within and without. This is the sort of madness that desperate people hope for; I was desperate. So I enrolled in a Rocky Mountains National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) course and by mid-February was on a tiny plane to Riverton, Wyoming.

Leadership School (NOLS) course and by mid-February was on a tiny plane to Riverton, Wyoming.

I met my group shortly after I landed. We were 15 students between 18 and 22—three women, 12 men—all from different walks of life: a fraternity at Ole Miss, a mental inpatient facility, a future in the Marines. I knew I’d enjoy them, but I was there in search of me.

The 15 of us, all initially strangers, met our instructors, strapped on skis, and set out to live in four feet of snow for 18 days with only what we could pull in a sled. A few days into Yellowstone we reached a camp where we could ditch our cold tents and construct shelters called quinzhees. To build a quinzhee you spend three or four hours mounding snow until you have a pile 12 feet by 15 feet. As you pile it, you pack it down so it’s dense and semi-frozen, then you leave it to set for a few hours. It’s sort of like the snow at the end of your driveway after a blizzard and a plow have come through. Once the pile has set, you hollow it out to create a living space. The temperature inside hovers around 30 degrees.

I was working with Sara and Dani, the two other women in the group. Sara started digging from the bottom, hollowed out a door, then started excavating the interior. Once she made enough room for a second person to be inside, I crawled in.

The space was tight. I had just enough room to move my shov- el. Sara was to my left. We chipped away at the icy walls in tandem. Scratch, scratch, scratch, woomph.

Buried.

I felt it before I saw it, and by the time I saw it, I was immobile. The mound had collapsed on us, and I was pinned under five feet of ice-snow, splayed on my stomach, one arm beneath me, the other outstretched. The force of the collapsing ceiling had ripped my legs from under me, and now hundreds of pounds of ice were pressing down on me. Fortunately, my head was turned to the left, allowing a small pocket of air to remain around my face. Through this pocket I could see Sara a few feet away, her eyes full of fear. I tried yelling, moving. I couldn’t. I was entombed in snow the consistency of concrete. I was helpless.

After a minute, a eternity, I could feel the snow around me shifting enough to signal that people were walking above me. I couldn’t hear them, but I knew my peers were digging me out. Another minute, another lifetime, and the darkness broke a bit. They were getting closer. And then I could hear them approaching from the side. Dig dig dig dig dig! We were miles and days from a hospital. Dig dig dig dig dig! My leg was throbbing, bent at an odd angle. Dig dig dig dig! I couldn’t hold in the terror anymore. They’re so close!

And then it collapsed again. My heart stopped.

The second time was worse. To be so close to salvation, to see the light breaking through, and then to be swallowed again by cold darkness… something inside me broke. The second collapse pinned my throat. I couldn’t breathe; the pocket around my face was gone. The edges of my vision started to close in. I could feel the snow shifting above me, and with each step my would-be rescuers took, the snow got a little denser, the weight a little heavier, the air a little scarcer.

The rest I don’t remember well. I’m told that three minutes after the second collapse, they excavated me. All I recall is a paralysis so dark and complete it could have been three minutes or three hours. After they laid me out in the snow I moved, my vision started to close in. I couldn’t feel the snow shifting above me, and with each step my would-be rescuers took, the snow got a little denser, the weight a little heavier, the air a little scarcer.

They were what mattered. These guys, these competitive, sexist-joke-telling, bacon-loving guys, these strangers, had saved my life.

I had found the missing piece, and it was people. For three years in college, and for many years before that, my schedule had replaced relationships. Now I was ready to let that go, to make room for people for the first time.

LUCY ANDREWS ’14 is a geology and international studies major from Plymouth, Minn. She told this story last fall at a Let Your Life Speak event called “When I Was Afraid.”
You’ve planned your day, your weekend and your next adventure. Leave it to Mac to help with your planned gift.

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