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Karol Crosbie

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Alumni bring their best to Ohio
You’ve probably heard about the Wooster Bubble. Correct me if I’m wrong, but I think the phrase means that the quaintness of our town and ivory tones of our campus protect students against “real life.” But the thing about bubbles is that you can see out. And you’re never tethered.

These days, paths for intellectual inquiry that lead away from Wooster and away from the U.S. are diverse and plentiful. There are probing symposia, multicultural classes, and esoteric Independent Studies. There is also friendship. As our 1,800 students work, play, and study together, permanent change occurs. And, because of the College’s Friends of International Students (FIS) in the Office of International Student Affairs, staff and members of the community can also take advantage of these friendships waiting to happen.

Blain Tesfaye ’12 arrived on campus from Ethiopia in the fall of 2008, and she and I met at the annual FIS picnic in Dean Holmes’ back yard. She was shy, and let her Dad do most of the talking, but respectfully answered my onslaught of questions about her country. These days, I don’t ask her questions about Ethiopia; I ask her questions about Wooster. As a resident assistant at Bissman Hall and one of five international students chosen to be an ambassador to the Wooster community, Blain has unique insights. She’ll graduate next semester, and I’ll probably forget a lot of what she has told me about Ethiopia. (Already have, truth be told.) But I will never forget Blain.

And Blain won’t forget us. Our College is rich with stories about international students who returned home and took some of Wooster back with them. Be sure to read the story (pg. 64) of 1911 alumnus Ping-Wen Kuo, whose 100-year legacy lives on in Nanking, China, and in Wooster, Ohio.

Students studying and volunteering abroad also find that friendship helps them to teach and to learn. For example, Liz Plumley ’13 spent three weeks this past summer in Ghana volunteering at The Akaa Project, a nonprofit co-founded by a local woman and Wooster student Lauren Grimanis ’12. (Read more about this on the back cover.) Liz knew all 80 kids at the village’s new school, and they would often stop by for a photo, a story read in English, and a hug.
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Alumni bring their best to the state of Ohio.

32 THE 100-YEAR-OLD FOOTPRINT OF GUO BINGWEN
A 1911 alumnus shaped Chinese higher education.
Reflections on Daily Chapel

It was with much interest and many fond memories that I read Gordon Tait's *Reflections on Daily Chapel*. On June 13, 1947, 64 years ago, Oscar Olson '45 and I were married in that beautiful ivy covered building. "Pappy" Rowe played the organ and "Fuzzy" Vance performed the ceremony.

As associate editor of *The Voice*, I wrote more than one editorial against required chapel. Sunday attendance was required as well, although it didn't have to be at Westminster. Most of the churches in town had attendance cards for students to sign. Because I went every Sunday, I defiantly signed someone else's name who needed the required credit, since I had extra credits.

Looking back on my Wooster years, I realize that the chapel services were a vital part of campus life. It was a coming together of the College family.

SALLY WADE OLSON '46
WOODBRIDGE, VA.

*Reflections on Daily Chapel* resurrected wonderful memories. My wife, Mimi (Fitch) '54, and I have returned for countless reunions, so we have watched the campus and curriculum change dramatically over the years.

Here's one memory: Richard T. Gore, music director at the College, was renowned as a musician par excellence. He was likewise renowned for his preeminent gruffness, impatience, and dictatorial behavior. At one chapel performance, Mr. Gore walked over to the Steinway, squished his butt into position on the bench as concert pianists are wont to do, stretched his fingers, and waited for the hush of awe to come over the crowd. This being a winter in Wooster, the coughing and hacking was slower to subside than usual. Finally, the awkwardness ended as did the coughing, and Herr Gore tickled the keys as only Ludwig van Beethoven could do. After a few minutes, the coughing picked up again. Suddenly, to the surprise, bewilderment, and befuddlement of everyone, Gore jumped up, slammed the piano key cover as hard and loud as he could, walked over to the microphone and yelled, "You people are nothing but a bunch of walruses!" and stormed off the stage and out the chapel door.

Dean Taeusch sat there in shock for a few moments before he slid cautiously up to the microphone, and in his own inimitable staccato, disconnected style, said, "Well . . . it appears . . . we must . . . be done . . . so you . . . are dismissed."

CARL FLEMING '53
BAY VILLAGE, OHIO

Gordon Tait's lively article brought back a lot of memories (mostly good) about compulsory chapel. My favorite lecture was by former Wooster President Wishart, who was in his 80s when he spoke to us. I remember him standing before us perfectly still. He reached into his jacket pocket, pulled something out, and held it out in front of him. He looked us straight in the eye and said, "Three cigars!" He had our attention and proceeded to tell us the story of the Union scout who found three cigars wrapped in General Robert E. Lee's battle plan for Antietam. Prexy Wishart's grandson was my roommate, and he told me that on one occasion, his grandpa had out-debated William Jennings Bryan.

NEIL HUGHES '59
WOOSTER, OHIO

Unlike Colin MacKinnon (though of similar liberal views), I always enjoyed chapel for the very reasons Gordon Tait mentions—nurturing the mind and the "cause of community enhancement." I liked the break in the daily round of morning classes, and there was something cozy and comforting about crowding into the chapel on a cold, nasty winter morning that I still recall quite nostalgically. It was a great time to see friends.

The only thing you mentioned that I don't remember during my years at Wooster (I graduated in 1963) was the seating separation by sex. Part of what I liked about Chapel was being able to sit near or next to attractive girls in the same row. As I recall it, we sat with the sexes mixed but in strict alphabetical order. Thus, as long as I was interested in a girl whose last name began with "M," I could be quite content!

JIM MCGAVRAN '63
CHARLOTTE, N.C.
I.S. traditions

Your statement that I.S. Monday is “a most cherished tradition” is a bit misleading. There was no such thing in 1964, so it must have happened since then. A story on how and when it got started might be interesting.

I am glad to learn of the Senior Research Symposium. When I proposed something of this sort in 1964, I was told that my ego was too big. I argued that while music majors could do a public performance, the rest of us just had our I.S. papers filed away, never to be seen again.

A current member of the economics department told me that they are posting all I.S. papers on their webpage and are trying to collect older ones to post there. It would be great if all departments did this. Access could be limited to those who have a login ID and password.

JIM POPE ’64 CARLISLE, MASS.

I graduated from Wooster in 1969, so this I.S. Monday celebration tradition is new to me. As is the case now, we all knew when our I.S. was due: high noon, April 23, at the registrar’s office in Galpin Hall. We were given a handwritten receipt, marking the time. My receipt, which I still have, says 10:37 a.m., April 23, 1969.

In those days, in order to publish two copies, our manually typed papers had to be copied with a copier, and there was only one on campus. As I recall, we were not allowed to operate Zelda Xerox ourselves. We put our paper into a queue for someone else to copy it, and we always were interested in Zelda’s turnaround time.

After that day, there was great relief, but no I.S. Monday. I went to see a movie, Where Eagles Dare, a WW II action movie, which, for me, will always be associated with what I was celebrating. No mass marching in the streets. No alcohol-fueled rollicking.

Those were the days of required chapel, house mothers, and curfews. No smoking or drinking on campus. Seniors were 21, and many had access to a car, but drinking was not a big issue then, or at least I did not see that it was. There were few bars in town then.

I vaguely recall an oral defense of my econ paper, but it was for our econ professors, primarily my friend, Dr. Richard Reimer. No other students. A symposium sounds like a great idea to me. I knew very little about other students’ papers.

Please keep up the good work. After 46 years, Wooster and its history and traditions become even richer for me.

JOHN STELTER ’69 BYRON, ILL.

Multiple Lowry impersonators?

The winter issue of Wooster was correct in identifying Bob Boerum as the Howard Lowry-of-the-moment awarding Abe Lincoln his honorary degree. I was a student in the audience on the memorable occasion of that senior chapel. I knew Boerum—he was a friend of my brother, James Holm ’63, and had visited our home on occasion. Boerum did an excellent job, complete with shaking jowls, slight palsy, and other (exaggerated, of course) Lowry-like gestures. David Noble ’63 (who identified the impersonator as John Weckesser ’63) is correct that Howard Lowry laughed heartily, enjoying the performance as much as the rest of the audience.

SUSAN HOLM ’66 PEORIA, ILL.

From the Editor

CHAPEL CO-ED SEATING: A number of readers noted that in Reflections on Daily Chapel, we incorrectly cited 1964 as the year that co-ed seating was instituted at chapel. John McAnlis ’55 recalls that the first official co-ed seating was September, 1951. There may also have been some unofficial mixed seating during the war years, when attendance was low.

FIRST I.S. MONDAY: Library research didn’t answer the question of the exact date of the first I.S. Monday celebration. Does anyone know?
Welcoming, challenging the Class of 2015

“Today we begin, officially and in earnest, a new year of liberal inquiry. It is an honor, a privilege, and a joy to launch our noble work together.”

With those words, President Grant Cornwell welcomed the Class of 2015, returning students, faculty, and staff to the convocation that marked the formal opening of the College’s 142nd academic year.

Cornwell focused his address on the upcoming 2011 Wooster Forum, a multi-disciplinary series of speakers, art exhibits, and performances titled “The Americas: Contact and Consequences.” He urged students to use the forum as a springboard to explore and develop a more critical awareness of their place in the world. Following are excerpts.

Situated Citizenship:
The Americas in a Global Context

The first thing to realize is that the Americas are a geological construction that has, through history, become a social construction of many, many disparate nations. After the European conquest of the Americas, this land became a patchwork of colonies. Most of the people who lived here were killed through disease or genocide, and most of those who survived have, over time, mixed and mingled with those of European descent.

What this means is that the current population of the Americas in general, and the United States of America in particular, is a tapestry woven of overlapping diasporas. Most of the European colonists who settled here were motivated, if not driven, to leave Europe by economic or religious repression. Infamously, people of African descent who came to the New World during the colonial era were stolen from their homelands and sold as slaves.

The best historical account of this global peopling of the Americas is given by the scholar and Wooster graduate, Ronald Takaki ’61, particularly in his acclaimed, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America.*

Let me zoom in on the United States of America for a minute and look at its composition through a more contemporary lens. You have a mental map of the 50 states that comprise the nation, I am sure. But what makes us a nation? Who belongs here? Is this a different question than who can claim citizenship? You would be hard-pressed to point to those markers typically definitive of nationhood; we do not have a common religion, a common ethnicity, a common language, or even, if you look beneath the surface, anything one could identify as a common culture. You could make the case that what defines us as a nation is our common legal standing as citizens, but that is both fraught and flimsy.

In a fascinating essay, “Ecumenical America: Global Culture and the American Cosmos,” author Orlando Patterson makes a compelling case that sociologically, culturally, and even economically, the contemporary U.S. can better be understood divided into a network of regional cosmoses, each of which extends beyond the U.S. border.

Who they are

The 585 students making up the Class of 2015 come from 41 states and 24 countries. One in four are domestic students of color or international students. Nearly half were ranked in the top 10 percent of their high school graduating classes, and two dozen were valedictorians. They were selected from a pool of almost 5,000 applicants, the largest in the College’s history.
He devotes much of his essay to the analysis of what he calls the West Atlantic regional cosmos, the cultural capital of which is Miami, but whose reach extends throughout the Caribbean, Central, and South America. He goes on to talk about the Tex-Mex regional cosmos of the Southwest, the Pacific Rim cosmos of the Northwest, and so on. His most general point, and the reason I bring this up, is that the very idea of the United States as a nation is contested. I hope you will debate the merits of this framework in your residence halls and classrooms, tonight and throughout the Wooster Forum series. Why? Because part of what it means to be liberally educated is to have well-reasoned opinions about your situation and those of others in a global-historical context.

All citizenship is situated in space and time, including your own. I believe that one of the qualities of liberally educated persons is that they are critically aware of their own situations—how they are situated politically, economically, culturally, politically, and racially—in a context of their relations to the situation of others.

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**IN THE NEWS**

**Attracting students to math, computer science, chemistry, and physics**

The College has received a five-year, $600,000 grant from the National Science Foundation for a new program to provide scholarships, mentoring, and academic support to students pursuing degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The program, coordinated by Pamela Pierce, chair of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, will focus on students with financial need who have expressed interest in majoring in math, computer science, chemistry, or physics, with particular emphasis on women, minorities, and first-generation students.

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**Wooster Chorus: Singing with the pros**

Ten members of the Wooster Chorus sang with the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus and Cleveland Orchestra in their presentation of Beethoven's 9th Symphony at Blossom Music Center in early September. The invitation came as a result of Wooster Chorus director Lisa Wong's role as assistant director with the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus.

**Bioethics: The Search for Our Selves**

The College’s 43rd Fall Academy of Religion this year will tackle “Bioethics: Under The Microscope—The Search for Our Selves,” featuring six lectures by scholars from a variety of backgrounds, including Charles Kammer, Wooster’s James F. Lincoln professor of religious studies and academic dean of the Fall Academy.
“How Could I Not Succeed?”

The approximately 100 students who have participated in the Wooster Youngstown Early Intervention Program are headed for college.

The groups of 25 students from Youngstown, Ohio begin coming to the Wooster campus as squirrely 14- and 15-year-olds. They return for two weeks every summer for the next three years and by the time they are seniors, transformations have occurred. The changes center around a life-changing assumption: The students have every reason to believe that they will go to college.

Hayden Schilling, the Robert Critchfield Professor of English History at Wooster, who helped launch the program in 1980 and has coordinated it ever since, is only half joking when he says, “The program doesn’t give them a choice. They’re going to college.”

Teachers and counselors at Cheney High School in Youngstown help identify students who will excel in the program. Sarah Garcia ’09 was such a student. Her test scores weren’t particularly high, she wasn’t in honors classes, but someone thought the quiet, reserved 9th grader should come to Wooster’s summer college preparation program.

At the core of Wooster’s program is the opportunity to practice writing, particularly thoughtful, introspective narrative that will make a college application stand out. Almost no writing was required at her high school, said Garcia, who graduated from Cheney High in 2005. “The classes were so big, and teachers were so involved in behavioral problems,” she says.

Wooster summer days begin at 9:00 a.m. for the Youngstown college-bound students, with classes in math and writing; afternoons are spent in enrichment sessions, including theater, sociology, and chemistry. Graduates of the Youngstown program who are current College of Wooster students are mentors and role models.

In the course of four summers, students visit approximately 15 Ohio colleges and universities. And while Wooster often emerges as one of their top choices, the program does not actively recruit students.

“This is not an admissions ploy,” says Schilling. “But if they do decide to come to Wooster, they always do extremely well.”

Garcia, for example, graduated from Cheney High School, and then enrolled at Wooster. For her Independent Study, the psychology major researched how sleep interruption affects memory. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in neuropsychology at Kent State.
Making sure that grades are high enough for college is the biggest challenge of the program, says Schilling. The program, therefore, doesn’t end at the conclusion of the two-week campus visits. Schilling, Cathy Finks, associate director of admissions at Wooster, and Carol Marino, coordinator at Youngstown, monitor the students’ academic progress throughout their high school careers and provide tutoring when needed. During their junior year, students take a six-week ACT preparation course in Youngstown.

Tim Sharp, who this past summer participated in his third year in the program, understands both his academic strengths and weaknesses. “Writing, reading, and comprehension—that’s the easy part. But figuring out matrices on a calculator? Man!” Sharp, who admits to 9th grade squirrelliness when he began the program (“I thought it was a great chance to party”), is now clear about his goals. The Youngstown junior loves to dance and plays the baritone, French horn, percussion, and timpani. He will work hard to compete for a scholarship and has placed Wooster among his top three choices.

The friendships the students make with their Youngstown peers while they are at Wooster sustain them throughout high school. “My roommate when I first came here in 9th grade? I barely knew him,” says Sharp. “Now we hang with each other all year. We motivate each other.”

Funded by the Marion G. Resch Foundation in Youngstown, the program supports early intervention programs at four Ohio colleges, including Wooster, and also offers higher education scholarships.

Garcia, the first generation in her family to go to college (followed by her younger brother), recently attended her parents’ 35th wedding anniversary. “I asked them what was the best thing that had happened to our family,” she says. “And they said, ‘The Wooster-Youngstown program.’

“There were so many people behind me, so many people encouraging me and believing in me—how could I not succeed?”

Sarah Garcia ’09

STORY AND PHOTOS BY Karol Crosbie

far left: Isis Hilson is mentored by Anna Rella ’13, a Youngstown scholar alumna and Wooster junior. left: Hayden Schilling has coordinated the program since its beginning 31 years ago. top right: Chemistry professor emeritus LeRoy Haynes is one of five faculty members teaching in the program. bottom right: There’s plenty of time for students to play while they’re at Wooster. A rainy day can’t keep them away from an Akron Aeros baseball game.

PHOTO BY Brandon Jacobs ’11
Laurie Houck is new vice president for development

Laurie K. Houck joined the College in mid-September as vice president for development and alumni relations. She succeeds Sally Patton ’67, who stepped down after more than 30 years.

A member of the President’s cabinet, Houck has overall responsibility for development at the College, including major and leadership gifts, alumni relations, annual giving, advancement services, foundation and corporate giving, planned giving, donor relations, and events.

Houck comes to Wooster from Whitman College in Walla Walla, Wash., where she served as associate vice president for development since 2006. There, she lead a team of 21 in development work. Prior to her tenure at Whitman, Houck held a series of positions at the University of Washington, advancing from major gifts officer, to associate director of the major gifts program, to director, and finally to executive director of campaign operations. In that role, Houck led the university’s $2 billion campaign.

Houck began her development career in secondary schools, serving as director of development at O’Dea High School, then at University Preparatory Academy, both in Seattle, Wash. She holds a bachelor’s degree in English, with a minor in biology, from Whitman College.

“I am thrilled to be joining the Wooster family, a college that melds academic rigor with personal attention, a focus on research, and an engaging view of a ‘learning’ life,” said Houck. “This college offers wonderful opportunities to its students and to its community, and I look forward to being an ambassador for what it does so well.”
Recent books by Wooster alumni authors

Frederick G. Burton '61, Presbyterians in Zion: History of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Utah; Vantage Press, 2010.

Robert Calhoon '58, Political Moderation in America's First Two Centuries; Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Deborah Davis '77, A Gift of Time: Continuing Your Pregnancy When Your Baby's Life is Expected to be Brief; The John Hopkins University Press, 2011.


Jim Edmonson '73 (co-authored), Dissection: Photographs of a Rite of Passage in American Medicine 1880-1930; Blast Books, 2009.


Don Gifford '73, Suing the Tobacco and Lead Pigment Industries; University of Michigan Press, 2010.

Karen Codrick Haely '92, Objectivity in the Feminist Philosophy of Science; Continuum Publishing, 2008.


Daniel Heischman '73, Good Influence: Teaching the Wisdom of Adulthood (second printing); Morehouse Publishing, 2010.


Amy Holman '85, Wrens Fly Through This Opened Window; Somondoco Press, 2010.

Davis W. Houck '89; (co-authored) Emmett Till and the Mississippi Press; University Press of Mississippi, 2010.


Lawrence C. Marsh '67, Brain on Fire—Confronting the burning issues of today... and tomorrow; Emeritus Publishing, 2011.


Kathleen Dean Moore '69 (co-editor), Moral Ground: Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril; Trinity University Press, 2010.


Kenneth M. Swope '92, A Dragon's Head and a Serpent's Tail: Ming China and the First Great East Asian War, 1592-1598; University of Oklahoma Press, 2009.


If you have news of a book published in the last few years, let your class secretary know, or contact us directly at class_notes@wooster.edu.

50 years ago, Will Lange '57 wrote his recently published A Dream of Dragons. Then he sat on it. (Well, sort of. He did use it as his I.S.)
Meet 10 alumni who are passionate about Ohio and its institutions. They understand their state’s weaknesses, but play to its strengths.
Once you’ve lived four years in Wooster, Ohio, you have a special feeling for the state that housed you—a feeling that can last for the rest of your life. You remember and take note of Ohio’s great institutions—from sports teams to opera. And if you were paying attention when you were a student, you know that Ohio is a state of contrasts—breathtaking natural beauty and metropolitan squalor, pastoral countryside and industrial manufacturing. It is a performing arts mecca that beats out 44 other states with its number of colleges and universities, yet poverty and unemployment bar many citizens from taking advantage of these resources. It is a state with a history of industrial pollution that now ranks in the top five states with the most jobs in clean energy, energy efficiency, and environmentally friendly products.
at Kindig ’00 knows precisely how many Facebook users recently responded to Brutus Buckeye’s exuberant plea for affection. Ohio State’s mascot, a wide-eyed Buckeye wearing a scarlet and gray striped t-shirt and baseball cap, points to Facebook users over the headline, “Brutus wants YOU!”

One million fans responded that they “liked” the Buckeyes on Facebook (which allows them to receive news updates posted on the site). Kindig, who administers social media for the athletics department, promptly noted that Ohio State now holds the country’s collegiate record for the number of Facebook fans.

But while the school’s social media goal is to keep fans connected with fun activities and upbeat messages, it is also to keep them informed of Buckeye news, both good and bad. And Kindig concedes that this past year, it was just as well that fans couldn’t hit a “dislike” button.

Ohio State’s football program has been on a media roller-coaster for the past 10 months during an NCAA investigation that resulted in the resignation of head coach Jim Tressel. As the university issued statements, Kindig made sure fans had links to updates at their fingertips. “We always look to highlight the positive, but we want our fans to be the first to know the news, good or bad,” he says.

Kindig also coordinates online streaming and media packages for 20 different sports on OhioStateBuckeyes.com and oversees student interns who announce, film, and produce coverage of school sports events. Shows air live on the Big Ten Network’s Web site (BTN.com) and are rebroadcast on the cable network on a tape-delay basis. In only its third year, the operation supplies a significant portion of midday and prime-time slots, says Kindig, “It’s exciting to see the students grow as they get real-life experience.”

Kindig, a communication major who played defensive back for the Scots, began his career in sports journalism at the College, working as an intern for sports information director Hugh Howard and director of public information John Finn. In his tenth year at OSU, Kindig spent the first half of his tenure as a media relations contact in the athletics communications department and the last five in his current position.

Facebook fan responses come from all over the world, says Kindig, including from alumni who are serving in the military in Germany and the Middle East. “I’m constantly amazed at our fans’ responsiveness. If you ask a Buckeye fan to help you with something, you know it’s going to happen.”

In addition to his job in social media marketing, Pat Kindig (far right) directs Ohio State University’s student interns, who capture Buckeye sports for broadcast.

PHOTO BY Alex Morando, OSU
Head to London, New York or Vienna if you’re seeking Opera Mecca. Where operetta and musical theater are concerned, the prime destination is a small college town in Ohio.”  
... Donald Rosenberg, reviewer, The Cleveland Plain Dealer

So what’s behind the 33-year success of Ohio and Wooster’s beloved musical tradition? Why does it work? Laura Neill, executive director since 1998, likes to refer to “OLO magic”—that hard-to-quantify collective energy that takes over when creative minds work together. But the alchemist behind the scenes is quite capable of hardheaded analysis, mixed with a dash of historic perspective.

The time was right. “The early years were critical,” Neill says. “Henry Copeland, the College’s president, and Frank Knorr, the College’s director of alumni relations at that time, recognized a great opportunity when Kent State ended its light opera program, and its director, James Stuart, came looking for a new home.”

The place was right. “Ohioans love the performing arts,” Neill says. “And this region has always been particularly receptive; 30 percent of our audience comes from Cuyahoga County in northeast Ohio.”

The repertory festival concept (offering six or seven operettas in a daily rotation throughout the summer) was right. Unique in 1979, it remains so. And it is impossible to separate the successful concept from its successful location, says Neill. Guests arriving in Wooster to see two or three shows in a weekend need not struggle with big city traffic jams and parking problems. Instead, they are welcomed by the small-town charm of rural Ohio and the beauty of the Wooster campus. College amenities are equally relaxing for members of the theater company, who live on campus from the end of May through mid-August.

Partnering with a liberal arts college was right. Eighteen months ago, the College began evaluating the possibility of spinning off OLO as a separate entity. But educational benefits, combined with financial benefits to the city of Wooster were compelling. An economic impact study conducted by students serving on the College’s Applied Mathematics Research (AMRE) team found that OLO brings an annual revenue of approximately $2 million (including ticket sales) to local businesses. In July, a new agreement was reached. The contract outlines the ways in which the The Ohio Light Opera operates independently from the College, including maintaining and balancing its own budget. In-kind services in media relations, human resources, and business assistance will continue.

“An independent college supporting something like Ohio Light Opera is far beyond most people’s comprehension and vision,” says Neill. “It’s really what makes it unique.”

Opportunities for experiential learning were right. Approximately 50 percent of the OLO company (which averages about 120 members) are professionals and 50 percent are students, says Neill. “Ohio Light Opera began with undergraduates doing Gilbert and Sullivan, and ever since then we’ve had students in our cast.” The number of shows, intensity of the experience, and the lyric theater genre offer students an experience that is not available anywhere else, she says.

Neill, working with artistic director Steven Daigle, chooses from top-notch applicants from across the country. Wooster students and young alumni frequently make the grade. This past season’s personnel included Caroline Drozdik ’11, violinist; Noah Dresser ’12, violist; Eva Hendrix-Shovlin ’11,
Ohio Light Opera orchestra and cast rehearse Camelot (above) and Pirates of Penzance (left).

PHOTOS BY Matt Dilyard

“I’m frequently asked, ‘What’s the future of operetta?’ and ‘What is it good for?’ It brings a kind of joy and escapism that will always be part of the human spirit.” LAURA NEILL
mezzo-soprano; George Myatt ’11, assistant stage manager; Christina Polet ’13, box office assistant; Nicole Sacharaow ’14, props; Etienne Massicotte ’13, trumpet; and Kaleigh Richards ’13, costumes.

NOURISHING THE HUMAN SPIRIT

Neill’s year-round job as executive director is complex and diverse. The English major, who went on to earn an M.S. in Scandinavian studies, is fundraiser, grant writer, budget manager, audience developer, and company manager.

She pounces on new opportunities, with an eye for ways to build OLO loyalty and awareness throughout the year. For example, she partners with local restaurants to combine music and food for special event dinners, markets OLO compact discs, and develops ways to take the music to children and involve them in productions.

The 113 separate works produced by Ohio Light Opera over the years show an evolution of sorts. Although Gilbert and Sullivan have always ruled, they made room early on for French and German late 19th and early 20th century composers such as Strauss, Romberg, Offenbach, Lehár, and Von Suppé. In 2000, the company added a musical comedy to its traditional lineup, with composers such as Rodgers and Hammerstein and Lerner and Loewe. As the company continues to broaden its audience base, they have begun adding productions of mid-20th century composers, such as George Gershwin and Cole Porter.

Says Neill, “I’m frequently asked, ‘What’s the future of operetta?’ and ‘What is it good for?’ It brings a kind of joy and escapism that will always be part of the human spirit. And that’s why it’s a good fit for a liberal arts college—because we choose to study not only those things that train us for a job, but also those things that make us more joyful human beings.”

On a twilight August evening the orchestra finishes tuning, the lights dim, and the audience falls silent. It’s the last show of the season—a rollicking performance of Gilbert and Sullivan’s Pirates of Penzance. Even though most audience members have heard the message before, a ripple of laughter moves through the darkness as Neill’s voice instructs us to turn off cell phones, unwrap candy wrappers now, and informs us that most people like to listen to the overture in silence. As tradition dictates, we launch the evening’s performance by standing and singing “God Save the Queen.” During intermission, we pick up ice-cream cones in the lobby of Freedlander Theatre and saunter outside to reminisce about other performances of Pirates and compare them to tonight’s version. It’s as good as we remembered. No! It’s better.

The final curtain goes down to thunderous applause and gold confetti showers the actors’ heads. After relentless rehearsals, 59 performances, and 11 weeks on campus, cast members are ready to go home. They leave behind a community that is richer in many ways.
Bobby Vega remembers the day that he received a call from the Cleveland Browns offering him a job as an in-house scout for professional and college players. It was the same day the communication major and former Scots linebacker graduated from Wooster. “It made my day,” he remembers.

Four seasons later, Vega was promoted to scout for the southeastern United States, where he identifies promising players at colleges and universities in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, and Alabama—an area he describes as “saturated with talent.”

But talent must come with the right attitude, and Vega researches a player by interviewing folks who know him and by observing him in game tapes and at practices. “Who does he hang out with? Is he a homebody or a partier? I assess how accountable he is, his level of toughness, what kind of leader he is. Is he motivated by people or is he self-motivated? How well does he learn? How important is the game to him? Is he passionate about football?”

The best way to catch players “being themselves,” says Vega, is to observe a practice when the players don’t know he’s there. “If the guy is joking around so much that he’s a distraction; he’s not what we’re looking for.”

In order for him to be able to evaluate which players are best suited for the Browns, Vega says it is important for him to know the strengths and weaknesses of the team. But with the NFL lockout this year, his job has been more difficult. The day he talked to Wooster magazine in mid-July was the first day players were allowed back into the building. “We have new players, new coaches, new everything,” says Vega. “We’re more than 130 days behind schedule.”

One of nine scouts, Vega identifies approximately 350 players with potential every season. When 140 top candidates are brought to Cleveland for final tryouts, the scouts assist the coaches, who make final decisions.

The Browns have not played a league championship since 1970 and are one of only four teams of the NFL’s 32 teams that have never played a Super Bowl. But fans don’t care. With 94,208 members, Browns Backers Worldwide (BBW) is considered the largest sports-fan organization in the country.

And the city of Cleveland, says Vega, loves its team. He has no doubt that one day they’ll reach their ultimate goal. “And when that happens, this town is going to explode. It’s going to be a sight to see.”

Bobby Vega during Brown draft activities.

PHOTO BY Jen Nawalenic
There have been many requests to form chapters of Power of the Pen beyond Ohio’s boundaries from other states and as far away as Japan. But for now, the 27-year-old program exists only in Ohio, the brainchild of Lorraine Merrill ’54, a former teacher who knows first hand what turns students on to writing. She also knows what turns them off. “If, as young learners, most of their instruction has been on footnoting and writing bibliographies, they may write with the voice of the teacher and never discover that they have voices of their own. They’re happiest when they’re writing notes to friends,” she says.

During the 30 years that Merrill taught English and speech in the Ohio public schools, she found ways to excite and involve her students. Every day they exercised their own voices by writing about local events that mattered. They wrote original scripts and performed them for elementary aged students. There were so many students vying to be on the staff of Merrill’s school newspaper and literary magazine that tryouts were held before classes began in September.

At first, Merrill’s interscholastic writing tournaments attracted only a handful of schools. But in 1988, the innovative idea earned her a Christa McAuliffe Fellowship from the U.S. and Ohio Departments of Education and an accompanying year’s sabbatical to develop her vision.

Merrill’s idea combined two unique elements: Using a sports competition model to motivate young writers and using the process and the outcome to train teachers. The program received one of its first major financial boosts from the Gund Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Gordon Gund, former major owner of the Cleveland Cavaliers, who coined the description, “the creative sport of writing.” Today, grants, sponsorships, and donations come from more than 200 organizations and individuals.

Ultimately, says Merrill, the program succeeds because of the involvement of Ohio’s teachers and school administrators. “I winces when I hear criticism of Ohio schools,” she says. “I work with and train 1,000 of Ohio’s most brilliant teachers.”

Schools in 80 counties (out of a total of 88) participate, resulting in the annual involvement of 200,000 private and public middle school students, 80,000 of whom compete in tournaments. In 2006, the program expanded to Power of the Pencil, for fifth- and sixth-graders. Wooster has hosted the state tournament since 2001, and last year the College offered scholarships to Power of the Pen standouts.
A key to the program’s success, says Merrill, is its structure. Teams of 12 students attend district and regional meets and respond to subject matter prompts that grow increasingly more challenging as the contestants advance. For example, in the final round of the 2011 state tournament, writers were asked, “What do you suppose Rodin’s famous sculpture, *The Thinker*, was thinking about?” Responses are published as part of curriculum materials and distributed to participating teachers. Says Merrill, “When students see what their peers have written, they say ‘Gee whiz, I think I could do this. I know I could do this! I have something to say that’s important.’

“As soon as that happens, there’s no stopping them.”

The program’s unique software was developed by Frank Merrill ’55, Lorraine’s husband. The couple fell in love with Ohio about the time they fell in love with each other, says Lorraine. “We got married on campus in the old chapel and our love for Ohio began right there.” The couple have four children, including Lee Merrill Hapner ’82.

The couple say they hope to see Power of the Pen move to other states. “If there is any unfinished business in our lives, says Merrill, “it is the expansion of an educational program that has made a difference to so many.”
No one knows Ohio’s problems better than Bill Spratley ’70. A 39-year veteran of Ohio public service jobs that range from director of the state’s first consumers’ council, to legislative consultant to the United Auto Workers CAP Council, to owner of a public utilities consulting firm, Spratley can catalogue how the economic downturn has ravaged the area. And he freely acknowledges Ohio’s past reputation as a “big, dirty polluter.”
“Eleven years ago, Ohioans didn’t even know what ‘green’ meant, or they associated it with something negative.”

BILL SPRATLEY

But a discussion with Spratley leaves one with renewed faith that opportunities really do grow from problems. Executive director of Green Energy Ohio (GEO) since 2001, Spratley is passionate about the state’s potential to be a leader in sustainable energy practices. “Eleven years ago, Ohioans didn’t even know what ‘green’ meant, or they associated it with something negative,” he says.

But the opportunity was right for a state that was neither the windiest nor the sunniest to embrace alternative energy technologies. Ohio’s 5.9 million workers include experienced technicians no longer needed by the automobile industry. Manufacturing plants are in place, ready to tackle new products. Accordingly, four years ago, research by the Pew Charitable Trust showed that Ohio ranked among the top five states with the most jobs in clean energy, energy efficiency, and environmentally friendly products.

Green Energy Ohio assisted in the first in-depth study that benchmarked revenues and jobs in green industries in the U.S. The forecast is invigorating: one million new clean energy jobs in Ohio alone by 2030.

Successes already abound.

- Plans are in the works for wind turbines off the Great Lakes, which would make Ohio the first state to harness fresh-water wind. Since 2001, Green Energy Ohio has analyzed wind data from 24 test wind towers across Ohio, including the Cleveland Water Intake Crib, the highest elevation wind test in any of the Great Lakes.

- Ohio is the second largest manufacturer of solar panels in the nation, second to Oregon. Green Energy Ohio brought the first statewide training of solar electric installers to Ohio in 2001 and has partnered with community colleges to develop curriculum and train workers to install solar thermal devices.

- Green Energy Ohio conducts the nation’s largest solar tour, with 243 sites and more than 4,000 visitors. The tours correct misconceptions and give consumers a chance to “kick the tires,” says Spratley. Included on the tour is the College’s Scot Center, with a solar roof that is the largest of any higher education institution in the United States. “Putting a green face on Wooster is huge,” he says. “The whole world is moving in that direction.”

Spratley, who grew up in Wooster, majored in political science and began his public service career at the age 24, serving as the youngest elected member of the City of Wooster’s Ohio Charter Commission. He received his law degree from The Ohio State University College of Law and is married to Wooster alumna Faye Van Vleck ’71.

A new study by the Brookings Institution found that between 2003 and 2010, the clean economy grew by 8.3 percent—almost double the rate of the overall economy during those years. And the future looks just as bright. “A new federal study tells us that by 2018, there is the potential for at least 281,000 Ohio green jobs, or nearly 7 percent of the state workforce,” says Spratley. “These are jobs that require workers with a liberal arts education, capable of drawing on diverse and interconnected disciplines.

“It’s an exciting time. The industry is taking hold.”

LEFT AND BELOW: A wind turbine and solar panels at the Great Lakes Science Center and Browns’ stadium in Cleveland are signs of the times. Photos by Karel Creabie.

ABOVE: Bill Spratley recently visited Wooster’s Scot Center, which he is including on Green Energy Ohio’s solar tour. The Scot Center’s solar roof is the largest of any higher education institution in the United States. Photo by Matt Dilyard.
Rep. Ted Celeste ’67 remembers what he learned about trust from his Wooster junior Independent Study. The psychology major set up an experiment to measure how betrayal of trust can result in feelings of aggression. Today, State Representative Celeste (D), in his fifth year representing District 24 (Upper Arlington, Grandview Heights and parts of Columbus), has many opportunities to reflect on the power of trust.

Trust played a powerful role in Celeste’s ability to overturn an incumbent in a district that had voted Republican since 1984. Celeste, a successful real estate executive, decided to run for the Ohio legislature after he helped coordinate a class for his church titled Faith in American Politics. “It was about how we hold public officials accountable,” recalls Celeste, “and it was really exciting.”

Celeste’s decision to run a totally positive campaign caught the attention of the electorate, the endorsement of the Columbus Dispatch, and, he believes, was key to his victory. Celeste’s ongoing commitment to positive engagement and civility since the election prompted The Ohio State University’s John Glenn School of Public Affairs to award him its prestigious Excellence in Public Service Award for 2011.

Ted Celeste knows Ohio. Although this is his first time serving as an elected public official, he has been engaged with the Ohio electorate for more than 30 years. He ran the successful Ohio primary effort for President Jimmy Carter and for his brother, former Ohio Governor Richard F. Celeste, who also served as lieutenant governor and state representative.

In 1983, when his brother was governor, collective bargaining for public employees was instituted in Ohio, reflecting a national trend that supported the idea. Since Celeste has taken office, he has seen Ohio’s political leaders abandon the idea, this time reflecting a widespread reversal—one that Celeste does not support.

In fact, Ohio often reflects national trends. “Ohio is at the cross-roads of the country,” says Celeste. “Our economy is driven by both agriculture and industry. And northern Ohio feels quite different from southern Ohio. There’s a rea-
son why Columbus and Dayton are often used as test markets for ideas and products.”

The housing crisis has sent the state reeling; the numbers of home foreclosures in Cleveland are some of the highest in the nation. And as the value of their homes plummeted, so did homeowners’ trust in government, says Celeste. “The voters are watching us, shaking their heads and asking, ‘Why can’t you get anything done?’”

“But ‘compromise’ has become a dirty word, with ideas so partisan and idealistic that if you give in, it’s like you’ve committed a sin.”

Celeste holds District Dialogues, town meetings that promote civil discourse, and he was invited to share the concept with legislators from around the country. A key educational goal, he says, is giving pointers on active listening. “If you listen with compassion and try to get at what’s driving someone else and where they’re coming from, you can keep from getting too wrapped up in your own beliefs.”

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The disappearance of many of Ohio’s auto and steel industries has opened up new opportunities in the field of alternative energy, says Celeste. “Repurposing industrial plants for new uses and retooling the work force have exciting potential. Ohio is blessed with Lake Erie; in the field of alternative energy, water will be a precious resource for future energy. But we must be vigilant to protect it.”

Celeste, who served on the Ohio State University Board of Trustees for nine years, also believes Ohio has unique opportunities because of the state’s vast number of colleges and universities. But higher education must be protected as carefully as clean water, he says. Celeste frequently volunteers to read for the program, I Know I Can, which sets Columbus youth on the road to college. The excitement he sees on children’s faces inspires him, Celeste says.

“We’re going through a lot of pain right now. But I want to maintain that same kind of excitement—to trust that there’s a bright future.”

In August, Rep. Ted Celeste received the Legislator of the Year Award from the Governor’s Council on People with Disabilities.

PHOTOS BY Matt Dilyard
The sprawling Cuyahoga Valley National Park, located between Akron and Cleveland, was once home to farms and businesses, made rich by the Erie Canal and later by the railroad. Worried that urban sprawl and industrial pollution would compromise the valley, local residents pressed for preservation, and in 1974, 33,000 acres were declared a national park.
But memories and reminders of past lives remain. The Ohio and Erie Canal towpath follows the crooked Cuyahoga River; the beautiful Beaver Marsh was once a junkyard; homesteads, mines, and old barns dot the area; what was once a gravel quarry is undergoing a transformation to become a native prairie.

And that’s where Andrew Bishop ’05 comes in.

Coordinator of exotic plants for the park, Bishop looked at the abandoned quarry and imagined something quite different. Almost the entire 10-acre area was choked with autumn olive, an invasive bush originating in Asia, brought to the States to stabilize banks and control erosion. The 15-foot bush created a dark understory, where garlic mustard, another invasive species, thrived. An area that has been conquered by one plant—a monoculture—cannot sustain diverse bird, insect, and animal populations.

The quarry’s soil was poor, but it could support plants native to Ohio, and Bishop imagined tall prairie grasses—Indian, switch, big bluestem—and prairie flowers—purple cone, black-eyed Susans, and Ohio spiderwort. “One day,” says Bishop, “the prairie will be abuzz with pollinators.”

The first task in any restoration is removing invasive species, and Bishop and his colleagues mobilized volunteers, including school groups, corporate executives, and community organizations. Five thousand volunteer hours later, Bishop’s crew had cleared two-thirds of the area—approximately six acres.

Bishop nurtures native plants in a hoop house across from his office (an old farm house) and, with the help of volunteers, collects all the seed that will be used to sow the quarry and other newly cleared areas. The park’s 43 invasive species, including Japanese knotweed, multiflora rose, buckthorn, and garlic mustard, are being replaced with Ohio-hardy trees and plants, including buckeyes, red and white oaks, maples, sycamores, black cherries, and diverse prairie flowers. Bishop also nurtures more delicate Ohio plants that are at risk of disappearing, such as the fringed gentian, ladies’ tresses, and buffalo berry.

Bishop, who grew up in the area and worked summers at Cuyahoga Valley National Park, landed his present job a little over a year ago. A biology major, he researched the effects of environmental pollution on lichen populations for his Independent Study by comparing lichens in a Wayne County forest with those in the Cuyahoga Valley. About the time Bishop was offered his permanent job, his wife, Elaine Morgan Bishop ’04, found a job as nurse-midwife with Paragon Health Associates, serving northeast Ohio. “We are happy and lucky to be back,” says Bishop.

The steamy, hot summer of 2011 made removing 15-foot bushes exceptionally sweaty work. But Bishop wouldn’t trade his job for the world. “I love it. I tell the volunteers that I work where I do for a reason. I remind them to stop and pay attention—to listen to the sounds, feel the wind, and be mindful of the beauty.”
Back in 1909, when Steve Schmid’s grandfather opened the doors of Smith Dairy in Orrville, Ohio, milk was milk. Today, it’s not so easy. Want organic milk? Want your strawberry or vanilla flavored milk to have fewer than 150 calories? Want milk from happy cows that spend their lives in grassy fields? Or milk from cows that have been given no growth hormones? Smith Dairy’s got it, and DEI sells it.
And while specialization makes his business more complex, Schmid, DEI’s president, is happy to have it. These niches set him apart from competition that has become increasingly monolithic. “Fifteen years ago,” he says, “we competed with local and regional dairies. Today, our competitors are a few huge, national companies.” This trend has occurred at the farm level, too. The U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that from 2001 to 2009, the number of dairy farms declined by 33 percent, as thousands sold out to bigger ones or exited the business entirely.

But with 500 employees and plants in Ohio; Richmond, Ind., and Pacific, Mo., Smith Dairy and DEI are going strong. Capabilities at the Indiana plant extend the shelf life of the company’s milk from three weeks to 60 days, and Smith products now appear in Florida and the East Coast.

The company received a boost when Organic Valley, the country’s largest organic farmer cooperative and distributor of organic foods, contracted with Smith Dairy to provide sour cream and cottage cheese. “If you go to Memphis or Anchorage and buy Organic Valley cottage cheese, it will probably come from the big city of Orrville, Ohio,” says Schmid. “And that’s pretty cool.”

And in 2010, a national taste test showed that teens preferred Smith’s low fat chocolate milk to the other 48 brands tested.

Schmid, who majored in math at Wooster and went on for an M.B.A from the University of Michigan, “officially” began working for the company in 1977. But his unofficial work began when he was 10 years old, helping his father.

And will Schmid’s three children become the fourth generation to take over the family business? “I’ve told them to go get a job somewhere else. Go pursue their dreams. And then after they’ve done that, if they want to work in the dairy industry, we’ll be glad to have them.

“And will they come back? Time will tell.”
When editors at The Cleveland Plain Dealer, Ohio’s largest newspaper, approached Leila Atassi three years ago about taking the courts and criminal justice system as a reporting beat, they knew what they were doing. No matter that Atassi was new, young, and inexperienced in court reporting. No matter that this was a beat traditionally covered by males. They knew she was a writer who could tell a story.

Atassi’s story telling at The Plain Dealer began with internships when she was in graduate school at the University of Missouri–Columbia School of Journalism. For one internship, she went undercover as a waitress at Bob Evans and reported on her experiences. Her empathy for the city’s working class grew even stronger when she contributed to a series of stories about Cleveland’s quality of life. Plain Dealer reporters hung out in inner-city neighborhoods, made friends, chatted about problems, and watched stories unfold. One evening, as Atassi watched and learned, a shooting erupted on the street.

When her editors asked her to take on the court beat in 2008, Atassi said yes—but not without some trepidation. “I didn’t know how someone was supposed to cover this beat. So I just covered it the way I would cover anything. I walked into a courtroom and paid attention to every detail. I watched and waited for that moment when the hair stands up on the back of your neck—when you feel it on a visceral level. That’s what I built the story on. It’s been my strategy ever since.”

Atassi’s first big story was her coverage of the trial of Yazeed Essa, the physician who killed his beautiful young wife in favor of multiple mistresses. The trial captured international attention, and Atassi found herself rubbing elbows with reporters from “Dateline” and “48 Hours Mystery.” “They had huge budgets and overseas sources, and I found myself feeling envious,” remembers Atassi. “I wondered if I was in the right place.

“And then I saw their pieces air, and I realized how limited they were. I looked back at the daily coverage we did (one story for print and one for the Web), and we didn’t miss a single thing. I felt suddenly very powerful as a newspaper reporter. That trial was a big breakthrough. I felt like I really caught my stride.”

“It was just horrible . . . horrible.”

If the story of Anthony Sowell had only been one about a serial killer who raped, dismembered, and buried his 11 victims at his Cleveland home, it would have been horrific enough. But as the bodies were discovered, another story emerged, and with it came a shocking awareness that many of the deaths
ABOVE: Leila Atassi, who covers the courts for The Cleveland Plain Dealer, came to Wooster intending to major in pre-med. But The Voice hooked her, she declared English her major, and by the time she was a senior, she had four years of reporting and editing experience. She also had a clear vision of her professional calling. Here, she interviews the attorney for Cleveland mass murderer Anthony Sowell.

PHOTO BY GLUS CHAN, The Plain Dealer

might have been prevented. Testimony revealed that the city’s protective and legal system had repeatedly failed Sowell’s 16 (known) victims—all African American women, many of whom were socially marginalized.

“I think that this case is the most important criminal case in the history of Cleveland for what it means about the services that are withheld from its people,” says Atassi. For two years leading up to Sowell’s trial, Atassi and another Plain Dealer reporter were assigned to a full-time investigation of how the city’s police department handled reports of rape. “We constantly found evidence that the police were closing cases improperly without investigation. Or they might call a victim, and if they didn’t get a call back within a day or two, would close the case. Once a case is shut, it’s out of circulation, and police don’t use information to cross-reference with reported cases to see if there’s a serial rapist out there.

“We discovered so much evidence of this that we concluded that it was just common practice. It was heartbreaking.”

The city formed a commission to study the problem and

“I watched and waited for that moment when the hair stands up on the back of your neck—when you feel it on a visceral level. That’s what I built the story on. It’s been my strategy ever since.”  

LEILA ATASSI

Above: Leila Atassi, who covers the courts for The Cleveland Plain Dealer, came to Wooster intending to major in pre-med. But The Voice hooked her, she declared English her major, and by the time she was a senior, she had four years of reporting and editing experience. She also had a clear vision of her professional calling. Here, she interviews the attorney for Cleveland mass murderer Anthony Sowell.

PHOTO BY GLUS CHAN, The Plain Dealer
Excerpts from the Plain Dealer by Leila Atassi

May 21, 2008, CLEVELAND — Terrance Hough Jr. bent the stem of the witness stand microphone toward himself, cleared his throat and unfurled a list of apologies, typed entirely in capital letters. To his family and friends... to his fellow firefighters... to the community he was sworn to protect. And to the families of the three people he killed and the two he wounded in a barrage of hollow-point bullets...

March 9, 2010, CLEVELAND — Street vendors and barflies in Beirut have heard the story of how and why former Gates Mills doctor Yazeed Essa killed his wife with calcium capsules emptied and refilled with hand-crushed cyanide. ...

July 22, 2011, CLEVELAND — One of the most prolific serial killers in Ohio’s history—who took the lives of 11 women and discarded their remains in crawl spaces, trash bags and shallow graves—is presumed innocent no more...

ongoing corrective action was promised. But Atassi believes the road to change will be long and rocky. “It’s a difficult thing because the whole culture of policing—how marginalized people are treated—needs to be a top-down shift. I think that the only way the city will continue to move toward positive change is if the media hammers the hell out of them.”

Atassi’s decision to approach her story telling—no matter how horrible it is—with her whole heart is a conscious one. “I don’t think I can be a good writer if I don’t let the story in—if I don’t try to empathize and feel it on a visceral level.” But Sowell’s nine-week trial took its toll. Particularly hard, said Atassi, was hearing the testimony of women who had been victimized by Sowell and had escaped. Many people in the courtroom, including Atassi, openly wept as they heard what the women had experienced.

The ugliness of the cases she was covering began to choke Atassi’s own personal happiness. “That people can treat each other that way—it’s hard to wrap your mind around it. It just crushes me. It was horrible—just horrible.” She attended counseling sessions and meditation groups, and tried the many suggestions that friends and professionals offered: carry a crystal; imagine that her body was a filter that could screen out all the bad stuff; imagine a protective force field.

What works, she has found, is to focus on her unborn baby, due to her and husband Marty Coppola ’02 in late October. “When my editors learned I was pregnant, they were worried for me. They know I’m really sensitive, particularly about the Sowell case. But there was no way I wasn’t going to cover this trial. I’d been gearing up for it for two years.

“Every time things would get a little too heavy in the courtroom, I would switch gears and for at least 30 seconds think about playing with my baby on the beach next summer, or what color I will paint the nursery. I had this great escape built in.”

“I’VE BEEN GIVEN THIS AMAZING OPPORTUNITY.”

Atassi plans to return to the court beat when she returns from maternity leave. Her new identity as a mother will help lighten the emotional load. But if her professional mantle is heavy, it is also exciting, “There’s nothing like covering the courts. Someone’s most important moment is always playing out right before you. As a reporter, you feel like a lightning rod, sitting in the middle of it all. And if you’re open to it—not shut off completely and hardened by years of this work—then you can receive it in a way that will let you find the moment that gets people engaged in the story.

“I’ve been given this amazing opportunity. I feel like I have a megaphone that can illuminate deficiencies and celebrate the stories of pioneers who are reclaiming what is theirs. It’s my calling to be a champion for this region.

“The people of Cleveland and Ohio are fighters. I want to fight with them and I want to fight for them.”
Barbara Ludwig ’82 calls her job the “perfect fusion of my interests.” A studio art major at Wooster who went on to earn an MBA and a degree in graphic design, Ludwig is fascinated by medicine and has specialized in health care print design for the past 14 years. She has been in her current managerial position at Cleveland Clinic for the past seven.

“I wanted to work for the best of the best,” she says. Cleveland Clinic has been ranked by U.S. News & World Report as one of four top hospitals in the country and has been rated the country’s top facility in cardiology for 17 years in a row. As part of a team of designers and writers, Ludwig helps to produce materials that seek to educate both consumers and physicians.

The high point of her job, she says, is when she scrubs up, dons a surgical mask, and directs photo shoots during surgeries. Ludwig, whose forte at the Clinic is producing materials for its Neurological Institute, has observed world class surgeons in action, including Dr. Maria Semionow, who led the surgical team that performed the world’s first near total face transplant. “To observe surgeons on the cutting edge of their craft—I can’t think of a better way to spend my day.

“No, everything about working for Cleveland Clinic is a rare opportunity—from my day-to-day work, to being surrounded by the amazing architecture of the buildings, to the Clinic’s own art collection.”

*(top)* Barbara Ludwig works with a Cleveland Clinic photographer to design a document. *PHOTO BY Steve Trarcar*

*(bottom)* Ludwig observes a surgical procedure. *PHOTO BY Toni Greaves*
Guo Bingwen (known then as Ping-Wen Guo) enrolled at the College in 1909, one of 26 international students in a student population of 423. As a 29-year-old junior majoring in the natural sciences, Guo’s path was atypical. Born in Shanghai, China, he completed his secondary education and began a career as a customs and postal service worker at the age of 16. But he wanted to be a lawyer, and was determined to see the outside world. After nine years of work and with the help of the Presbyterian Church, he earned his passage to the United States, where he enrolled in the Wooster Preparatory School. The next year, Guo entered The College of Wooster, supported by the Boxer Rebellion Indemnity Scholarship Program. Established by President Theodore Roosevelt, the program repaid American debts to China in the form of education for Chinese students and served as a model for the Fulbright Scholarship.

A 1911 Wooster alumnus shaped Chinese higher education.
At Wooster, Guo won prizes as an orator (mentored by Delbert Lean), served as president of the Chinese Students’ Alliance, and worked as editor of The Voice. In a Jan. 17, 1911, Voice article, Guo wrote, “The influence which the American universities and colleges can exert on new China . . . cannot be overestimated. The doors of the Chinese Empire have been opened and no power under the sun could shut them again.” This optimism about the influence of American colleges and universities on Chinese higher education was a theme that would guide him for the remainder of his professional life.

Guo went on to earn his Ph.D. from Columbia University, where he studied under philosopher and educational pioneer John Dewey. His doctoral dissertation, “The Chinese System of Public Education,” was later published and remains a seminal text for scholars in the field.

In 1914, Guo returned to China, where he served in several higher education posts, including dean of the Higher Normal College at Nanjing, chairman of an educational commission to Japan and the Philippines, and president of Higher Normal College. He proposed creating a new national university in Nanjing and served as the chairman of the organization committee. In 1921, he became the first president of National Southeast University in Nanjing.

Guo worked to modernize China’s educational practices, advocating for the co-education he had first experienced at Wooster. Working continually to bridge gaps in understanding between East and West, he founded the Chinese Institute in New York City and translated Western reference texts into Chinese, including Webster’s standard dictionary. Elected three times as vice-chairman of the World Education Congress, Guo was a strong believer that China should coordinate connections between politics and education and between the humanities and the sciences.

At the heart of Guo’s educational philosophy was attention to a set of four ‘balances,’ says David Gedalec, Wooster professor of history and Chinese studies. “He sought equilibrium between a well-rounded education and a specialized education; between humanistic and scientific areas of study; between investment in teaching faculty and in teaching facilities; and between national and international learning.

“Although Guo graduated from a much younger Wooster and entered a very different world from the one we inhabit today, his liberal-minded approach still rings true.”

100 years later, connections continue

2011 marked the 100-year anniversary of Guo’s graduation from Wooster and the 90-year anniversary of his founding of National Southeast University in Nanjing. Gedalec, asked to represent Wooster at a conference at Southeast held in Guo’s honor, gave a lecture in Chinese on Guo’s experience at Wooster, and presented a letter from Grant Cornwell and a formal proclamation from the College honoring Guo’s accomplishments.

Gedalec also discussed Wooster’s Independent Study program with Southeast University faculty members. “It took some explanation to make the point that the process is a cooperative one between faculty and students,” says Gedalec. Despite the challenges of translation, Gedalec says he believes his point was made; participants expressed enthusiasm at strengthening Southeast’s liberal arts core.

Gedalec found time for trips to ancient historical sites in Zhenjiang and Nanjing, where he discovered that his wife’s grandfather, Qin Fen, was Guo’s successor as the president of Southeast University.

One evening, Gedalec gave a seminar on one of his lifetime passions—bluegrass music—to Southeast students and faculty. A member of the performing group, Bluegrass Reunion, Gedalec played a variety of tunes, including some popularized by Maowang, or “King of the Cats,” better known by English speakers as Elvis Presley. Says Gedalec, “The term ‘bluegrass’ didn’t translate with any meaning, because the Chinese don’t have an understanding of the music’s Kentucky origins and the reference to the state’s native grass. But the bluegrass song, ‘Why You Been Gone So Long?’ resonated, so we called this kind of music weisemnna haojiu bu jian, or ‘Why Long Time No See?’”

Gedalec has been invited to attend another symposium on Guo, scheduled to take place in 2013 at the China Institute in New York City. There, he hopes to present his research on Guo and continue to promote connections between the two institutions.
In Closing

THE AKAA PROJECT
Lauren Grimanis ’12

In 2007, Lauren Grimanis ’12, now a senior studying global development and management, worked with a Ghanese woman, Joyce Doho-Efa, to co-found a nonprofit organization in the remote, impoverished village of Akaa in eastern Ghana. Since then, The Akaa Project (www.theakaaproject.org) has established a school, founded a community micro-finance jewelry and batik project, and instituted health care programs.

Here, Liz Plumley ’13, sports a friend and a team t-shirt (a remnant of March Madness). Other members of the Wooster team in Ghana this past summer were Laura Higgins ’12 and Frances (Boo) Flynn ’12.

“I think the photo is important,” says Grimanis, “because it shows the connection between Wooster and the Akaa community.”