

GW's

NEW

WHAT-
YOU-SEE-
IS-WHAT-
YOU-GET

PRESIDENT





Deer calmly take in the spectacle of students arriving at the dorms on Mount Vernon Campus during Move-In Day in August.



GW MAGAZINE

WINTER 2018

A MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

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Newly installed GW President Tom LeBlanc, the former chief academic and budget officer at the University of Miami, arrived in August short on formalities, winsomely optimistic and unflinchingly pointed about change.

/ By Danny Freedman, BA '01 /

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Former college softball player Elana Meyers Taylor, BS '06, MTA '11, has used a daredevil style to become one of the greatest women's bobsled pilots in U.S. history. She's won four world championships, Olympic bronze and Olympic silver, and in February in South Korea, she's the favorite for Olympic gold. / By Matthew Stoss /

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Bomber jackets, finials, olive oil, stationery, dog carriers, cheese plates, T-shirts, coffee and robots—a curated (and varied) selection of alumni-made gifts for this gift-giving season.

/ By Danny Freedman, BA '01, Rachel Muir and Matthew Stoss /

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GW President Tom LeBlanc photo by William Atkins; lettering by Heather Oesterling

WILLIAM ATKINS



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GW
TODAY

GW MAGAZINE

Winter 2018
Volume 28, Issue 1

What bad habit won't you be giving up in 2018?

**"The salty siren
song of corn nuts.
By the handful."**

MANAGING EDITOR // Danny Freedman, BA '01

ASSISTANT EDITOR // Matthew Stoss

**"Persistent, soul-crushing
pessimism."**

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UNIVERSITY PHOTOGRAPHER // Logan Werlinger

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"Cable news."

"Twitter. Ever."

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CONTRIBUTOR // Kristen Mitchell, *GW Today*

**"Projecting my emotions
onto sports teams."**

CONTRIBUTOR // Ruth Steinhardt, *GW Today*

INTERN // Rebecca Manikkam, BA '17

**"Reading nonfiction
accounts of murders,
and now listening to
podcasts about murders."**

Thomas J. LeBlanc

PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY

"My 'occasional' cigar." — Matthew R. Manfra

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ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR MARKETING AND CREATIVE SERVICES

**"What some (my husband) might deem
overly ambitious culinary projects. (So far:
homemade pasta, cheese and sourdough
bread; next up, brewing beer)."**

Rachel Muir
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR EDITORIAL SERVICES

**"Ummm, I curse a lot. Some may think
that's a bad habit. I think I'm just
passionate and I can't #@\$* give it up."**

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Travel Woes

I'm impressed with Wendy Simmons' adventurous spirit ("Wanna Get Away? JUST GO"), but not so much with her assumption that anyone who wants to travel simply needs to "just go." Many people cannot afford to fly. She assumes everyone has two weeks of vacation, and those who do are able to use it all at once for leisure, instead of caring for elderly or sick family members, overseeing major house repairs or supervising children's activities. She seems to forget the weighty responsibilities keeping us home and keeping our bank accounts on lockdown. Ms. Simmons claims not traveling is "really about conquering fear more than anything else," which does not acknowledge the reality in which many people live.

Kimberly Lackey, MA '04



[Sound of Hand Planted Firmly on Our Face]

I really enjoyed reading Danny Freedman's article on Dr. Dick Thompson ("The Flying Dentist"), as drivers of Dr. Thompson's generation inspired my lifetime interest in sports car racing. Just a few minor points: Next time, please use the correct spelling of "Ferrari," and the Le Mans 24-hour is a proper endurance race—not a "rally"! Lastly, to put Dr. Thompson's Corvette contributions in perspective, he is a member of the Corvette Hall of Fame! We sports car purists are particular about these things. But please keep up the great work with exceptional subjects like these!

Matt Oleksiak, MBA '96
Oakton, VA

We did get overzealous with the "r"s in Ferrari and with the term "rally." Good catches. —Eds.

Recycled Goods

I am not an alumnus of GW, but my sister is a graduate of Mount Vernon College (which was acquired by GW in the '90s) and occasionally sends me her copy of *GW Magazine*. I just finished reading the summer issue. It's remarkably well done. Congratulations and best wishes to everyone who has a hand in producing this extraordinary alumni magazine.

Marshall Swanson
Columbia, S.C.

Knapp's Tenure

Thanks for your recap of President Steven Knapp's "decade at the helm" in your summer issue ("An Era in Sunset"). How I envy the students who enroll in his English class knowing that he spent a decade leading their school to greatness. I appreciate him even more whenever I enter The Textile Museum, Science and Engineering Hall and the soon-to-be reopened Corcoran School of the Arts and Design. He has left an indelible imprint on my personal life as well for one of the most memorable evenings of my life. I sat next to him at a dinner and asked him the secret of his success. When he replied in one word, "stamina," he provided me with advice that I could emulate, although it will pale in comparison to his achievements, fundraising ability, graciousness and the kindness that he shows to others.

Those very traits will be obvious to his students, who will not only learn the subject matter from a true English scholar, but they will be able to bask in the greatness of this former college president who still thinks of GWU as his "cultural and intellectual home."

Kathy A. Megyeri, MA '69, MA '82
Washington, D.C.

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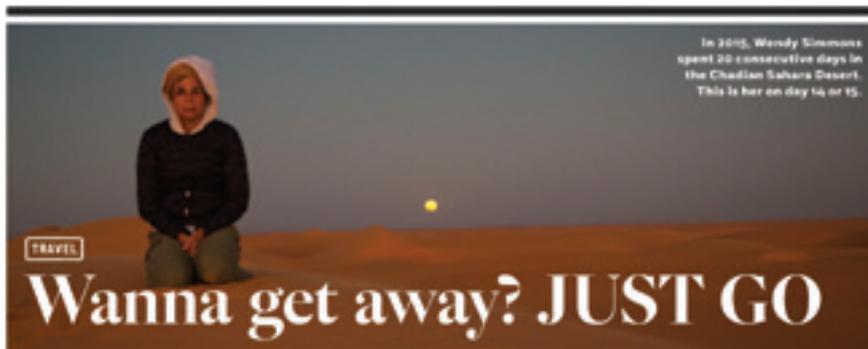
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WISDOM AND HOW-TO: FROM EXPERTS IN THE GW COMMUNITY

INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE



Alumna Wendy Simmons has been to about 92 countries and says anyone can go places—if they want to go bad enough.

People ask and tell Wendy Simmons, BA '99, a lot of uninspiring/inflating things about her travel habit. The most prevailing is: *I wish I could travel like you do.*

"I can't tell you how many people say that to me," says Simmons, the CEO of Vendelio, a consulting firm, and a *McGuffin Post* and *Travel + Leisure* contributor. "And I look at them and say, 'Then go.'"

Simmons, who lives in Brooklyn but is moving to New Orleans, has been to about 92 countries, starting at age 12 when she flew, alone, from her hometown of Bethesda, Md., to visit a friend in Mexico. And just like she did then, Simmons still prefers to travel alone because it means she can do what she wants. (Her mother once joked that the intractably independent Simmons could have had her own apartment at age 3.)

"I've always thought that I'm here to check everything out," Simmons says.

Many of her destinations, like the Democratic Republic of the Congo or North

to travel and then promptly kneecap their dreams with boilerplate excuses—no time, no money, marriage, kids—Simmons says this:

"I'm not a billionaire. I have responsibilities," Simmons says, "but you have to go. You have to take your vacation time or not get paid for two weeks. It's a sacrifice. All your decisions in life are at the expense of a different decision, so if you really want to travel, it's at the expense of something else. You just have to make the decision and go."

Simmons says she does minimal research before visiting a country because she doesn't want the experiences of others influencing her own. In her travels, she has seen the galaxy undimmed by earthly light pollution and watched moonrises as vivid as sunsets. She's camped in the Sahara, wandered Bolivian jungles and climbed mountains

HOW TO TRAVEL ALONE (IF YOU'RE SO INCLINED)

Europe is a good place to start because it's largely politically stable and...

The language barriers are minimal but...

If you're shy about eating alone, there's always takeout. Still, you'll be surprised by how many people want to make friends.



a fear of being afraid. She encourages people to, at least once, travel alone for the sake of perspective and in the name of exploration. And it's not like you have to solo your way through Transnistria or live a while with the semi-somadic Hamar people of Namibia, although Simmons has.

To those nervous about it, Simmons suggests going somewhere politically stable (most of Europe) and getting a personal guide or joining a tour group. Pick a place that doesn't require a second language. Or if you're wary about eating in restaurants alone, for example, there's always takeout.

"I think those people, especially, will be surprised that when you travel by yourself, you're accosted by people constantly who want to talk to you and be friends," Simmons says. "It's really about conquering fear more



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INAUGURATION

Enter LeBlanc

GW inaugurates former University of Miami executive vice president and provost Thomas LeBlanc as its 17th president.



GW inaugurated Thomas LeBlanc as its 17th president during a ceremony in November at the Charles E. Smith Center. LeBlanc invoked the university's namesake in his inaugural address and pledged to dedicate his tenure to inclusion, open inquiry and the pursuit of knowledge.

"We will fulfill George Washington's 18th-century vision for a national university and renew it for the 21st century," LeBlanc told a crowd of faculty, staff, students and alumni. "We must be out front, leading—taking risks, making investments, choosing the harder path. It is the difference between membership and leadership."

LeBlanc takes over for Steven Knapp, who spent 10 years as GW's president before stepping down in July. A career academic, the 62-year-old LeBlanc had served as executive vice president and provost at the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Fla., since 2005. The Plattsburgh, N.Y., native has a PhD and a master's degree in computer science from the University of Wisconsin and a bachelor of science, also in computer science, from State University of New York at Plattsburgh.

Donna Shalala, Miami's president emerita, said during the inauguration that LeBlanc is "hands down ... simply the best strategic leader in higher education today."

During a roughly 23-minute speech, LeBlanc laid out his mission for the university: It will lead as a comprehensive, global research institution that strives for excellence and preeminence. LeBlanc officially assumed office in August, and since, he has stressed that universities must not only propagate knowledge but also create it.

He defined preeminence as being the best and attracting the best—while also being diverse.

"No matter where you were born, the

color of your skin, which language you spoke as a child, how you live, who you love, how you vote, or how you pray—you are welcome to make your mark here at GW," LeBlanc said. "We ask only one thing in return: You strive for greatness and to bring distinction to this wonderful university."

LeBlanc's address was the keynote to a slate of inaugural events that included a celebration at Science and Engineering Hall, where music echoed through the glassy building's eight floors as students, staff and faculty ate and mingled. On display were letters of congratulation from universities around the world, open laboratories, student performances and historical artifacts, including a Bible owned by George Washington and a page from his will, which called for the creation of a national university.

Washington left money for an "endowment of a university to be established within the limits of the District of Columbia." He died in 1799. An act of Congress passed in 1821 to form the college that would become GW.

LeBlanc noted the importance Washington placed on educating American leaders in America, so that they would lead and advance a then-fledgling United States.

LeBlanc also spoke of the contributions of previous presidents as well as students, faculty, staff and alumni who, over many years, helped GW continue on a path to quality and excellence—which requires a "persistent, gradual process." And he emphasized the current place for a university that has long dealt in knowledge, facts and the open exchange of opinions.

"I'm not the only person on this

campus who gets frustrated in a fact-free environment," LeBlanc said. "However, you can't test facts—you can't evaluate ideas—unless you hear them first. That's why this university must always stand firmly for free speech and open inquiry. Without free speech, and the open and unfettered exchange of ideas, there can be no knowledge, no scholarship, no teaching—and no universities."

Many attendees donned regalia and marched as part of an academic procession to open and close the ceremony. Board of Trustees Chair Nelson Carbonell, BS '85, delivered the charge to the president and conferred to him the official symbol of the GW presidency: the president's medallion.

"I charge you to take your keen understanding of history, your great appreciation for the academic vocation, your knowledge of the world, your sense of humor, your love of learning and your personal integrity and combine them all for the benefit of this honorable, now nearly 200-year-old university," Carbonell said.

Ultimately, LeBlanc said, GW will continue to depend on people choosing to make an education, career and life at the university—and it should be their best option.

"If we build on this campus a model of how to pursue scholarship with focus, learn with wonder and debate with respect," he said, "we can affect the culture not only in this capital city but in this nation and beyond. We can do this. But we all have to be committed. We all must choose to lead."

He said later: "The world has not yet seen everything we can do and everything we can become." **GW**



WILLIAM ATKINS

GW PRESIDENTS

1821–27 WILLIAM STAUGHTON

Born in England. Presided in 1824 over the first commencement (attended by the Marquis de Lafayette) of GW, then named the Columbian College.

1828–41 STEPHEN CHAPIN

School was debt-free by the end of his tenure. Resigned for health reasons.

1842 WILLIAM RUGGLES INTERIM

Served brief term after Chapin's resignation.

1843–54 JOEL SMITH BACON

Moved the Department of Medicine to an old jail in Judiciary Square, which became one of the country's first teaching hospitals.

1855–58 JOSEPH GETCHELL BINNEY

Missionary in India, who died at sea and was buried in the Indian Ocean. German was added to the curriculum, and bachelor of arts, bachelor of philosophy and master of arts degrees were conferred.

1859–71 GEORGE W. SAMSON

Oversaw school through the Civil War, during which the school served as a military hospital after a fire destroyed the Medical School Infirmary. Enrollment sagged, with students leaving to fight.

1871–94 JAMES C. WELLING

School renamed the Columbian University. Established permanent endowment.

1894–95, 1900–02 SAMUEL HARRISON GREENE INTERIM

Twice served as acting president. Also was chairman of the board of trustees.

1895–00 BENAIAH LONGLEY WHITMAN

Library science added to curriculum. New Law School building erected. First woman becomes a faculty member.

1902–10 CHARLES WILLIS NEEDHAM

Columbian University becomes GW and secularizes. Previously, Baptists controlled the school. Needham resigned during a federal investigation into the school's financial irregularities.

1910–18 CHARLES HERBERT STOCKTON

Civil War veteran and retired rear admiral. Moved GW to Foggy Bottom from the area around what is now Meridian Hill Park.



Anne LeBlanc applauds during her husband's inauguration as GW president.

Always a First-Generation Student

President's wife **Anne LeBlanc** plans to mentor those who are the first in their families to attend college

Anne LeBlanc, like her husband, new GW President Tom LeBlanc, is a first-generation college student. And now, having arrived in Foggy Bottom from the University of Miami in Florida, she says she wants to get involved with, help and counsel GW students who also are the first in their families to go to college.

"Maybe it's being someone who they can talk with about their experience," LeBlanc says. "I know that there is information on the internet. But if you don't know what questions to ask, the available information won't be much help."

LeBlanc speaks from experience. Born in Euclid, Ohio—an eastern suburb of Cleveland along Lake Erie—Anne LeBlanc, formerly Anne Sulen, comes from a lower-middle income family and says her father never mentioned college, but her mother insisted that she go, so LeBlanc enrolled in Ohio University. She dropped out after a year, in part because of the costs, which she, herself, was paying, and considered abandoning higher education altogether after securing a job as an assistant buyer for a department store.

"I thought I had it made, then," LeBlanc says, "and I was going to drop out completely, but my mother and my aunt—her sister—said I should go back to college."

At the women's urging, she moved to Union, N.J., to live with the aunt and enrolled in Kean University there, taking courses in subjects she found interesting. That meant outer space.

"I had always wanted to be an astronaut," LeBlanc says. "But I was a woman. I was tall. I'm very nearsighted. I knew there was no way I was ever going into space. It never occurred

to me that I could be an engineer and work in the space program. I just didn't even think about it."

At Kean, she took courses in astronomy, meteorology and introductory physics, and a professor at Kean convinced her to apply to a summer program at a U.S. Department of Energy laboratory at Iowa State University, where she would meet her future husband. Other professors encouraged her to study science and math at a time when she would frequently be the only woman in a class. (The gender split in that summer program was 26 men to four women.)

That preparation and support built her confidence, LeBlanc says, and led to a research assistantship in graduate school at the University of Wisconsin—where she earned a master's in satellite meteorology—and a position working on an early version of the now-common graphic weather maps seen in weather forecasting. In Rochester, N.Y., where Tom served as a computer science professor, vice provost and dean at the University of Rochester, she was a computer programmer who worked on the project that first computerized directory assistance in the United Kingdom.

"My professors encouraged women involved in math and science," she says. "Without their support, I believe I never would have succeeded. I would go to office hours and ask questions, frustrated and unsure of my ability. They kept telling me I could do this. It made all the difference in the world to me."

LeBlanc, though, remembers feeling adrift during her one year at Ohio, a feeling she hopes to assuage in first-generation college students at GW.

"I was lost and fell through the cracks," LeBlanc says. "I know that GW already has programs in place for first-generation students. I want to help those students succeed at GW." **GW**

LOGAN WERLINGER

1918–21 **WILLIAM MILLER COLLIER**
Resigned after President Warren Harding named him ambassador to Chile.

1921–23
HOWARD LINCOLN HODGKINS INTERIM
First alumnus to serve as president, albeit in only an interim capacity.

1923–27 **WILLIAM MATHER LEWIS**
Former chief of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's education service. GW's president when the school's board of trustees elected its first female member.

1927–59 **CLOYD HECK MARVIN**
Longest-tenured president (32 years). Expanded campus to six times its size and doubled enrollment to about 10,000.

1959–61, 1964–65
OSWALD SYMISTER COLCLOUGH INTERIM
Twice served as acting president. Veteran of both world wars. Commanded submarines for the North Pacific Fleet during World War II.

1961–64 **THOMAS HENRY CARROLL**
President John F. Kennedy spoke at his inauguration as GW president. He died in office.

1965–88 **LLOYD H. ELLIOTT**
Opened three libraries and the Smith Center. GW's endowment grew from \$8 million to \$200 million. Elliott School of International Affairs is named for him.

1988–07 **STEPHEN JOEL TRACHTENBERG**
Opened the School of Media and Public Affairs, the Graduate School of Political Management, the College of Professional Studies, the Milken Institute School of Public Health, and the Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration.

2007–17 **STEVEN KNAPP**
Launched, completed \$1 billion fundraising campaign. Built Science and Engineering Hall and the George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum. Opened School of Nursing and oversaw creation of the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design.

INTERIM **Interim presidents are not included on the official list of GW presidents.**





BOTANY

A Budding Laboratory

Eight stories above the bustle of Foggy Bottom, a new greenhouse was in bloom this summer, a year after opening. The 1,225-square-foot lab atop Science and Engineering Hall is home to nearly 100 different plants connected to research across GW, from studies of marsh plant survival in a rising Chesapeake Bay to the genetics of butterflies and the potential reintroduction of the American chestnut tree, which was largely wiped out by a blight in the early 1990s.

For Amy Zanne, an associate professor of biology, the greenhouse is also a way to engage students who aren't necessarily planning on a future in botany, like many of those in her evolution-centered "Comparative Plant Structure and Function" course.

"I try to show them how plants are relevant to their everyday lives and why they should be interested," she says. "I try to get them out here touching, seeing, smelling and tasting them so they can experience these evolutionary steps firsthand."

The facility, which will be named the Wilbur V. Harlan Greenhouse—as part of a \$9 million bequest by the family of Harlan, BS '35, to the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences—is overseen by greenhouse manager Rachel Klein, who might spend three hours or more just watering the plants each day, besides pruning and looking after seedlings. And already, she says, she's getting attached. "They become your friends after a while," she says.

—Kristen Mitchell

WILLIAM ATKINS

Computer science professor
James Hahn



HEALTH

Helping Newborns Breathe

// By Kristen Mitchell

Physicians have less than 30 seconds to intervene when a newborn is having trouble breathing. They must quickly place a tube through a baby’s mouth and into the windpipe—a common procedure, but one that medical students aren’t adequately trained to do during residency, according to one group of researchers.

The issue, they say, is the baby itself—that it’s not a rubber mannequin, devoid of saliva and tissue and movement, which is what the students are used to practicing on. Instead, the GW researchers, in partnership with Children’s National Health System, are building a virtual reality training program, bolstered this summer by the awarding of a five-year, \$1.6 million grant from the National Institutes of Health.

Lead researcher James Hahn, a computer science professor, says that after three years of training under the existing model for the procedure, called neonatal endotracheal

intubation, medical residents still have only a 1-in-4 chance of positioning the endotracheal breathing tube correctly.

“Usually in an emergency situation there is something obstructing the airway, and you have to quickly get this tube inside the trachea so they can breathe,” says Hahn. “You can imagine this would be relatively difficult [on] an adult. But for a tiny baby, the physiology is obviously different. They are very small, very delicate, and they don’t have a lot of breathing reserve, making the procedure very difficult.”

Even experts at the procedure in real life don’t perform significantly better on the mannequins than the novices do, Hahn says.

“There is something going wrong here. The training process is not doing what it’s supposed to do,” he says.

In preliminary work for the project, the team created an augmented reality simulator based on CT scans of an infant mannequin, which were then aligned with the real mannequin using electromagnetic motion tracking. Students performed the procedure and could watch their movements through the anatomy tracked on a computer screen in real time. With recorded 3D examples of both expert and novice users, a machine learning algorithm was developed to assess performance.

Hahn and his team—Lamia Soghier, a neonatal physician at Children’s and an assistant professor of pediatrics at GW;

psychology professor John Philbeck; and Naji Younes, an associate professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics—plan to extend the augmented reality simulation to a full virtual reality system that does not require the mannequin. Students would use a haptic device to navigate the on-screen procedure, which would provide resistance when the device used to insert the tube presses against the tongue and other parts of the anatomy.

“We could make this as realistic as we want to. Instead of scanning the mannequin, we would use MR scans of real babies to create virtual models. We could then simulate the physics of deformation of the tissue in the virtual model during the procedure,” Hahn says.

The team plans to incorporate distractions in the simulator to mimic a high-stress environment. The virtual reality training will be evaluated by testing groups of pediatric residents over three years.

“This is a basic skill that all neonatologists and clinicians in neonatal care have to become good at,” says Soghier, the neonatal physician at Children’s. “If you attend deliveries or work in a neonatal intensive care unit, you will have to be proficient in this skill before you can practice alone. It is a crucial skill. If you can’t do it, you will need to find someone who can, and there is a time limit. You can’t live without an airway.”



PALEONTOLOGY

Study Finds 2 More Dinos That Traded Teeth for Beaks Mid-Life

A team of researchers in 2016 reported a series of dinosaur skeletons at different ages that showed one species' radical transition from sharp-toothed babies to beaked, toothless adults. Now, some of the same researchers are saying the phenomenon may be more common than they'd thought.

In a study published in September in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, GW doctoral student Josef Stiegler and his co-authors reported finding two more dinosaur species that had teeth as a juvenile and lost them as an adult.

Stiegler and the team, led by Shuo Wang at Capital Normal University in Beijing, looked at *Sapeornis*, a bird that lived 120 million years ago. They found individuals in the fossil record that had jaw morphologies similar to the ones that researchers—including Stiegler's graduate adviser, James Clark, the Ronald Weintraub Professor of Biology—earlier identified as *Limusaurus inextricabilis*, part of the group of dinosaurs that are the evolutionary ancestors of birds. Like *Limusaurus*, as *Sapeornis* aged, it lost baby teeth and grew a beak in adulthood.

The team also looked at a small species of caenagnathid oviraptorosaur, which is similar in appearance to a *Velociraptor* but with a toothless beak. Researchers noted comparable lower jaw morphologies here, too, in both early and late stages of development.

The findings, Stiegler says, shed light on how dinosaur species evolved into modern birds.

"People have been studying the evolution of beaks for a long time and studying the loss of teeth for a long time, but it has never been quite clear the interplay between those two phenomena," he says. "There seems to be something going on where the beak prevents the teeth from growing or the loss of teeth allows the beak to grow." —Kristen Mitchell

SPACE

Glimpsing a Never-Before-Seen Cataclysm

Four GW astrophysicists were part of a global group of scientists that studied the first confirmed observation of two merging neutron stars, called a kilonova, which occurred 130 million light-years from Earth.

The existence of a kilonova—the explosive collision of the dense, hulking remains of collapsed stars—had been theorized but never definitively witnessed.

"For the first time ever, we have detected both gravitational waves and electromagnetic radiation at the same time from a single source," says physics professor Chryssa Kouveliotou. "With these observations, we put the astrophysical context to the gravitational waves. This is a monumental result—the result of the decade."

It was predicted that merging neutron stars would generate gravitational waves and emit electromagnetic radiation at various wavelengths. Researchers also suspected these mergers as the source of mysterious short gamma-ray bursts. The recent observations confirmed those predictions.

On Aug. 17, two land-based observatories alerted scientists to a gravitational wave event, and two satellites detected a short gamma-ray burst—the most powerful, brightest explosion in the universe—coming from the same area of the sky. In the days after, other observatories detected the light from the gravitational wave event, confirming the kilonova.

Kouveliotou, an expert on gamma-ray bursts, worked with an Italian research group to study the optical and infrared electromagnetic radiation emitted from the merger. Their work, published in *Nature*, verified that neutron-star mergers are major cosmic producers of heavy elements such as gold, platinum and lanthanides.

GW physicist Alexander van der Horst and Kouveliotou studied the light emitted by the collision to learn more about how the light is produced; Bethany Cobb Kung was involved with telescope observations of the infrared glow from the kilonova and studying the composition of material it released; and Sylvain Guiriec analyzed data from the gamma-ray burst. □



“You could barely see your hand stretched out in front of your face.”

Gabriel Robles, a junior majoring in archaeology, recalling the cloud of disrupted sediment that lingered underwater around Key Largo in October, a month after Hurricane Irma had swept through as a Category 4 storm. Robles was one of 11 members of the GW Scuba Diving Club who went to Key Largo over fall break to aid coral restoration efforts—a previously scheduled trip, but one that took on added significance after the storm. “They just needed sheer manpower after the destruction of the hurricane,” says junior Chloe King, who co-founded the group with Robles. “When the hurricane hit, we were even more motivated to go help out.”

SKELETON: PROVIDED BY JOSEF STIEGLER / MASK: ©ISTOCK.COM/ MBBIRDY

6 QUESTIONS

... on the return to the moon.



Apollo 11 astronaut Buzz Aldrin stands on the moon in July 1969. The Apollo 11 mission landed humans on the moon for the first time.

The Elliott School's Scott Pace now leads President Trump's revived National Space Council, which has its eye on the moon.

This summer, Scott Pace, on leave as director of GW's Space Policy Institute, was appointed executive secretary of the National Space Council, a White House organization that was re-formed in July and has existed on and off since the late 1950s, most recently under President George H.W. Bush. (Pace previously served as NASA's associate administrator for program analysis and evaluation.) The NSpC oversees and coordinates U.S. space policy for military, civilian and commercial sectors. Pace talked with GW Magazine about the NSpC, the moon and Mars.

What are the NSpC's policy priorities?

Doing human space exploration, with a human return to the moon as part of it ... with international and commercial partners. Returning to the moon is not like it was in the 1960s, when it was a Cold War race against the Soviet Union. In this case, it's more about expanding economic and scientific and cooperative opportunities, so going to the moon by ourselves would not be the point. The point is to go in partnership with industry and the larger international community.

What do we want to get out of going back to the moon?

First of all, rebuilding a capability for deep-space exploration that has gone away and lapsed, and we have not only new technologies, but we have a whole new generation of people.

The second purpose of it is scientific research. There's lots of things to be done still on the moon—and there's things to do on Mars and other planets—but science is part of it.

The third thing is to get other developing space programs, both in the private sector and the international sector, to align themselves more closely with us. The world today is very different than it was in the 1960s—or even at the end of the Cold War when the last Space Council was around. ... You have a much stronger private sector; you have a much more diverse and capable international sector. Those groups can develop separately and independently and maybe somewhat in competition with each other, or they can have common projects, and while still competing commercially, can kind

of pull in a more common direction.

Is there a timeline to get back to the moon?

It depends on what the budget can afford, and that's a debate we're having now. Certainly, there are a lot of private-sector people who have ideas about how to do it more quickly than conventional government-contracting programs, but also those are potentially higher risk. So I think what you'll see is a mixture of ideas. You'll see things which are more traditional government-contracting, NASA-directed programs, but you'll also see more entrepreneurial and private-sector ones, possibly funded by NASA, but in more unconventional ways. ... It's possible that you could see a return to the moon by the early 2020s. On the other hand, if the commercial ideas don't pay off, then it's going to be later.

Can we expect a permanent lunar settlement in coming decades?

The question is: What kind of settlement? Is it a settlement that is still highly dependent upon Earth? Is it relatively more self-sufficient? And the hardest thing of all, is it economically self-sufficient? I think economically self-sufficient is pretty challenging and probably unlikely—but there are some people who think it's possible.

A more probable outcome is something like Antarctica. We have scientific bases in Antarctica. We have tourists who go to Antarctica. We have scientific research. We don't have commercial activities, but that's largely because it's governed by the Antarctic Treaty, and that is not necessarily a problem with the moon—you can have commercial activities on the moon. But whether or not a settlement is able to be economically self-sufficient as opposed to physically or technically self-sufficient, those are two different things.

There are international treaties prohibiting nations from claiming lunar sovereignty, but could there be problems with the commercialization of the moon?

Let's suppose two different countries or two different companies want the same portion of the [moon's] south pole where there might be trapped water-ice. That would then be

subject to direct negotiation, diplomatic arrangements. One can certainly imagine areas of conflict, but they would have to be worked out just as any other international conflict would be. ... I'd argue that many of the most interesting international relations problems today are in the areas that are beyond traditional sovereignty. So we're talking about cyberspace, Antarctica, the high seas ... and space is probably the biggest problem of them all. But that's what makes it interesting, and that's where there's both opportunity and danger.

Is Mars doable?

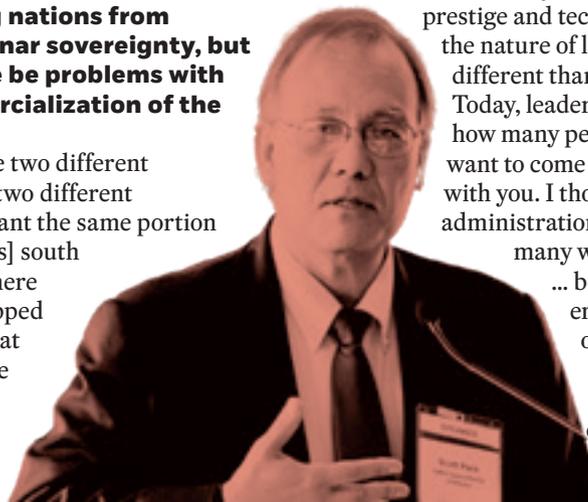
Mars is more of a horizon goal. It's something that is extremely challenging and difficult to do, so that as we're doing things nearer term with the moon or in low-Earth orbit or on space stations, we should be thinking about Mars and we should be thinking about what technical demands a Mars mission would require, such as long-term life-support systems, radiation shielding, better propulsion systems, all those sorts of things.

On the other hand, because it is so challenging, there really are not very many countries [or] private-sector entities that can really participate with us. Elon Musk notwithstanding, it's very difficult to imagine very many governments or private-sector entities able to afford to do that right now. In terms of building a capability of going to Mars, I would argue—others may disagree—that the fastest way to get to Mars is to be able to get to the moon. I used to have a math professor who would say you can't do the harder problem until you do the easier problems. It's basically retraining ourselves to go beyond low-Earth orbit again. ... Do that first and keep an eye on Mars as that horizon goal, but go to Mars when you can bring lots of other people with you—not just a single-nation dash, plant a flag and return. That was a perfectly reasonable strategy in a Cold War context where you're looking to demonstrate

prestige and technical capability, but the nature of leadership today is very different than it was in the 1960s.

Today, leadership is measured in how many people you can get to want to come with you and want to go with you. I thought that the previous administration's focus on Mars was, in many ways, not really helpful ... because it didn't allow enough opportunity for others to participate in it.

—Matthew Stoss



PHYSICS

'To Call This a Giant Fuss Is an Understatement'

Answering a riddle at the heart of the atom may portend a new model of physics. // By John DiConsiglio

The tiny world of the proton is on the cusp of big news, anticipating the answer to a mystery that's divided the scientific community and threatened to upend everything we know about physics.

"To call it a giant fuss is an understatement," says Evangeline J. Downie, an associate professor of physics.

The proton, the plentiful particle that makes up much of the visible matter in the universe, may be smaller than scientists have long believed—specifically, 4 percent smaller, or about a trillionth the width of a poppy seed. And that infinitesimally tiny degree has sent scientists "running in circles," Downie says.

"The proton makes up about 50 percent of all observable matter, and we aren't sure how large it is," says Downie, who's also an associate dean at the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences. "That's huge."

Backed by funding from the National Science Foundation, Downie and an international team of 45 scientists, including GW physics professors William J. Briscoe and Andrei Afanasev, are attempting to crack what's become known as the "Proton Radius Puzzle." Begun in 2012, their groundbreaking experiments now are heading into the home stretch—and their results may herald a fundamental new theory of physics.

INSIDE THE PROTON

Protons, the positively charged particles in the nucleus of every atom, are a cornerstone of centuries of science. They formed just millionths of a second after the Big Bang. Protons generate heat in the core of the sun,

whiz through space as cosmic rays and are fundamental components of virtually all of the matter around us. Even small shifts in our understanding of them could have large-scale implications.

Protons are too small to be measured directly. Instead, scientists devised two methods for determining the particle's radius. One is electron scattering: firing a beam of negatively charged electrons at a hydrogen atom and measuring the scattering angle as the electrons deflect off the nucleus' lone proton. The second involves jolting an electron with energy to kick the particle between orbits within the hydrogen atom.

By measuring the exact frequency of the laser that propels the electron between orbits, scientists can determine their energy difference and estimate the proton's size.

Historically, both methods had yielded results that agreed with each other: a proton radius of 0.88 femtometers. "And as long as the two methods agreed, everybody was happy," Downie says.

But in 2010, scientists working at the Paul Scherer Institute in Villigen, Switzerland, accidentally flipped the physics world on its head. Attempting merely to improve the precision of the known proton radius, they tried a novel twist on the laser-transition method. The group replaced the electron in a hydrogen atom with a muon, a particle identical to an electron but about 200 times more massive. The experiment should have provided a more precise measurement without fundamentally changing the equation.

Instead, "they messed everything up," Downie laughs. The muonic radius disagreed with both electronic measurements,

recording 0.84 femtometers instead of the standard 0.88. The discrepancy was tiny—a femtometer is a millionth of a billionth of a meter—but it was significant enough to confound physicists. Experimental error became less likely as the results were scrutinized and confirmed by other methods.

The mystery runs so deep that some scientists have contemplated a once-unthinkable violation of a sacred principle of physics: Could there be an unknown new particle that interacts with muons but not electrons? That scenario would be revolutionary, Downie explains. If true, "It opens a whole new world of understanding."

THE MUON MISSION

The muon mystery led to the formation of the international research team and a project they called the MUon proton Scattering Experiment (or MUSE) Collaboration. The group plans to perform a definitive experiment: a version of electron scattering with muons. If the muon scattering numbers agree with the smaller radius, there will be little doubt that the new proton size is correct for muons—and that could lead to a rethinking of traditional physics.

But preparing for the muon scattering experiment has been a massive undertaking. In 2012, MUSE received a \$900,000 grant from the National Science Foundation simply to design and build equipment. With construction nearly complete, Downie, who is the lead spokesperson for the MUSE Collaboration and its head investigator at GW, is leading the second phase of the project. She recently secured a new \$420,000 NSF grant to finally run the experiment.

Beginning in 2018, the MUSE Collaboration will conduct two separate six-month muon scattering operations at the Scherer Institute in Switzerland. Downie, Briscoe and Afanasev—along with a team of CCAS postdoctoral, graduate and undergraduate students—are in charge of the data acquisition system that will capture and process the muon scattering angles from more than 3,500 detector elements.

The MUSE team may not reach a final verdict until 2021. And while Downie says she's officially neutral about their prospective findings, she admits that the idea of taking science where it's never gone before is a physicist's dream.

"We could be pushing the edge of what's thought to have been possible," Downie says. "We could be going beyond all of our boundaries." ☐

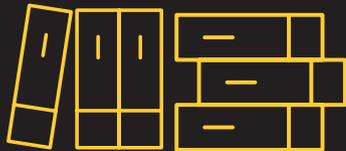
.84
femtometers

The controversial revised estimate for the radius of a proton, which is smaller—by about a trillionth the width of a poppy seed—than the prevailing wisdom. GW physicists are preparing to definitively test that number.

IN BRIEF

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GW's rank, out of more than 200 colleges and universities, on the Sierra Club's 2017 "Cool Schools" list, which measured commitment to environmentalism through factors like campus energy use, transportation and academics. For more on eco-friendly initiatives at the university, visit sustainability.gwu.edu



A new program this fall is making available at Gelman Library textbooks from nearly three dozen high-enrollment classes that tend to have expensive textbooks. The program, which allows for books to be checked out for two hours at a time inside the library, began as a proposal from the Student Association.

The Defense Writers Group, an association of defense and national security correspondents with 50 member news organizations from around the globe, will move to GW and become part of the School of Media and Public Affairs' new Project for Media and National Security. The project will be led by David Ensor, a 30-year veteran of broadcast journalism, including as a reporter for CNN, ABC News and NPR, and who served as director of Voice of America from 2011 through 2015.

SCIENCE & ENGINEERING HALL

GW announced in September the signing of a \$5.3 million corporate research sponsorship—the largest in GW history—to further work exploring the use of cold plasma as a treatment for cancer. The funding from US Patent Innovations LLC expands a collaboration between Michael Keidar, a professor in the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, and surgeon Jerome Canady, the chief science officer of the Jerome Canady Research Institute for Advanced Biological and Technological Services, and chairman of the USPI board of managers.

The White House in September announced President Donald Trump's intention to nominate Professor of Law Gregory E. Maggs to serve as a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces. Maggs, who has been at GW since 1993, is currently the Arthur Selwyn Miller Research Professor of Law and co-director of the national security and U.S. foreign relations law LLM program. He also serves as a colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve, Judge Advocate General's Corps.

LAW SCHOOL

SCHOOL OF MEDIA & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF POLITICAL MANAGEMENT

Researchers at the Graduate School of Political Management this fall launched a weekly recap of political activity on Twitter, which will publish updates through *U.S. News & World Report* each Friday. The report, called *The Echo*, will quantify which politicians, issues, campaigns and political institutions are garnering the most traction on the social media platform.

HEADLINERS AT UNIVERSITY EVENTS

GEORGE WELCOMES



Betsy DeVos

Hassan Ali Khaire

Liu Yandong

Matthew Barzun

Elaine Chao

“The baton of history has been passed on to the young people of our two countries.”

Chinese Vice Premier Liu Yandong remarking that the educational exchange between China and the U.S.—including, she said, nearly 1.5 million Chinese students who have studied at U.S. universities—would have been unimaginable 40 years ago. Liu spoke alongside **U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao** and **U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos** at the September event at GW. The event was supported by GW’s Sigur Center for Asian Studies and its Institute for Public Diplomacy and Global Communication.

“We understand Somalia for what it is, a country with vast resources, with a lot of potential, with a strategic geographic location and linkages of religion and cultures across the world which has a lot to offer the world. We are no longer a nation that thinks we need a handout.”

Hassan Ali Khaire, prime minister of Somalia, speaking in September at an event with Elliott School of International Affairs Dean Reuben Brigety II. In February 2017, after decades of strife, the nation put itself on a path to re-establishing democratic institutions when its parliament elected a new president.

“It is an unhealthy homesickness, largely for a time that never really existed. So we always have to be wary of sepia-toned ‘wonderful’ pasts.”

Former U.S. Ambassador to the United Kingdom Matthew Barzun, who served from 2013 to 2017, speaking about the reality of nostalgia when asked whether Britain’s planned exit from the European Union had people looking backward for leadership models. He spoke in September at Gelman Library’s National Churchill Library and Center.



"It's hard for us to argue that we want you guys to have on-record sources if we're not going on the record."

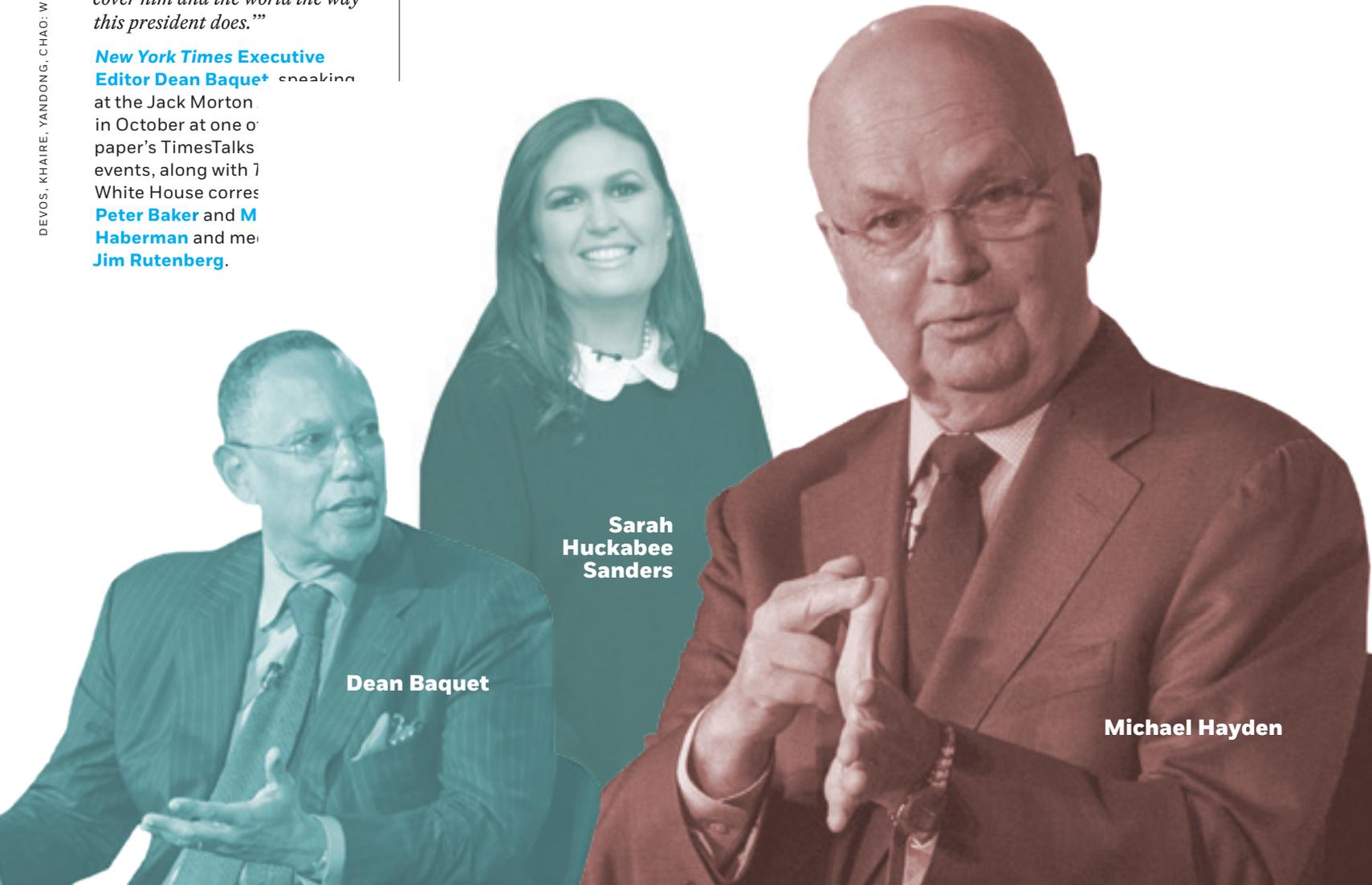
White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders noting in October that her office plans to become more transparent, in part to try to reduce the press corps' reliance on anonymous sources. Sanders spoke at GW on a panel of journalists and experts at an event that was sponsored by the School of Media and Public Affairs and the White House Correspondents' Association.

"I've never been involved with covering a president, governor or a mayor who really loved the press. But I'm not sure I've seen someone who so boldly challenged the press' right to cover him and the world the way this president does."

New York Times Executive Editor Dean Baquet speaking at the Jack Morton in October at one of paper's TimesTalks events, along with 7 White House corres **Peter Baker** and **M Haberman** and me **Jim Rutenberg**.

"American espionage is not just compatible with our democracy, it is essential to our democracy. Frightened people begin to gnaw on their neighbor's liberties and privacies, and when they get really scared, they start to gnaw on their own."

Former CIA Director Michael Hayden, who served from 2006 to 2009. He spoke at GW in October during an annual CIA conference supported by the GW Center for Cyber and Homeland Security. The event included remarks by current **CIA Director Mike Pompeo** and other ex-directors **John Brennan**, **Porter Goss** and **William Webster**.



Dean Baquet

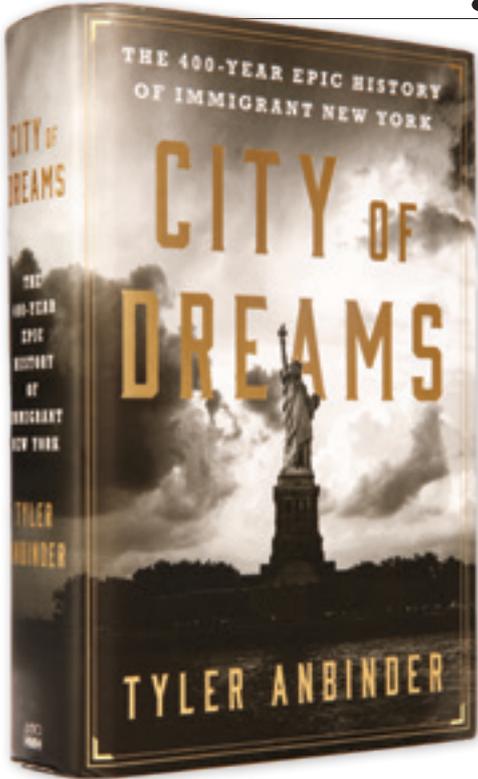
Sarah Huckabee Sanders

Michael Hayden

SHOWCASING NEW BOOKS BY GW PROFESSORS AND ALUMNI

BOOKSHELVES

Over Centuries, A Plot Unchanged



City of Dreams (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016)

History professor Tyler Anbinder's *City of Dreams*, which recounts the 400-year history of immigration in New York City, is at times so lifelike that it's not so much read as it is moved through. It took nearly a generation to write—to chart a path “that didn't end up reading like an encyclopedia,” he says—an effort that in March was lauded with a \$10,000 narrative history prize from the Columbia Journalism School and the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard. The book, his third, is one of enduring constants. “The immigration story really doesn't change,” he says, “even though we always think it does—and have always thought it has.”
—Danny Freedman, BA '01

What drew you to the topic of immigration?

I started out very much not in the area of immigration history, focused on American political history, especially Civil War-era politics. By the time I got to the end of [my] first book, writing about what the nativists thought, I felt this great desire to tell the other side, to tell the immigrant side of the story. That was what led me to write about Five Points [the infamous, 19th-century Manhattan slum], which is only such a small part of the story.

And there were these myths that I wanted to debunk. Like this idea that today's immigrants are totally different than American immigrants of the past, which I just find, in writing about New York, is not true; that they may be different on the surface—they may be from different countries, different religions—but their experiences are almost identical. And the way Americans treat them is almost identical, and the way Americans perceive them is almost identical.

We think, “Well, today's Muslim immigrants are much more of a threat than the Christian immigrants we had in the past,” and we forget that a hundred years ago Catholics were seen as a serious threat—and not just a religious threat, but a physical threat. The big terrorists of the early 20th century were mostly Italian immigrants and, to some extent, Jewish anarchists.

And you mention in the book how hard it is to immigrate now to the U.S.

Yeah, that's one of the other myths I wanted to debunk: Most people say, “Why don't they just wait in line like my ancestors did,” when there was no line for previous generations to wait in, because pretty much anybody could get in. Whereas today if you're from Latin America or from Asia and you don't have a close relative already in the United States—unless you're rich and can get one of these \$500,000 visas—there's no line for you to get in. It's just that you literally can't immigrate to the United States unless you sneak into the country, and so people do.

These are well-worn paths, New York history and immigration. Was there room for original research?

There's always room for original research. In this book—even though I didn't intend to at first—I did what I tell my students: Always go to the original source because you can never trust another scholar.



At first I thought it's such a huge book, covering so much that's already been written about, there's no way I can do that. As I started working, that voice in my head said, “You should really check that ... this quote sounds too good to be true.” And so I would go check, and I would find mistake after mistake after mistake.

What are some new things you turned up?

[One] discovery that I really enjoyed was the one about this guy named Felix Brannigan. His story is pretty much completely unknown—the part that's known is these racist letters he writes to his sister, saying we Irish don't want to fight with the African Americans, though he uses the “n” word. And that's where the stories always ended. He's quoted in dozens of books about the Civil War as the exemplary case of a bigoted Irishman whose views are what causes the draft riots.

But then I started looking into him, and I found all this other stuff—that he later is the commander of an African-American unit, which lots of white soldiers refused to do. And then he goes to law school at GW, then Columbian College, and eventually becomes a prosecutor in Mississippi and prosecutes the Klan, and he becomes a Republican, which clearly he was not at the beginning of the war.

He had the capacity to change and grow, so that was a really interesting story.

Were you entering into the Brannigan anecdote expecting to use it the way others had, but then you found those other details?

Yes, exactly.

What was the feeling?

When you find that stuff, it's the historian's dream. ☑

 For an excerpt from *City of Dreams*, visit GWMagazine.com

Thundersticks (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016)

By David J. Silverman, professor of history

Silverman chronicles how firearms irrevocably altered the Native Americans' way of life over the course of two centuries. "From the early days of Atlantic coast colonization in the seventeenth century, through the end of the Plains wars in the late nineteenth century, one group of Indians after another used firearms to revolutionize their lives," he writes. With the introduction of flintlock muskets, which became the Native Americans' weapon of choice, they used them increasingly to hunt, capture territory and wage war on Colonists and, more often, each other.

Occupational Hazards: Business, Sex, and HIV in Post-Mao China (Stanford University Press, 2016)

Elanah Uretsky, MA '97, assistant professor of global health, anthropology and international affairs

Uretsky spent 18 months in China researching the ritual of *yingchou*—the lavish and shadowy way Chinese businessmen and government officials make deals and get political favors. Typically

involving banquets and brothel visits, *yingchou* has been outlawed but secretly persists and helps fuel China's burgeoning HIV/AIDS epidemic, since the ritual overwhelmingly doesn't involve protection against sexually transmitted diseases. Uretsky says her study isn't just about HIV but also the broader issues of masculinity and societal pressures and how complex social, cultural, political and economic issues affect China's HIV problem.

The Rising Price of Objectivity: Philanthropy, Government, and the Future of Education Research (Harvard Education Press, 2016)

Michael Feuer, dean of GW's Graduate School of Education and Human Development

Feuer charts the impact of three forces negatively influencing education research: "strategic" philanthropies selectively funding research that fits their missions; less government funding for objective and independent research on social and educational problems; and an ecosystem of think tanks—what Feuer calls the "advice industry"—facing mounting pressure to succumb to partisan and financial interests. It's the sort of thing that "keeps deans of social science and education ... awake at night," he writes.

Murrow's Cold War (University of Nebraska Press, 2016)

By Gregory M. Tomlin, MA '10, MP '12, PhD '13

After his storied quarter century at CBS, journalist Edward R. Murrow joined the Kennedy administration as head of the United States Information Agency. Tasked with improving America's public image worldwide, Murrow was guided by his "fervent belief that truth is the best propaganda," leading to more nuanced and transparent public diplomacy. His hiring and

promoting of black employees and outspokenness against racism also set an example for other agencies. Tomlin uses USIA documents, dispatches from embassies, oral histories and Murrow's personal papers to examine the renowned journalist's three-year tenure at the agency and its legacy.

The Forever Letter (Llewellyn Publications, 2017)

By Elana Zaiman, BA '84
Drawing on the medieval Jewish tradition of ethical wills, Zaiman, a sixth-generation rabbi, urges readers to write "forever letters" expressing their

values and imparting wisdom and love to the ones who matter most to them. "Writing a forever letter offers us the opportunity to access our innermost selves, to see ourselves as honestly as we can, and to articulate our thoughts for ourselves and for the people we love," she writes. Through anecdotes, examples and tips, Zaiman guides readers through the process—a journey that can be as meaningful for the writer as it is for the recipient. **EW**



SPORTS



SOFTBALL

Jenna-rating Power

Jenna Cone set a bunch of GW hitting records in 2017, including most home runs in a season. The sophomore is part of a new, long ball-happy era in college softball.

// By Matthew Stoss

When GW softball players Jayme and Jenna Cone were in high school in Southern California, the sisters, who are a year apart, played on the same travel team. Once, the Cones' team scrimmaged a team short on pitching, and Jayme, a right-handed pitcher, got conscripted to help them out.

Inevitably, she faced her younger, power-hitting sister.

"I'm like, 'OK, Jenna knows everything I throw—that kind of sucks—but maybe I can try to throw my changeup,'" Jayme says.

She was still learning the pitch at the time. The bases were loaded.

"She absolutely raked my changeup," Jayme says. "Like, outside of the parking lot, on the other side of the fence, hitting cars that were driving past."

Often, pitchers look away after giving up home runs—they know what happened; they don't need to see it. Jayme, however, did.

"I had to watch it," she says. "It was beautiful. *It was beautiful.*"

There are a lot of pitchers with stories like Jayme's.

Jenna Cone, a 5-foot-11 sophomore catcher/third baseman, was among the best power hitters in Division I softball last season. She hit 18 home runs, setting the GW single-season record and hitting shots that, months later, are as much myth as statistic. Jenna, who batted a team-best .395 in 52 games, also set single-season program records for runs (47), RBIs (59), extra-base hits (28), total bases (125), slugging percentage (.822) and on-base percentage (.500) before being voted the Atlantic 10 Rookie of the Year. The Colonials also won the most games in program history, going 28-24 overall (11-12 in the A-10).

"People ask how I've done so well, hitting so many home runs," Jenna says. "I just say that I never try to hit home runs. I just try to hit it as hard and as solid as I can, and a lot of times, it just turns into a home run."

Her sister says that's true.

“When she hits a home run, I don’t think she realizes that she hits it because she sprints for first,” says Jayme, a 5-6 junior. “The coaches are like, ‘Slow down. That went out.’”

Jenna Cone says she doesn’t watch her home runs because she’s less than fleet, so she takes off just in case. Her 18 homers last season put her in a six-way tie for 11th most in the country (Louisiana-Lafayette’s DJ Sanders led D-1 with 29). They also make her another entry in college softball’s current great home run era that started around 2000 and exploded around 2010, balancing the game more between pitching (which has always dominated) and hitting.

“It’s definitely a fact,” GW coach James DeFeo says of the home run surge.

From 1982, the first year for which the NCAA has records, to 2016, the number of home runs per game rose from 0.15 to 0.65, peaking at 0.77 per game in 2015. But in the past six seasons, the per-game home run average jumped from 0.4 per game to 0.6 per game. It took 13 seasons for the average to move from 0.1 to 0.2 per game and another 13 for it to go from 0.2 to 0.4.

Of the top 26 career home run leaders in NCAA history, 22 started their careers after 2000. Sixteen started after 2005, and 13 started after 2010.

DeFeo says players have gotten bigger and stronger because of the advent of weight programs. He also says they have honed swing biomechanics through video analysis, imbuing even once-feeble slap-hitters with the ability to hit it out.

Jenna Cone does it naturally. “We have a big building right behind our center-field fence: the Ames building,” DeFeo says. “Jenna hit one like halfway up the building that hit the windows, and we thought it was still pretty much going up as it hit the building. It had to go 340, 350, 375—and it was still

traveling. It’s the furthest ball I’ve ever seen a girl hit.”

DeFeo came to GW after six seasons as the head coach at Mercer and eight seasons as an assistant at LSU, one of college softball’s elite programs and traditional powers. He says Jenna could have played there.

“Is she that caliber of athlete? Absolutely,” DeFeo says. “She could not only play there but she could start and be an All-American, absolutely. She’s one of the best hitters I’ve coached—at all levels.”

A few Pacific 12 programs—notably, Utah and Arizona, another blueblood program—lightly recruited Jenna, who says she chose GW for its academics and a chance to play with her older sister, who had already committed.

DeFeo says Jenna’s size and strength are among her best attributes. He also cited her work ethic (she’s inquisitive, too) and an ability to hit well any pitch after a season of opponents throwing her everything everywhere in an attempt to get her out. DeFeo expects Jenna to see more of the same this season. He’s also made small tweaks to Jenna’s swing but nothing that qualifies as major surgery.

The second-year coach made the adjustments—they focused on getting her legs more involved—to maximize Jenna’s power and allow her to hit it (harder) to every field, even if she prefers to pull it, further imperiling Lloyd Gymnasium well beyond the left-field fence at the GW softball field and her sister’s changeup.

Or maybe not. “She hasn’t hit it as far as she did,” says Jayme Cone, who has since mastered the offspeed pitch. “And I just don’t throw it inside. She said she likes them there.”

BASKETBALL

Getting To Know: Mei-Lyn Bautista

Mei-Lyn Bautista is a 5-foot-6, 20-year-old junior point guard on the GW women’s basketball team. Last season, she averaged 5.6 points and 3.3 assists and had the fourth-best assist-to-turnover ratio in the Atlantic 10. This fall, the Queens, N.Y., native, who is expected to take on a bigger scoring and leadership role in 2017-18, chatted with *GW Magazine*.

On wanting to work in marketing and social for pro sports teams: I really have an interest in the positives of social media and I like the way that professional players can use that platform to [change the world] or to show their personality, because a lot of the time, the fans don’t get to see the personality of the player and I’m really huge on that. And I’m one who has a big personality and I like to get involved with the crowd and everyone outside of the actual team and show them that we’re more than just athletes.

On that time last year when she met former Georgetown and NBA star point guard Allen Iverson, her favorite athlete, in Dupont Circle: He was going into an Uber. I put my head into the Uber driver’s window. I said, “Please, you have to stop the car, you don’t understand!” Allen Iverson’s looking at me and he pounds his chest—he acknowledged me, and that’s when I started crying and almost wanting to throw up because I know he acknowledged me. So I step away from the car, and my hand’s on the car, I’m bending over and I’m like, “... I can’t breathe.” And then he sees me crying, so [he] gets out, feels bad and goes, “Hey, don’t worry. You don’t need to cry.” He hugs me, takes pictures with me. And that was the greatest day of my life.

On her love of Allen Iverson: I grew up with my mom liking him a lot, and I played basketball, so I was always interested—“Who is this guy?”—and then when she showed me, I was like, “Wow, this guy is something else.” I mean, our games are completely different, because he’s definitely more of a drop-30-[points]-kind-of-guy and I’m definitely more of a drop-30-assists-kind-of-guy. But I just like his mentality, his drive, that he’s a little guy. It’s amazing—and the fact that his personality is just, *I don’t care*.

On playing for coach Jennifer Rizzotti, a point guard who led Connecticut to the 1995 national championship: With one year with her already, I feel so comfortable with her. ... I just trust her so much with her judgment and everything. Even if I feel like I don’t think I can do something, she thinks so. And I’m like: *All right, I think I can do it*. She has so much confidence in me, but at the same time, I don’t want to let her down because her history is so great. **EW**





THE *WHAT-YOU-SEE- IS-WHAT-YOU-GET* PRESIDENT

GW President Tom LeBlanc, the former chief academic and budget officer at the University of Miami, arrived in August short on formalities, winsomely optimistic and unflinchingly pointed about change. // BY DANNY FREEDMAN, BA '01



Tom LeBlanc talks with students over a pancake breakfast at his house in November, part of a goal to meet this year every freshman and better understand GW from their vantage.

Tom LeBlanc tees up: "I WANT TO TELL YOU ONE LITTLE ANECDOTE."

He's on his feet, the way he prefers it when he's on stage. Microphone in hand, he's half an hour into a come-all campus forum on a Thursday afternoon in September, the first of two sessions that day, with more of these to follow in the days and weeks ahead.

LeBlanc is answering a question from an alumna and staff member in the Biology Department about university budget cuts in recent years. They haven't exactly been morale boosters. She wants to know what he plans in terms of valuing the staff and making them feel heard.

Three hundred or so staffers, faculty members and students, filling the seats and the spaces beyond, settle their eyes on the stage.

LeBlanc offers a nod to the staff ("the backbone of the university") and acknowledges the burden of the cuts. He says he has a lot to learn about the university's more than \$1 billion budget; how it's allocated, how it's communicated.

And then LeBlanc mentions his assistant, Betty Freyre. She came with him to GW in August from South Florida's University of Miami, where he was executive vice president and provost, and he says that's given him a front-row seat to the experiences of a new staff member.

A knowing murmur curls through the audience.

"So she went to orienta—" he starts, but then cuts himself off. "You're laughing," he says.

"... I sense a shared experience here."

It's just 90 seconds into his answer, and the room—its tension deflated, for the moment—is his once again.

So he dives into that anecdote, unspooling a saga of attempting to log into his personal data within the university he now runs.

LeBlanc, who has a doctorate in computer science, is exasperated. He's clicking links, he's calling the IT department, grasping for the eight digits of his university ID—"What's my number with a G on it?" he calls out to Freyre—and a pin that's so secret even he isn't aware of it.

The audience is with him, following the beats. And suddenly it seems like LeBlanc, 62, isn't quite the person they came to see; not the boss's boss's boss or the person to buttonhole into a position in an open forum. He's the hapless new guy. Another person floundering through the labyrinth, wondering why the exit isn't better marked.

Then he sends it home: "A lot of what we do we've always done this way, and people have just gotten comfortable with it," he says. "And I want to change that."

It's a combo he lands often during these first public appearances of his presidency: *I hear you. These are busted processes, not bad people. And we're gonna try to do better.* [Applause.]

Of course, a new president is in the enviable position of having a clean slate: Everything up to this point, well, that was then. But a new president also could choose to make himself available only to audiences that nod politely.

In today's forum doubleheader LeBlanc fields a couple gimmes, like a question about the pronunciation of his last name (it's an inaudibly soft French "c" at the end: "*LeBlahn*"). But mostly it's a minefield, and he's waltzing through it like Gene Kelly in a rainstorm.

Just the second question of the day, from a business school undergrad, is a two-parter with an air of cross examination: He asks about a potential shift in federal guidelines for universities on the handling of sexual assault cases. ("We are incredibly committed to the safety of our students," LeBlanc says, "and that's not going to change whatever gets said four blocks from here." He also says all GW policies on the subject are being reviewed by an outside firm.) Then the student asks whether that means GW will "continue policies that have led to the denial of due process, kangaroo courts and the inevitable witch hunts."

LeBlanc says he's aware some people feel that universities aren't "respecting the rights of the accused, and I understand that." The external review is "to help us develop a best-in-class approach."

Others ask LeBlanc whether he's in favor of unlimited freedom of speech on campus (yes, but that might not be extended to outside entities), and whether the university would divest from fossil fuel companies (it's complicated, but he's open to exploring it). They ask whether he'll challenge the GW enrollment cap set by the D.C. government ("Before we worry too much about what the cap's doing in terms of our growth potential, we ought to make sure we're maximizing quality within it."); and about a rule that has prevented the student Hawaii Club from using an outside vendor for its annual

luau in the Marvin Center. They ask about expanding a freshman grade-forgiveness policy and about the plight of postdoctoral students, who often can seem to exist in the nexus of a student/faculty/staff Venn diagram.

When the day's second session closes around 8 p.m., the student representing the luau has the business card of LeBlanc's chief of staff, Aristide Collins; the students pushing for divestment are chatting with Dean of Student Affairs Peter Konwerski; and the student concerned about free speech is going deep with LeBlanc.

A small crowd has formed around the two of them to listen. After another 15 minutes or so, one of LeBlanc's assistants finally beseeches the group to at least let him come down off the stage to continue the conversation. There are refreshments in the next room.

The whole time he's in the spotlight, LeBlanc seems more apt to break a smile than a sweat. He seems at ease in the midst of it—the firsthand data gathering, the academic sparring, the meanderings through the philosophical weeds of freedom and of school-rankings formulae and of campus branding.

But LeBlanc also uses the forums to lay out some challenging observations and questions of his own—questions tantamount to a re-examination of self on an institutional level. Essentially: *Is this the place you want it to be?* He's calling for the kind of existential woodshedding that leads *somewhere*, by default. As for where, he's got some ideas. But it's certainly beyond here.

HE LIKES TO JOKE THAT

a thousand freshmen live across the street from him in Thurston Hall and he's been "getting to know them individually," Tom LeBlanc says. "I recognize their voices late at night."

They're fitting neighbors. The new start has LeBlanc, not unlike a freshman, parachuting into the relative unknown for the first time in a dozen years, since he arrived at the University of Miami in 2005. (Before that, he'd spent 20 years as a faculty member and, eventually, a dean at the University of Rochester in New York.) And LeBlanc likely will be giving a full ear, an eye and prime mental real estate to those freshmen, who occupy two of his chief concerns: reforming the experience of undergraduates and deriving meaning from GW's bicentennial in 2021, the year many of those same freshmen will be winging their mortarboards at the sky.

But first there are portraits to take. And

THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY

WASHINGTON, DC



At 8:15 p.m., after a doubleheader of come-all campus forums one day in September, Tom LeBlanc lingers to continue a conversation with a student based on a question about free speech, attracting a gaggle of listeners.



Tom and Anne LeBlanc work in the garden at a D.C. public school during the university's Freshman Day of Service in September, in which 2,200 students and dozens of faculty members and staff volunteered at 40 sites across the city and the region.



WILLIAM ATKINS

unpacking to do.

On the third morning of his presidency, as the August sun is barely beginning to burn a hole in the day, LeBlanc is taking official portraits, filming a getting-to-know-you video and posing on a couch with his wife, Anne (who asks, during a playful series of obligatory staring-lovingly-at-one-another photos: “Do we need to do one with googly eyes?”).

The LeBlancs are enjoying this.

They're in the sunny back room of their new home, a university-owned 1849 Greek Revival house at the corner of 20th and F streets, which for the past 10 years has served as GW's presidential quarters.

Once a secret clubhouse for U.S. presidents, diplomats and other D.C. elites during the early- and mid-20th century—a time when students would gawk at the building's comings and goings—the house has maintained a stately grace. Wooden floors grouse with age, gilded chandeliers light the entry and transomed doorways connect the rooms.

The LeBlancs seem buoyant as they move through the rooms on the first floor. They're excited: They're at a university Tom had one day imagined for himself, and they're living for the first time in a city. They're moved by the house, where an original Rembrandt Peale portrait of George Washington looks upon them in the library; where Ulysses Grant's oak table and chairs are in the dining room; where around the corner, should they need to borrow a cup of sugar or a trillion dollars, is the World Bank.

To all this, they're bringing the sensibilities of a grounded upbringing and an affection for the sundried, *clave*-syncopated life under a palapa.

“We're not huge on formalities,” Tom says, sitting beside Anne on a plush sofa near the windows at the front of the house. “We decided fairly early on: We're comfortable in our own skin and we are who we are. We're not really formal people ... I came from a big family. It's the nature of big families that the minute you get a little too formal, somebody takes you down a notch.”

And there were plenty of somebodies. He's the third of six children, while Anne is one of four, and Tom's extended family can be tallied up by the dozen. It's a population in which he's still called “TJ” by everyone except his mother, who for a while now has felt it a bit too informal for a big-shot university administrator.

Even by those first days of August, pieces of the LeBlancs are beginning to peek through beyond a cluster of moving boxes in the front room: a glass tea-candle holder from Anne's collection of cobalt blue glass; a conch shell up on a high shelf, from one of the snorkeling vacations they used to take with their sons, Brian, 33, and David, 32; and above where they sit on the couch, a wall-size painting they had commissioned while living in Florida.

The piece, by artist Humberto Calzada, offers a pastel, stucco-walled home on the beach. The red-tiled roof, black-and-white checkered flooring and the palm trees place it geographically. The lines are neatly ordered, architecturally sound;



Tom and Anne LeBlanc share a laugh while posing for official portraits. Positioned face to face and hand in hand, Anne quips: “Do we need to do one with googly eyes?”

everything is just so, which accounts for some of the appeal to a pair of scientists like the LeBlancs. Anne has a master’s degree in satellite meteorology; Tom is at home in the discrete nature of computer science—the steady march of ones and zeroes—preferring books on history and behavioral economics to fantasy fiction, where the rules bow too easily.

But the painting is also a portrait of complete stillness: The palm fronds are unswayed, the ocean is without a whitecap, the pool without a ripple. The doors of the house are ajar, but there isn’t a body or *mojito* in sight. The place appears deserted.

It’s a hallmark of Calzada’s work, which evokes “a lonely but beautiful feeling,” Anne says; a feeling they appreciate enough that they have prints of another three paintings by the Havana-born artist, who lives in Miami.

“If you ask me: How do I see myself 10 years from now, 15 years from now, I’d love to be in a chair right there,” Tom says, pointing to the vacant strip of sand dissolving into the surf. “In some ways ... this is how I imagine heaven must look.”

What he sees in there, he says, is peacefulness, solitude, “the infinity of the ocean.” It connects the two of them back to their dozen years in Miami, and no doubt to those earlier February family escapes to the Caribbean, where they’d slough the frost of Rochester. It also brings Tom back to an intellectual awakening 45 years ago in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

In January 1972, he was called into the principal’s office at his high school in Plattsburgh, N.Y., just shy of the Canadian border, and he found his father waiting there with a package. That paperwork he’d filled out, and those moonshot interviews he gave with the American Field Service for a free, yearlong study abroad program? They’d selected him. And he was leaving in 10 days.

Tom was 16. He remembers that package like this: “Here’s some background on the family you’re about to go live with, in a country you may or may not be able to find on a map, that speaks a language you certainly haven’t studied, to live with a family you’ve never met before and know nothing about, in a city you know nothing about in the interior of Brazil, leaving behind a family that you’re not going to see again for a year—and because of the price of

phone calls and everything, you're not going to call them for a year, either; you can write some letters. And you've got 10 days to pack your stuff and get down to New York for this plane."

The plane ride—any plane ride—would have been remarkable to him at that point in his life, let alone jetting 4,000 miles to live under a South American military dictatorship, in a city with a hundred times the population of Plattsburgh.

"It changed my life," he says, and the memory seems effervescent still, despite the decades, as if kept under a cork.

He couldn't sneeze in Portuguese at first, but he traveled under the wing of the host family's 19-year-old son—"Nineteen," he says, leaning into the number, "... I grew up really quickly"—and the trip lit the fuses of flavor and rhythm, which he used to help excavate Brazilian culture and politics.

"I started asking questions," he says. *Why is that house surrounded by barbed wire? Why is Caetano Veloso singing so longingly about Brazil from London?*

"It opened me up in a way that no other experience could have done in that period of time," he says.

WHEN THE ELEVATOR OPENED,

the room beyond had barely more than a door with a slot. Tom LeBlanc got off the elevator and knocked on the door, unsure even if there was a person on the other side.

"It was almost like Oz," he says, thinking back to the day in 1974. "I was working in black and white, and one day I knocked on the door and I'm now in color."

Behind the door was a computer center that spanned an entire floor in an academic building at the State University of New York at Plattsburgh. LeBlanc was halfway through his freshman year and was enrolled in his first computer science class, a course he'd taken up so casually he can't recall why he took it. It was not out of burning interest.

He knew nothing of computers; didn't tinker with them as a kid or anything like that. And though his father sold and repaired business machines—typewriters,

calculators and the like—in his mind, those were ancestors that bore little resemblance. But LeBlanc really liked the class, where he was learning to design computer programs on punch cards. That's where the slotted door factored in.

"You'd put your card deck in the slot, something happened, and then the next day you'd pick up your printout on the shelf. So it was a total mystery," he says.

When he knocked on the door, someone did answer—"a classic computer nerd"—and LeBlanc asked for a job; he got one. "Now I was the guy on the other side of the mail slot."

Decks of punch cards would come in, he'd organize them, run them through a reader, collect the printout, wrap it around the deck and put it out for pickup. When it was slow, he'd chat up the computer technicians and became interested in the technology.

He took a second course, and that sealed the deal.

"I'm all in," he says. "Then I just took every single course I could get my hands on. I'd already finished my general

education requirements, so for two years all I took was math and computer science, and I just burrowed down in there and I really felt like this is what I've been looking for."

Prior to that, he wasn't sure. There was a time he thought maybe chemistry was the one, but then there were technical difficulties. "I have to say, I was terrible at pouring liquids from test tube to beaker."

(From beside her husband on the couch, Anne lets out a laugh; a genuine, joyful little burst, even though there's a chance she's heard the line a time or two over the years.)

LeBlanc thinks he also could've made a run at economics or law. Like computer science, he says, those fields occur within a set of rules, and often in air-conditioned rooms, both things he came to realize that he appreciates. That's opposed to, say, being an artist or chef. "There are things I just know, and my wife knows—I could never be a handyman, right?" (Anne lights up in laughter again.) "Handyman is too close to chemistry, in my view."

He moved up in the computer center at SUNY Plattsburgh, becoming a programmer—one of a handful of jobs, along with clerking in a library and driving

the Zamboni at a local ice rink, that LeBlanc held to supplement a full-tuition scholarship from the state. And it was computer programming that brought him to Anne. The two—both in the first generation of their family to go to college—were among just 30 or so undergrads accepted to a summer program at the U.S. Energy Department's Ames Laboratory in Iowa.

"We met basically the first day," Tom says. "At the end of the first week we were a couple, and by the end of the summer we knew we were going to stay together."

"Guys say a lot of things, who knows?" Anne says of the end of that summer. "But he kept calling, and that's when I realized: Geez, he was serious."

Anne had grown up near Cleveland and was studying meteorology, and together they went to grad school at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, both of them on fellowships. There Anne worked on building faster computer simulations of cloud formations; weather modeling at the time took 24 hours, even for the National Weather Service, she says.

They married on campus, along the shore of Lake Mendota, and Tom stayed on to get a PhD while Anne found work as a computer programmer. When Tom finished, in late 1982, he took a tenure-track assistant professor position at the University of Rochester, back near the Canadian border, about 85 miles from Niagara Falls.

His interest was in parallel programming; essentially a computer's ability to multitask. At Rochester, LeBlanc helped take that to the next level, building a checkers-playing robot that ran four parallel programming models at once, in a variety of programming languages—enabling the robot to simultaneously see, plan, talk and move the checkers—on a single operating system.

While there, he was the principal or co-principal investigator on projects that garnered \$7.5 million in funding from the National Science Foundation, as well as grants from the Defense Department's Advanced Research Projects Agency and the Office of Naval Research.

Over the years there, he fielded most of the academic jobs in higher education, rising to associate professor, tenured professor, department chair and then vice provost and dean.

"It was not going to be easy to get him out of Rochester," recalls Donna Shalala, who was president of the University of Miami from 2001 to 2015 and recruited LeBlanc in 2005 to be Miami's executive vice president and provost.

She remembers him seeming intrigued by the opportunity, but "I had to sell him



A commissioned painting by artist Humberto Calzada hangs in the front room of the LeBlancs' new home. The couple says it evokes a sense of peace. "In some ways ... this is how I imagine heaven must look," Tom LeBlanc says.

**"IT WAS
ALMOST
LIKE OZ,"**

he says thinking
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**"I WAS WORKING
IN BLACK AND WHITE,
AND ONE DAY I KNOCKED
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**Tom LeBlanc tours a data center at GW's
122-acre Virginia Science and Technology
Campus in Ashburn, Va., in October.**







on the job,” says Shalala, who also served for eight years as Bill Clinton’s health and human services secretary. “This was not [that] he was looking for a job and he was dying to come to Miami. I had to convince him that this was the transformation of an institution from a good institution to a great institution.”

In his role at Miami, LeBlanc was both the chief academic officer and the chief budget officer. After Shalala left, he even served as interim president.

“Tom was ready for a presidency five years ago, as far as I’m concerned,” Shalala says. “... I just kept saying, ‘Tom, it’s time.’”

TOM LEBLANC’S FIRST DAY ON THE JOB IS AUG. 1,

but his first *night* on the job is probably seven months earlier, on Jan. 6, the day GW announced his hiring. From there on, he pulled the strings at the University of Miami by day and studied up on GW after the sun’s retreat.

He read, he listened. Often on weekends, he flew up and listened some more.

Even then, LeBlanc had some familiarity with the university. A decade prior, he’d served as the outside administrator overseeing GW’s accreditation effort with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, a voluntary, mostly mid-Atlantic

“AT THE END OF THE FIRST WEEK WE WERE A COUPLE, AND BY THE END OF THE SUMMER WE KNEW WE WERE GOING TO STAY TOGETHER.”

membership group. And even further back, while a dean at Rochester, he tried to recruit then GW political science professor Forrest Maltzman, who was named GW’s provost in 2016.

LeBlanc has said he was in no rush to leave Miami—“I had a great job in a great city, I was happy”—but GW was one of the places he’d pictured himself living and working, and when the call came, he took it. “I chose GW as thoughtfully as GW chose me,” he has said.

When Board of Trustees Chair Nelson Carbonell, BS ’85, rolled out LeBlanc for the announcement in January, he said he’d gotten the impression that LeBlanc “was someone who in the computer science world we call WYSIWYG: what you see is what you get.” And it’s an image LeBlanc carries into the opening months of his term; one of informal-but-exacting clarity and directness, which Carbonell later remarked was “one of the things that we fell in love with” during his candidacy.

By the time LeBlanc’s carousel speaking tour of student groups, administrative offices, academic departments, campus events and open forums picks up speed in August and September, he’s ready to talk—candidly, without notes and without being above interrupting himself, as he scans the back of a room, to observe: “There’s cake?”

He wants to talk business: about GW’s investments in research, how they should be measured and where they should be



OPPOSITE The LeBlancs watch an alumni basketball game in August. **ABOVE** Tom LeBlanc greets GW gymnasts.

heading; about using the recently finished \$1 billion fundraising campaign to look for ways to sharpen those efforts for the future; about the relationship between GW Hospital, the medical school and the Medical Faculty Associates, a partnership “formed in the ‘90s to solve the problems of the 1990s,” he says.

But mostly he wants to talk about culture.

“Every institution has a culture,” LeBlanc tells an audience at one of his open forums in September. “Not every institution talks about it, not every institution represents it, or understands it, but every one has it. And what’s interesting is when you start to talk about it, how all the heads in the room all nod in unison.”

And then he puts out, like laundry on the line, his crystallized observations of the past seven months or so. Many aren’t unique to GW, he says, and he thinks they should be discussed. He intends to fix them.

“We will always be in the change business, in everything we do,” he tells the audience. “Because if universities don’t change, they die.”

Pieces of that institutional culture are stifling the undergraduate experience, he says. Students are met with unintentional roadblocks, accretions of once well-meaning decision making: a difficult-to-navigate administrative bureaucracy; “curricular straightjackets” that make it hard to double-major across schools; an internal structure from which “no one actually can see a [complete] picture of the undergraduate experience”—what they encounter when

they go to bed, when they eat, when they apply for financial aid, when they go to class.

All that—combined with the give-and-take of being a university that’s nearly one with the cityscape, and one that’s relatively new to cultivating a residential experience for so many students—contributes to what

LeBlanc says is among the lowest alumni giving rates (9 percent) for a private research university.

The experiences of students and alumni also could be a symptom of what LeBlanc feels is an institutional allergy to risk that confronts faculty members and staffers; a quickness to say “no” that’s tangled in penny-wise anxiety.

“It’s a culture,” he says, “that has been defined by our financial limits rather than our aspirations.”

And so LeBlanc is seeking perspective from all points, especially from students. By early November, he’s attended or hosted three dozen student-focused events. He aims to meet this year with every freshman—in large groups, over pancakes at the house—to glean a sense of GW from their vantage. If one student is having an issue, he says, “there’s probably another hundred students that are having the same kind of experience.”

The students he’s talked to “love it here,” he told an audience of staffers in September. “But every single day, we make it hard for them to love us, in so many ways. And I’m making up a list, and it’s long.”

LeBlanc has seen some of this before. He helped engineer a reboot at the University of Miami, which, between his arrival in

2005 and exit in 2017, climbed 14 spots in the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings, to No. 44. Research expenditures (a measure of a university’s activity) jumped 70 percent during that time, to more than \$365 million. He also reworked the general-education curriculum to free undergrads to pursue their interests across schools. And he spent years counteracting what he describes as a byzantine administrative structure that left students bouncing from office to office without answers to questions, a phenomenon that had its own moniker: the Miami Shuffle.

Donna Shalala, the former president at Miami, says LeBlanc was “the key leader” in that evolution, the one who made it reality. LeBlanc “knows how to make institutions better ... People talk about it; Tom knows how to do it—and get everybody to go along at the same time and to be enthusiastic about it.”

A modicum of risk aversion may just be a D.C. thing. The city moves forward and back, right and left in a tenuous, unending *pas de deux*. And LeBlanc is hardly the first person to arrive in D.C. seeking to change the way things are done.

But he sees GW in the long view, and sees the problems of the moment as surmountable, like any others that pock the road in the rearview.

“We should be proud because of GW’s heritage and mission,” he says at his inauguration in November. “We should be proud because of what GW has become. And that pride should animate the future we will build together.”

He points out that GW’s centennial celebrated its mere survival; the emergence from decades of financial struggle and the cementing of its independence from the Baptist church. “The bicentennial must be about something far bigger,” he says. “No one doubts our ability to survive. We have greater ambitions now.”

At this moment, the internal perception of GW might be the biggest thing holding back the university, he tells an audience of staffers in late September.

In the *U.S. News* rankings, GW stands at No. 56, which he punctuates by noting that there are 4,500 or so institutions of higher education across the nation. Nearly a quarter of that formula is based on a peer assessment, a reputation survey of presidents, provosts and deans of admissions. On a scale of 1 to 5, LeBlanc says, GW’s score is 3.6—the highest score that appears between GW’s No. 56 spot and No. 30 on the list. “Let that sink in,” he tells the group.

“We have got to start to realize we’re actually pretty good,” he says, “and we have to start acting like it.”


President Tom LeBlanc will be traveling to several U.S. cities in 2018 for a series of receptions for GW alumni, families and friends hosted by the Division of Development and Alumni Relations.

For details on these and other events in your region, visit alumni.gwu.edu/events





PRECIOUS METTLE

Former college softball player **Elana Meyers Taylor**, **BS '06, MTA '11**, has used a daredevil style to become one of the greatest women's bobsled pilots in U.S. history. She's won four world championships, Olympic bronze and Olympic silver, and in February in South Korea, she's the favorite for Olympic gold.

STORY BY MATTHEW STOSS
PHOTOS BY CANDICE WARD

Three American bobsledders and I are sitting at a table in the Calgary Farmers' Market in Canada in early, warm September. I, a 33-year-old man who's afraid of roller coasters, have asked what it's like to crash a bobsled.

"The sound is worse than anything else," says Elana Meyers Taylor, BS '06, MTA '11, a GW softball great and a two-time Olympic medalist in the two-woman bobsled. She won bronze at Vancouver in 2010 and silver at Sochi in 2014 and will be a favorite to take gold in February at the 2018 winter games in PyeongChang, South Korea. She's also the first American woman to win a bobsled world championship.

"What does it sound like?" I say.

"Just think about driving your car against a cement wall," says Kehri Jones, Taylor's sometimes brakeman who ran track at Baylor.

"That's a good descriptor," Taylor says.

"Does the sound hurt your teeth?" I say.

"It doesn't hurt your teeth—because you're sideways," Jones says. "You're just trying to figure out what to do to stay inside [the bobsled] at that point."

"It's silent," says Nic Taylor, Elana's husband and a member of the men's national team. He ran track at Boise State. All bobsledders come from other sports because youth bobsled doesn't exist. The sport is prohibitively expensive, the sleds are prohibitively heavy, and going down a mile's worth of icy death chute at 90 miles per hour in nothing but a motorcycle helmet and a set of full-body underpants is prohibitively dangerous.

"I thought it made the cement-scraping noise?" I say.

"Right before you crash, it goes silent because the runners are off the ice," Elana says. "The runners on the ice usually make a lot of noise because it's a concrete base and it's ice. When you don't hear anything, you

don't hear anything because that means the sled is airborne."

I consider this and remember riding Space Mountain that one time. I was 31.

"Have you been airborne?" I say.

"Yes."

Elana Meyers Taylor, 33, is a big, strong woman and the daughter of one of the greatest running backs in U.S. Naval Academy history. She took up bobsledding 10 years ago because she'd wanted to be an Olympian since she was 11 years old and the 1996 summer games came to her hometown: Atlanta. Blowing two tryouts for the U.S. national softball team—the first one because she stunk, swinging at pitches over her head and throwing one ball over the backstop; and the second because her ACL stunk—forced her to find an alternate sport, as did softball getting cut as an Olympic sport after the 2008 games. (It's coming back in 2020.)

Her parents, Eddie and Janet Meyers, had suggested to Elana that she might be good at bobsled after watching another big, strong woman who converted to bobsled, former sprinter Vonetta Flowers, win a gold medal in 2002.

Family bobsled conversations continued through Taylor's college softball career. She also had a college roommate with a bobsled connection: The roommate, a former GW women's soccer player, worked with a trainer who recruited bobsledders. The roommate would later take a bobsled ride with Taylor at Lake Placid. Taylor wrecked. It happens.

"How often do you crash?" I say.

"I crashed four times last year—which is a lot," Taylor says. "Most of the pilots don't crash at all. But usually it's only like once or twice a year you crash, out of over 200 runs."

"Why do you crash so much?"

"She's willing to take risks," Jones says.

"I win," Taylor says.

"You gotta crash to win," Jones says.

The Calgary Farmers' Market is an indoor warren of kiosks managed by vendors trying

to out-organic each other in the politest possible way. The market is lit like a Santa's village at a nice mall. Bored children touch stuff and obstruct foot traffic, couples do the same thing, and a young blonde girl plays the ukulele for tips.

Elana and Nic shop here once a week when they're training at Canada Olympic Park in Calgary, an urban splotch stamped atop the foothills and grasslands that dominate Canada's midsection. The farmers' market makes it easy to eat healthy and maintain all that gaudy Olympian musculature. Occasionally, the couple splurges for Indian food.

They used to work part-time at the farmers' market stocking a produce stand because bobsled is both expensive and non-lucrative. Elana is sponsored by 24-Hour Fitness, Bridgestone, Coca-Cola, Deloitte and Procter & Gamble but those dollars don't cover the full cost of a bobsledding habit. Or rent. Or food. Or travel. She's made side money working as a personal trainer and a substitute P.E. teacher. She's worked for GE and at a burrito joint. Currently, she works for a U.S. Olympic Committee athlete-mentoring program.

"Sometimes you crash in order to figure out a line," Elana says. "Sometimes you're trying out new stuff, and then when you're thinking about something that much and you're trying to do it at 90 miles per hour, sometimes it just gets away from you."

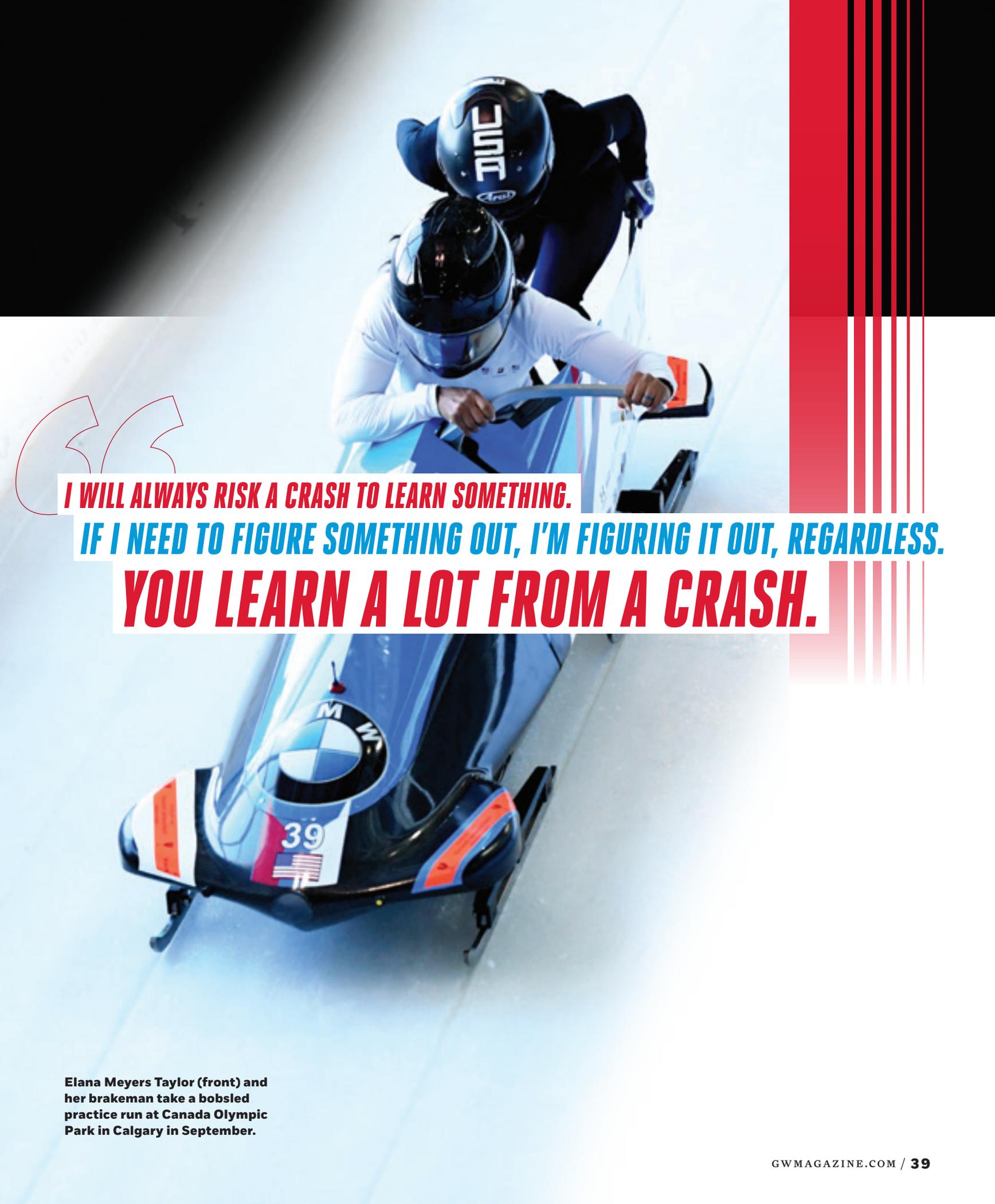
"Have you ever crashed on purpose to learn something?" I say.

"You never crash on purpose to learn something."

"OK. I phrased it poorly. You *risk* a crash to learn something?"

"I will always risk a crash to learn something. If I need to figure something out, I'm figuring it out, regardless. You learn a lot from a crash."

I learned a lot from Space Mountain. I'm still scared of roller coasters.



GG

I WILL ALWAYS RISK A CRASH TO LEARN SOMETHING.

IF I NEED TO FIGURE SOMETHING OUT, I'M FIGURING IT OUT, REGARDLESS.

YOU LEARN A LOT FROM A CRASH.

Elana Meyers Taylor (front) and her brakeman take a bobsled practice run at Canada Olympic Park in Calgary in September.



...WHEN YOU'RE REALLY HITTING YOUR DRIVES RIGHT

AND WHEN THINGS ARE REALLY GOING WELL,

IT IS LIKE

Elana Meyers Taylor lifts kettlebells at Canada Olympic Park in Calgary in September.

NIKE ZOOM

On the western edge of Calgary, abutting frontier on three sides and less than 50 miles east of the Canadian Rockies, the aerie of Canada Olympic Park sits on ground too small to be a mountain and too big to be a hill.

The complex is an upkept remnant of the 1988 Winter Olympics, a games remembered more by a certain generation as the setting for *Cool Runnings* than for any feat of sporting immortality. The track on which the Jamaican bobsled team did better in fiction than in real life remains and is one of four such tracks in North America, and it's where Elana Meyers Taylor is training for three weeks in September.

Under ceilings high enough to harbor weather, there are gyms, concourses and hockey rinks circling a cafeteria that sells sandwiches at movie-theater prices. There's also a vast room called the Ice House where

to talk bobsled and again reminded her of Vonetta Flowers and the former track star's second life as a bobsledder.

"We felt like, 'This is something you can do right now and don't have to learn over a period of time,'" says Taylor's father, Eddie Meyers, who spent 10 years in the Marine Corps, which included a six-month tour in the Gulf War, and briefly played for the Atlanta Falcons in the 1980s. He's now a regional president at PNC Bank. "... You're quick, you're strong—you have all those attributes today. There's nothing really that you need to do different than what you're already doing to be a good pusher in bobsled."

Taylor's parents weren't wrong.

"We've had great softball players come out for the team in the past," says Taveras, referencing Shelly Stokes, who helped the U.S. softball team win a gold medal in

ground. This is a good idea when sprinting for 50 meters down an icy hill with a 365-pound sled that's all juiced up on inertia.

"She is the best push-athlete and driver that we've ever had," Taveras says.

Mythic athleticism aside, Taylor still had to get in a bobsled and slide the icy death chute without needing a change of shorts.

"We've sent athletes down the hill and watched them walk home because bobsled is not a calm sport," Taveras says. "But once you see a smile on their face and you know they can handle it, you can send them through. After [Taylor] started running the sled, we knew she had what it takes."

Taylor made the national team just a few months after auditioning in Lake Placid. Like all beginning bobsledders, she started as a brakeman. She made the move to driver in 2010, learning to manipulate the two ropes that steer the sled's runners. Only a handful

IT IS THE MOST FUN FEELING I COULD EVER THINK OF. FLYING AND BEING A SUPERHERO.

bobsledders, lugers and skeletoners practice on two small U-shaped tracks that look like fun.

Here, the 5-foot-8, 175-pound Taylor refines her speed, skill and buffness—in another life, she would have been some kind of a warrior—with other veteran and aspiring Olympians (mostly Canadians), while the non-Olympic sorts are left to perpend upon all the abs they don't have.

It's the sort of place where Taylor learned to bobsled 10 years ago under former U.S. women's bobsled coach Bill Taveras. He helped transform Taylor from a shortstop—she hit .356 for her career at GW and better than .400 her junior and senior seasons—to one of the best women's bobsled pilots on the planet.

The process started when Taylor cold-emailed Taveras in the summer of 2007. Taylor's pro softball career had just died quietly following a penurious season in the underfunded and anonymous National Pro Fastpitch League. Around that time, Taylor's parents, always aware of their daughter's undying Olympic aspirations, continued

Atlanta in 1996. "And from [Taylor's] résumé, we knew she was a good athlete, so we invited her up to Lake Placid to go through our combine. ... She just over-exceeded our expectations."

Taylor finished the two-day combine that September looking not unlike a demigod, dominating, among other trials of power, speed and general kinesthesia, sprints of 15, 30, 45 and 60 meters, broad jumps, shot put throws, power cleans, squats and bench presses.

Ten years later, Taylor, who has a standing heart rate of around 40, runs the 30 meters in about 3.7 seconds, a time comparable to fellow bobsledder and former NCAA hurdling champion Lolo Jones. Taylor squats 400 pounds, deadlifts 400 and power cleans 250. She hasn't bench-pressed since 2012, but when she did, she cleared 220 pounds. That's just 5 pounds shy of what aspiring pro football players rep at the NFL Combine.

She's also made her running style conducive to bobsledding, shortening her stride so her feet have more contact with the

of bobsledders become pilots. Taveras taught Taylor to drive and served bravely as one of her first passengers.

"I ride down in the sled so I can see what they're doing," Taveras says. "The coach-and-athlete conversation is a little quicker that way. Instead of seeing them only in a couple of curves, I can see them in the whole track."

Rookie pilots drive tracks in quarters or fifths, starting at the bottom and working their way to the top, turn by turn, to the push start and the speeds that launch stomachs throatward. It takes a novice about eight years to master bobsled-driving, but Taylor, with discipline, focus and intelligence, went from greenhorn to Olympic medalist in four years, even studying the physics of how sleds run on ice. Coaches, teammates and rivals also ascribe to her a third-eye track awareness that comes off as vaguely preternatural.

And then there's her devotion to the school of learn-by-crashing.

"When you push the limits," Taveras says, "that's what happens."



At the Calgary Farmers' Market, the three American bobsledders are showing me YouTube movies on their smartphones of bobsled wrecks. There's one on there of Nic Taylor falling out the back of a sled as it takes a C-curve. It is a graceful, albeit non-consensual, dismount.

Elana Meyers Taylor finds a still image of an airborne bobsled. The sled is upside down. Nic, her husband and a member of the U.S. national men's bobsled team, tops that with a video of a bobsled going airborne, also upside down.

"And that's where she gets into trouble," Nic says.

The bobsled just hit a wall.

"More trouble," he says.

The video progresses.

"Looks like she saved it," I say.

Nic shakes his head. The bobsled jerks up the track and pulls a quarter of a barrel roll before smashing the driver head first into the ice and wrenching off her helmet.

"I hope her head wasn't in that," I say.

"What happened to the driver in the wreck? Is she alive?"

"Yeah," Nic says.

"She didn't snap her neck?"

"She was racing in the Olympics a few weeks later."

Bobsled officially started in Switzerland in 1897. There are vintage movies on the internet of the daredevilling pioneers who affixed a steering wheel to a wooden toboggan and sped snowy tracks, protected only by extra-strength chapstick and a nice holiday sweater.

Bobsledders established a governing body in 1923, the International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation, and the sport made its Olympic debut at Lake Placid in 1932. Twenty years later, bobsledding began to look like it does today: two or four people in a steel torpedo shooting toward frosty triumph or, as we learned from YouTube, a fate more painful.

"What do you think when it goes silent?" I say to Elana.

"You're just pulling and trying to pull yourself out of it," she says. "Like, you know you've made the mistake, but you're trying to fix it and trying to salvage it as much as you can. And then it gets to the point where you can't save it, but you're trying to do it anyways."

"Do you warn the brakeman?"

"Oh, usually I'm screaming," Elana says. "I'm usually saying, 'Oh, sugar honey ice tea or something.'" Elana minds her language, even in times of peril. "Or something like, 'AHHHHHHHHHHHH!'"

A bobsled costs about \$250,000, and the U.S. women's bobsled team has only three, so it's ideal to not destroy them. The sleds used to come from former NASCAR driver

Geoff Bodine, but in 2014, the national team switched to BMW-made models. A bobsled interior, regardless of manufacturer, is spare of luxury. They have minimal padding and would seem comfortable only relative to the bedding at a county jail.

A person in a bobsled going full speed can pull multiple Gs, comparable to an astronaut during a space launch, and concussions are common. Groin and hamstring pulls are hazards due to the sideways-ish gait necessitated by the way sleds are pushed. Lower backs also wear down and it is not uncommon for ex-bobsledders to have trouble walking in their golden years.

The risk of neck injury is high due to the weight of the helmet (about 4 pounds) and how often the head gets bounced around during a ride, which Taylor describes as being stuffed in a trash can and kicked down a rocky hill. But healthy post-bobsled lives largely depend on the frequency and the severity of crashes. People have died.

"When you wreck," I say, "is it better to stay in the bobsled?"

"Yeah," says Kehri Jones, a brakeman on the U.S. women's bobsled team. "But it's hard."

"When you fly out," I say, looking at Nic, "from watching you fall, I noticed there appears to be a technique to it."

Nic laughs.

"You try and keep everything locked, arms and legs together, and try to slide like



Elana Meyers Taylor takes a break from practicing push-starts on a mini indoor ice track at Canada Olympic Park in Calgary in September.

a penguin,” Elana says, “... If you sprawl out, then you could get injured. I’ve seen people break ankles because they get kicked out in a crash and they’ve been sprawled.”

“So you want to turn the track into a water slide?”

“But it hurts,” Jones says. “So you try to stay in as much as possible—but the pressure that was keeping you in the sled is now pulling you out of the sled.”

“How far will you slide?” I say.

“[The sled will] make it to the bottom,” Elana says. “Every single track in the world, you’ll make it.”

“How fast do you go without the sled?”

“Oh, the body? If you’re outside the sled, you’ll just make it a couple of curves, but that sled is going downhill *hard*.”

“And for a split second,” Nic says, “as soon as you flip over, as soon as you’re out, you’re going the same speed as the sled. But there’s more friction on your calves and arms than the blades, so you slow down faster.”

“Are your onesies padded anywhere?” I say. “You don’t have extra stuff in the butt?” Everyone shakes their head. “No?”



“You wear burn vests,” Jones says. “And the ice isn’t smooth. You find that out real quick—’cause it seems like it’s smooth when you’re sliding down, but once your skin is on it, it’s sharp. Like knives.”

“It’s got little bumps on it,” Elana says.

Afternoon ebbs. Elana and Nic are going across town for physical therapy before dinner at an Indian restaurant where they know the owners and earnestly offer to wash dishes after meals. Elana’s signed picture is on the wall by the host stand. She’s holding a Coke—it is important to plug one’s sponsor—and the picture next to hers features Kaillie Humphries, Canada’s premier women’s bobsledder, a 2014 Olympic gold medalist and Elana’s greatest rival.

“What is the allure of all this?” I say, asking one more question before the Taylors leave. “Why do you do it?”

“Because,” Elana says, “when you’re really hitting your drives right and when things are really going well, it is the most fun feeling I could ever think of. It is like flying and being a superhero.”

“What does that feel like?”

“You’re one with your sled. So it just feels like you’re moving, on and off curves, going as fast as you can, and it’s just like gliding. It literally feels like you’re flying through the air because it’s just so smooth and so nice, and that feeling is unlike anything I’ve ever felt.”



Elana Meyers Taylor holds her Olympic medals. The bronze she won in Vancouver in 2010 is on the left, and the silver she won in Sochi in 2014 is on the right.



ELANA HAS A VERY FREE STYLE OF DRIVING,

SHE LETS IT RUN. SHE LIVES RIGHT ON THE EDGE.

SHE JUST LETS THE SLED FLY.

IV

A man once said that the difference between an enemy and a nemesis is that you go to your nemesis's funeral. If you're Kaillie Humphries, you also go to your nemesis's wedding.

"I was a bit hesitant at first because, 'Is her family going to hate me?'" says Humphries, who edged Elana Meyers Taylor by a tenth of a second at Sochi in 2014 for Olympic gold, sending Taylor to a dread and consolatory silver. The wedding was two months later. Humphries's invite was a surprise.

"I don't know how that's going to be perceived," Humphries continues. "But her parents are super cool and they're really supportive of me still being who I am and competing, and I know my parents are very proud of Elana, regardless, win or lose. If I can't win, I hope it's Elana that gets to win, and I know she feels the same."

Humphries and Taylor are the best women's bobsled pilots in the world, made friends by mutual elitence and mutual competitiveness.

They dominate the eight-race World Cup circuit, the World Championships, and they are the first women since 1940 to compete in the four-man bobsled, an event once deemed too dangerous for women. The two-woman bobsled event, currently the only women's bobsled event, has been an Olympic sport only since 2002. Men compete in the two- and four-man.

Lately, though, the International Olympic Committee has pushed its sports to do better on gender equity. In 2014, the International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation, while also taking broadsides of grief from women's bobsledders like Humphries and Taylor, legalized co-ed bobsledding.

"I [am] always searching for opportunities and analyzing possibilities to develop our

sport in order to make it accessible for everyone—women and men equally," IBSF President Ivo Ferriani writes in an email. "Watching the great performances of our female athletes and listening to their ambitions to compete in an additional discipline ... made it clear to me that we must work in this direction."

Taylor plans to make a run at competing in the 2022 Olympics in Beijing driving a four-man sled. She's also lobbying with Humphries for a four-woman event to be added in 2022. (Ferriani says the IBSF is mulling a four-woman event but that it's "too early" to say if it will happen in 2022, citing a concern about having enough teams that compete at a "top level." New sleds also would have to be designed and built. Four-man sleds have a maximum weight—four guys, plus the 463-pound sled—of 1,389 pounds. Women aren't big enough to hit that.)

Taylor and Humphries met about 10 years ago, and at Taylor's suggestion, the two started training together in 2010, about the time Taylor took up driving. Humphries initially considered the request gauche and a brazen breach of competitive etiquette. She feared giving up her secrets but later realized that training with Taylor, whom she considers a superior athlete, would make her better.

"Not many people could push me within the sport," Humphries says. "There was nobody in Canada at the time and there were very few people in the world at that time who could challenge me. It wasn't an easy decision or a comfortable decision. It wasn't nice or easy to do, but I knew Elana, and I respected Elana, and she worked really hard. It was going to push me to be better and not become

complacent."

Now, they root for each other (when appropriate).

"In Sochi," Humphries says with a laugh, "... did I hope that she'd hit a couple of walls? Yep."

Humphries isn't braiding voodoo hair dolls of Taylor and lighting them on fire every equinox and solstice or anything. She wants Taylor, the Magic to her Bird—or the Bird to her Magic; it's unclear who would be who in this hypothetical—to be safely at her best. Still, that doesn't mean she's grieving if Taylor rubs a wall and fattens her time by a hundredth of a second. And that, on occasion, does happen. Taylor's piloting ensures it.

"Elana has a very free style of driving," Humphries says. "She lets it run. She lives right on the edge. She just lets the sled fly."

Taylor has speed records at five tracks. In the Ice House at Canada Olympic Park, where athletes practice on the bunny-slope equivalent of an ice track, Taylor's name is all over the wall. And sometimes, so are her bobsleds.

"I'll have one [crash] and she usually three to four a year," Humphries says. "I would say it's not unusual. She does crash more than the majority of people. I would say she's pretty average in the number of crashes a year that happen, but it is quite a bit for such an accomplished athlete—like, she crashes a lot for somebody who is a world-champion Olympic medalist."

Coming off the 2017 world championship, Taylor raced on what will be the track for the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea. She crashed on the first run. She was the only one.

"At the end of the day," Humphries says, "as long as she's OK, that's the most important thing—regardless of anything."



In the back of a hoppin' little coffee shop where a bobsled trainer has a coffee named in his honor, in one of Calgary's proliferating strip malls, Elana Meyers Taylor is describing to me the worst crash she ever had. I'm drinking English breakfast tea and she has coffee.

The worst crash wasn't the most violent or spectacular, though. No, the most violent and spectacular crash came during the fourth of six practice runs at the Sochi Olympics in 2014. Taylor's brakeman pulled the brakes late, and the sled, going 80-some miles an hour, hit a cement wall prow first at the end of the track. The impact shattered the chassis into shrapnel and rent the steel axle into postmodern art.

The backup sled, shipped to Russia for photo ops and press conferences, had to be cannibalized into a slideable vessel in one frantic night of mad scientist-ing. Even in a reclamation sled held together by prayer and science, a probably whiplashed Taylor still managed to lead until the end when she nicked a wall in the third curve and lost to Kaillie Humphries by one contemptible tenth of a second.

The worst crash happened in Germany during the World Cup regular season in January 2015. Taylor came out of a looping curve going too fast and lost control.

"My head hit the ice, and the sled slid for a second and then slammed back up," Taylor says. "I think it was the slamming back up, that jolt coming back up."

The "it" is what caused the concussion.

"We still finished sixth," Taylor says. "I came across the finish line, and I remember a whole bunch of people are yelling at me, asking me if I'm OK. But everything is in slow motion and the lights are so bright at this point. My head is pounding. And I get out of the sled and they're starting the award ceremonies and they're rushing me to the award ceremonies and finally I was like, 'I gotta get outta here.'"

"It's amazing you remember all this," I say.

"I have more memory loss from previous events—and I don't have the greatest memory now."

Taylor gives a play-by-play of what happened next: A coterie of doctors examined her at the hotel, her teammates kept her up all night just in case, a concussion test administered a few days later. She claims she's never failed one, despite having four concussions (that she knows of), and she passed this one. The concussion effects, though, persisted into the fall. She got

irritable, irrational and emotional. She cried for no reason. She stopped sleeping and it hurt to read computer screens.

"My biggest thing was light-sensitivity and sensitivity to noise," Taylor says, "and when that started going away and stuff like that, I started to feel better, started to compete and race again. We thought we were OK."

Taylor kept racing and kept winning. Then in October, during another World Cup regular-season race, she blacked out in a curve.

"I didn't crash or anything but I knew something wasn't right," Taylor says. "Finally, they were like, 'This is enough. You can't keep going like this,' and they sent me home."

Ten months after the concussion in Germany, she still had problems.

"What was wrong?" I say.

"My eyes didn't track together," Taylor says. "I didn't really have good communication between my feet and head. I couldn't feel exactly where I was in space ... And I, traditionally, have a really good sense of balance, so to have those kinds of issues, it was really bad."

"Do you worry about having memory problems when you get older?"

"A lot of the coaches and a lot of the people who have bobsledded for a really long time have memory issues, those kind of things, and seem a little slower. So it's concerning, but at the same time ... I feel like I'm recovered from that concussion and I haven't had symptoms since, so we're in a position right now that we can be competing. But if we feel like we get to a position that we can't, or things get bad again, now that I understand the signs and symptoms—now I understand how it's all linked together—then we'll take action and stop sliding."

Taylor wears a \$2,000 special helmet designed off the dampening properties of a woodpecker skull. She mentions this as the barista brings coffee and tea refills.

It's Sunday morning, and Calgary for the first time in a week is seasonably cool but the views from the foothills are not all

they should be. British Columbia is burning. From the west, the Rockies defended Canada's third-largest city and kept away the last flames of a record-worst wildfire season. But while 12,000 rocky feet sufficed for a firewall, they couldn't stop a wildfire haze from gauzing Calgary's blue air brown. That's wafting off now. It's obvious, even from the shadowy back of the little coffee shop, where Taylor is talking about the 2014 Olympics, the crash in practice and that un-won gold medal.

"That's what I've dreamt about my entire life," she says. "To come that close and not be able to grab it. That's devastating."

"Did you cry?" I say.

"Yes—not at the time, not at the podium or anything like that. But yeah, I cried a lot over that medal."

"Do you still cry?"

"No. I feel like if that didn't happen, I wouldn't be the pilot I am today and I wouldn't be in the position I am in today. I learned a ton from that situation and I won world championships last year after that, but I wouldn't have won those world championships without taking silver in that race. And who knows, maybe if I had won a gold medal, I would have retired and gone and done something else in my life. But everything happens for a reason."

The coffee shop has emptied and the staff is cleaning after uncivilized patrons. It's after lunchtime. Taylor is leaning on her arms, her ever-present skullcap sitting high on her head, and talking about the value of every so often getting slapped down by the backhand of the universe.

"I genuinely feel you learn way more from failure than you do from success," she says. "I feel like I've grown tremendously as a pilot as a result from that, just learning more about myself and how to compete and stuff like that. And bobsled is one of those sports where as soon as you feel like you have an angle on it—as soon as you feel like you've got the hang of it—it crumbles completely. The nature of the sport has taught me that you have to be humble, that you have to make sure you're constantly learning from your mistakes and that you're never content."

And that is what it feels like to crash a bobsled. ☑





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The idea to resurrect and manufacture the iconic bomber and flight jackets of World War II came to **Jeff Clyman**, JD '70, in the early 1970s while flying old military planes in East Coast air shows.

The son of a WWII B-29 pilot, Clyman wore his father's bomber jacket while flying, and after the exhibitions, when he was standing in front of his plane and holding court about all things military aviation, people asked where he got the jacket, made of horsehide and with a B-29 painted on the back. They wanted to know where they could buy one—or if they could just buy his.

So many people asked so many times that Clyman, then in the nascent of what would be a very brief career as a trade-regulation attorney in New York City, saw an opportunity.

“Sort of as a hobby—I call it a hobby or a side thing,” Clyman says, “I said, ‘Why don’t I try to reproduce these?’ There was no original style of flight jacket available to the public or being made commercially.”

In 1975, Clyman and his wife, **Jacky**, BA '69, founded Cockpit USA as a mail-order business, initially based around the trade and sale of Jeff's vast collection of vintage militaria. Today, Cockpit USA, based in New York, manufactures and sells, among other apparel, World War II-era replica bomber and flight jackets. That started in 1977 after Jeff set out to excavate the then-all-but-lost art of making them. He studied at American tanneries and sought the remaining old masters who had made bomber and flight jackets in the 1930s and 1940s.

He learned about garmenting and the garment industry, and by 1980, expanded into military contracting, making Nomex flight jackets for the U.S. Air Force. Shortly after, the Clymans started what would become a multiyear campaign to sell the Air Force on resurrecting the long-discontinued A-2 flight jacket worn by Army pilots from 1931 through World War II.

“It had been an important part of who the World War II pilots were,” Jacky says. “It was really a shame that they could not wear it as part of their uniform anymore.”

The Air Force, born in 1947 out of the various Army flying divisions that had existed since World War I, discarded the A-2 in the late 1940s in favor of high-tech textiles more agreeable to the burgeoning Jet and Space Ages (and less flammable).

The Clymans prodded the Air Force to restore the A-2 as a uniform option out of their respect for history, tradition and the war aviators, like Jeff's father and Jeff's fighter-pilot uncle, who wore them. In 1986—the same year Cockpit USA supplied flight

jackets for the movie *Top Gun*—the Air Force finally said OK, seeing, the Clymans say, the A-2's reintroduction as a perfect complement to the service branch's 40th anniversary.

“The Air Force needed something to promote internal morale and bring back some of the panache of the fighter pilot,” Jeff says. “The Navy had always kept their leather flight jackets. ... And the Air Force guys were kind of jealous and said, ‘Well, why can't we have a leather one?’ And my attitude was, ‘Yeah, why can't you have a leather flight jacket?’”

Jeff Clyman speaks in grandfatherly disquisitions and there's always something reverent about his tone, even when he makes jokes about political correctness, kids today and the rise of the singular they.

He grew up in agrarian Rockland County in upstate New York among World War II pilots who turned to cropdusting. Inspired by the flyers in his family and the cropdusters, Clyman got his pilot's license in 1970, and since, he has amassed a modest fleet of warbirds—the catchall term for antique military aircraft—that includes a P-51 Mustang and a P-40 Warhawk. (These planes can cost anywhere from \$200,000 to several million.) Some of his planes are on display at the American Airpower Museum, which he co-founded in 1993. It's been housed since 2000 in an old Republic Aviation factory on Long Island, where P-47 Thunderbolts—the fighters his uncle flew in WWII—were once built.

Cockpit USA is certainly birthed out of supply and demand, but it's deeper than that for the Clymans. The real impetus is the romance of flying, a gentle devotion to the warbirds and honoring the men who flew them.

“The only reason any of these old aircraft exist,” Jeff says, “is because people understood what they represented in the context of the historical activity that they took part in. Our museum and what we do—and even translated to the clothing—it's about the people and how they did what they did over insurmountable odds, and the leather flight jacket is an iconic representation of that.” **EW**

FINIAL PURSUIT

One time, while living in a Dupont Circle studio apartment, a then-30-something **Jack Dorner** spent too much money on two finials. They were little blue and white vases that would adorn two swing-arm lamps stationed on either side of his bed. They'd also match his linens.

He had to have them.

"I spent \$80 on these two bloody finials that were totally unnecessary—but very important to me," says the now-72-year-old Dorner, BA '68, MFA '73. "I guess having a beautiful home sets me apart from other people because when I come home from work, I don't need to go on vacation. I can travel anywhere in my home."

Decades later, Dorner's home in Montclair, N.J., is filled with strange and sundry collections that demonstrate his unconditional love for good design and all things fine. It still includes finials, which are ornamental toppers for everything from lamps to bedposts.

"My taste is very catholic in that nothing is too esoteric or mundane to attract my attention," Dorner says. "I'm designing finials, for chrissakes. How much more bizarre can it get?"

Dorner is a retired art director who specialized in home fashion, showroom and gift-wrap design as well as holiday-decor installations for shopping centers and malls. He has an MFA in soft sculpture and has made finials for nearly two years, selling them out of his Etsy store: The Fine Finial.

Dorner makes finials for lamps only, buying small tchotchkes and affixing them to brass bases. The process takes about two hours, not including the 24-hour drying time for the glue, and he sells the finials for \$25 to \$75, with most of them going for around \$40. Dorner has made more than 425 (with a 125 more in the works), categorizing them on his Etsy store under headings such as "House & Garden," "The Man Cave," "Holidays," "Kids Club" and "Mystical Far East."

He got into finial-making after an antique dealer friend griped about not being able to find an appropriate finial for a period lamp. She said finials would be a good, albeit-niche business. Dorner, who also runs Town and Country Antiques in Madison, N.J., realized he had the interest, artisanal know-how, and time to make it happen.

"They're like conversation items," Dorner says. "They're something interesting on top. You're eye-level or looking down on almost any lamp, and you look down and you say, 'Oh, that's clever.' It makes the lamp new again." —M.S.



↗ | etsy.com/shop/TheFineFinial



➔ | ilfiorello.com

OILING UP

There have been books, like *Extra Virginity: The Sublime and Scandalous World of Olive Oil* by Tom Mueller, written about how the olive oil you buy in big grocery stores—certainly in bottles branded “extra virgin”—is not only shoddy olive oil, but may not even be made entirely of olives.

“There is an enormous amount of fraud related to olive oil,” says **Ann Sievers**, MA’ 79, who, with her husband, Mark, founded the Il Fiorello Olive Oil Company in Fairfield, Calif. “Honestly, that’s been going on since the Greek and Roman times.”

The real stuff is expensive because the oil-extraction rate is low—often less than 20 percent and sometimes dipping into the single digits—and oil, a fruit juice, quickly degrades. So olive oil producers find devious ways to make their oil go further.

Many multinational companies, Sievers says, mix oils from as many as 10 countries and cut it with highly refined vegetable oil. Then they send it to the United States as “extra virgin olive oil.”

Sievers is a retired advanced-practice nurse (a nurse with a post-graduate degree) and specialized in surgical oncology, particularly head and neck cancer. Sievers started her olive mill 15 years ago, leaning on the agricultural and agronomical knowledge she gleaned from her father, a hobbyist gardener, while growing up in upstate New York. She’s also devoted herself to the ancient craft, taking countless classes, visiting masters in Europe and getting certified as a master tester through the Robert Mondavi Institute at the University of California-Davis. She also doesn’t mess with adulterated olive oil. All her oil is certified through chemical and taste testing, which is dictated by the state of California.

Named for Sievers’s great grandfather, Raphael, whose son emigrated from the Campania region of Italy in the late 1800s, Il Fiorello is one of about 10 production-size olive mills. It features an organic farm and a tasting room, which hosts oil and food pairings, cooking classes and (of course) tastings of its 13 varietals, produced from a grove of 3,000 olive trees.

Just don’t try to order anything that’s “first cold pressed.”

“There’s no such thing anymore,” Sievers says. “It’s not first, it’s not cold and we don’t press olives anymore. We have big, modern centrifuges. I don’t need a donkey.” —M.S.

A FIRST (LADY) PRINTING

When **Alessandra Echeverri's** letterpress and printmaking business started getting repeat customers (and those to whom she's neither related nor acquainted), she had a feeling that Typecase Industries might make it. That was 2014, about two years after she opened her shop, now located in Northwest Washington, D.C.'s Shaw neighborhood.

"We just realized work hadn't slowed down since we opened," says the 30-year-old Echeverri, who got her master's degree at the

Corcoran in 2011.

That was her first answer to the when-you-made-it question. Her second is better.

"Michelle Obama hired us."

Should've led with that.

In October 2014, the then-first lady hosted the Fashion Education Workshop, a fashion-career symposium for high school students. About 150 students from across the United States attended, and *Vogue*, among other media outlets, covered the event.

"They had actual fashion designers come out for the weekend and teach [the students] in these workshops," says Echeverri, also an adjunct art professor at the University of Maryland. "[Obama] hired us to make these workbooks for the students."

Typecase Industries got the gig through the girlfriend of a client. Typecase had made posters for this client's 9:30 Club show. His girlfriend was among Obama's personal stylists.

"[The girlfriend] asked us if we were interested in doing this because she was looking for a small business," Echeverri says, "and we just fit all the bills—small business,

women-owned."

Echeverri says she got about a week's notice on the workbooks and it took until the night before the event to finish them. But she also got invited to the White House by the first lady, so, fair trade.

Echeverri says she and one of the store's co-founders (who has since parted ways with the business) met the first lady in a receiving line. The interaction lasted about 10 seconds and consisted mostly of hellos, thank-yous and you're welcomes. And the 5-foot Echeverri thinking about how tall Obama is.

"But," Echeverri says, "she did know who we were—which was very cool."

Three years later, Echeverri and Typecase Industries are making coasters, greeting cards, posters, wedding invitations and just about anything else that can be printed on one of their three vintage presses, just like always. And to her, that's just as cool as being hired by a first lady.

"I'm going to remember that for the rest of my life, and those things don't happen every day," Echeverri says. "But I like making things for everyday people, too." —M.S.



→ | typecaseindustries.com



TRAVEL PAWSSIBILITIES

Michelle Lau, a professional poker player turned entrepreneur, got a dog nearly six years ago. She was recovering from back surgery, and her doctor touted the benefits of a canine companion. She was smitten and suddenly found herself wanting to “get everything” for her 5-pound Maltese-poodle mix, Abigail Grace.

“I never thought I would be one of those crazy dog ladies, but I am,” says Lau, MBA '13.

She had a hard time, though, finding products that were functional and stylish for a small dog. So she designed them herself.

“That’s how Miso Pup came about,” says Lau, who, in addition to poker—her father hails from the gambling mecca of Macau, and she grew up playing—is a real estate broker, model, casino host and a former flight attendant. “I’ve never been afraid to do new things,” she says.

Lau honed her business plan while getting an MBA at GW and launched Miso Pup in 2015. The Las Vegas-based company sells her luxury carriers and slings for small dogs, typically 8 pounds or less.

The interchangeable carriers are airline-approved and ideal for travel, she says, with a mesh inner bag that can be used alone as a carrier or snapped into an outer tote bag, which doubles as a large handbag when not transporting a dog.

The slings are machine-washable and designed with pockets and two adjustable straps to allow owners to comfortably carry their small dogs hands-free.

“We want to make it easy for the little ones to go anywhere with us,” says Lau. —**Rachel Muir**



➔ | misopup.com

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A NATURAL SELECTION

"OUR BUSINESS SHARES OUR GEOLOGY IN A SUSTAINABLE WAY"

➤ | americanstonecraft.com

Massachusetts native **Gerald Croteau** grew up exploring the rocky landscape of New England.

"My parents took my brother and me traveling all over the area, and you'd see stone everywhere—rock piles, stone walls," he says. Croteau, BA '05, was fascinated by the local geology and how each spring a new crop of fieldstones surfaces across the region.

"The earth here is littered with boulders from the last Ice Age," he says. "As winter transitions into spring, the ground expands and contracts as it freezes and thaws, pushing larger stones to the surface."

In what can be a nuisance for farmers who have to clear fields of rocks come spring, Croteau saw an opportunity when he discovered the fieldstones' dramatic, striated interiors.

In 2011, Croteau formed American Stonecraft, which partners with about 80 farms in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, Connecticut, Vermont and Rhode Island to harvest stones.

The stones are then cut into artisan bowls, coasters, cheese plates and other wares at American Stonecraft's workshop and studio in Lowell, Mass., outside of Boston. All products are labeled with the stones' farm of origin. The company can also create custom designs out of stones customers supply, say, if you pick up a rock on a memorable hike, says Croteau.

The provenance of the stones—whether from a neighboring town or a vacation spot—is meaningful to people, he says. And Croteau takes pride in tapping into the Northeast's stone-strewn farmland to create functional art.

"Our business shares our geology in a sustainable way," he says. —**R.M.**



COURTESY AMERICAN STONECRAFT



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LOCAL TO A 'T'

Unimpressed with the “cheesy” D.C. T-shirts hawked to tourists, **Lisa McLaughlin**, MA '10, decided to create her own.

The San Diego native moved to Washington a decade ago, hoping to work for the federal government. She found a position with a Defense Department contractor and soon after enrolled in GW, earning a master's in security policy. But while Washington was rapidly feeling like home, McLaughlin couldn't find anything she wanted to wear to show off her D.C. pride.

“The T-shirts for sale just didn't appeal to me as someone who lived here,” she says. “I had the idea that I could make a more unique, thoughtful collection, and that there would be a market for them.”

After her daughter was born in 2013, McLaughlin quit her job and decided to give D.C.-centric apparel a go and launched District Line Co.

Three years later, the company offers a range of locally themed, colorful T-shirts and running shirts in men's, women's and children's sizes. Local independent artists create the designs, which focus on D.C. and its Virginia suburbs, including Arlington (where McLaughlin lives), Alexandria, Falls Church and Vienna.

“We make shirts that resonate with locals,” she says. “We want to help people display their D.C. and Virginia love.”

“It's not the path I expected to take, but I love the energy and the community here, and I really enjoy doing my own thing,” McLaughlin says. “I think that comes through in our shirts.” —**R.M.**





THE CENTURY-OLD UPSTART

➤ | vassilaroscoffee.com

By Danny Freedman, BA '01

It's been 99 years, and Vassilaros & Sons is ready to let the public know it exists.

The New York City coffee roaster and supplier has operated mostly behind the scenes—an anonymous fountain of pep flowing endlessly into Greek diner mugs—since it opened in 1918. It's a mom-and-pop outfit that remembers a New York before the Yankees won a World Series, before the Chrysler Building and the Empire State Building harpooned the sky, and before the arrival of those once ubiquitous “We Are Happy To Serve You” paper coffee cups.

Nearly a century later, the company says it's now responsible for 5 million cups of coffee served each week at thousands of diners, doughnut and bagel shops, restaurants and hotels in the New York metro area.

“We're everywhere, but nobody knows it,” says CEO **Stefanie Kasselakis Kyles**, BA '92, whose great-grandfather, John Anthony Vassilaros, founded the company.

"WE'RE EVERYWHERE, BUT NOBODY KNOWS IT."

Stefanie Kasselakis Kyles, CEO of Vassilaros & Sons

Kyles, 46, who sits at her great-grandfather's oak desk at the company's factory in Flushing, Queens, says that coffee is enjoying a moment of artisanal vogue and expansion. It seems like an opportune time to let people know that Vassilaros & Sons is here, with roots as thick as a corned beef on rye and a decent chance that local coffee drinkers have already tried the brew without realizing it.

So, recently, the Vassilaros logo has been showing up at places where the coffee is being served, including sleek black signs adorning those big spigoted metal coffee brewers you might see at a bagel shop or restaurant. In 2013, the company began offering retail sales on its website, where now the classic blend and expansions into cold brew and Italian espresso are for sale, and Kyles says orders come in from around the country.

It's a bit of a shift for the company, and for Kyles, who is two years into a job that she'd never planned on and never knew she wanted. But one to which she now—as if this all were bent through the lens of a Hollywood romcom—seems to be lovingly, indelibly attached.

John Anthony Vassilaros, who emigrated from the Greek island Ikaria, had been working in New York as a coffee salesman when he launched his company in 1918, which he was able to prop up on his reputation: His first two clients were the restaurants on Wall Street and in the Bronx where he'd waited tables in the early days after he came through Ellis Island.

His son, Anthony, succeeded him at the helm and expanded the business beyond diners into other restaurants, into hotels and country clubs. And Anthony's son, John, took over from him in 1964, and focused on modernizing the blend.

It also was John—Kyles' uncle—who made the first forays into public consciousness in 2013, setting up the website for retail sales and staging a mayoral campaign. He even roped comedian Lewis Black, a friend, into making a mock endorsement video. (“Look at this city, huh?” Black erupts. “Look at it trying to reach the sky; it needs coffee, for God's sake. Nothing else works.”)

By then, Kyles had become a lawyer and an investment banker in New York. She'd grown up at the factory, scaling the sack mountains of raw, green coffee beans as a kid. Most of her family worked there, including her parents (who still do), she says, “but I was raised not to go into the business. My parents wanted me to become educated and do other things.”

But after her uncle was diagnosed with cancer, the family asked Kyles in 2015 if she would step in to lead, given her background in business. She felt duty-bound to protect the family enterprise,



and worried that it could be in jeopardy if she didn't. A succession plan was made, and when her uncle died three months later, Kyles showed up for work later the same week.

"I very abruptly left my career and came to Queens, where I'm sitting right now, and grabbed the bull by the horns," she says.

She had to learn about buying coffee on the commodities market, about the crop's growing cycles and sourcing a consistent blend. She spent time in the warehouse, she went out on the delivery trucks, she learned to "cup"—the smell-slurp-spit routine of professional tasters—and to distinguish what the brand is and what it isn't.

"After each pass [at the business], I just kept drilling down," she says.

What Kyles found there, knee deep in the organs of the company, was a sense of the great-grandfather she never knew, who died in 1970.

"He's become a mentor from the other side," she says. "I don't want to sound weird; I'm not seeing ghosts or anything. But he built a company that's so strong in its foundation that there's a lot to be learned, even [after] a 25-year corporate career; the lessons of the streets and practical cleverness and the strength of his relationships."

The original John Vassilaros was "the godfather of the diner industry," she says. As soon as his coffee business was running, he was lending money to help other Greek immigrants open

diners. Those owners would bring over their families, more eateries would open—proliferating and becoming part of the city's personality and mystique—and the dominion of Vassilaros & Sons spread along with them.

"The result," Kyles says, "is four generations of loyalty."

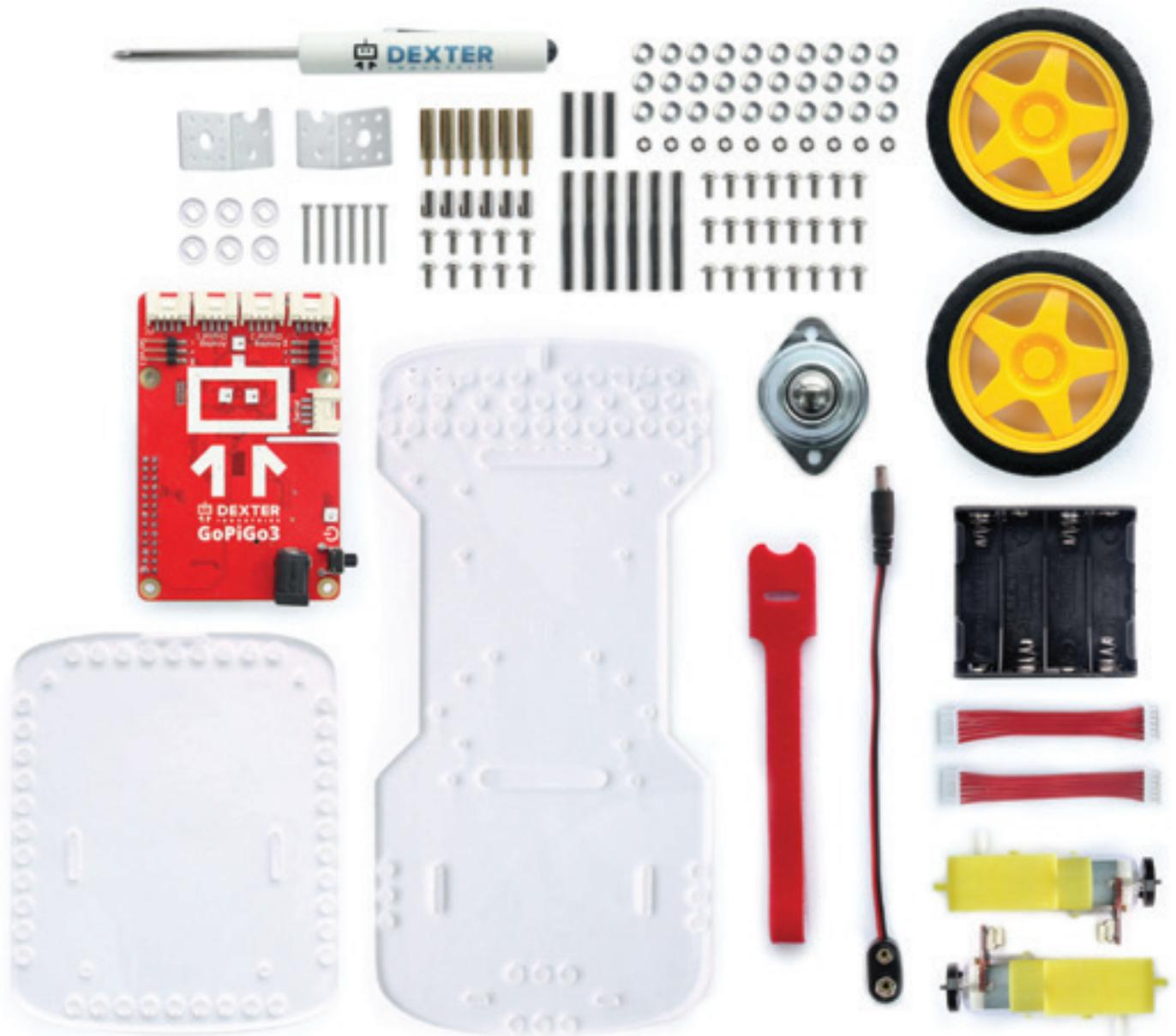
As she tagged along on deliveries, she found that some of those clients were old enough to remember her great-grandfather, or to have heard of him, and she picked up tall tales of an outsized character, including his renown as a big tipper.

Kyles figured he was generous. But then, she remembers, one person told her why: so the waiters would pour more coffee.

"I thought, 'That's so smart—wait a minute, did he invent the refill?'" ☞



WILLIAM ATKINS



➤ | dexterindustries.com

THE DROIDS YOU'RE LOOKING FOR

Raspberry Pi is a \$35, roughly credit-card-sized computer. And this lil' bugger, the GoPiGo from Dexter Industries, is its Iron Man suit. It's the brawn that turns the tiny CPU into a foam-"missile"-launching drone, an exploratory rover, a robo-delivery service or just about any computerized doodad.

John Cole, BS '02, who founded Dexter Industries in 2009, says the GoPiGo is so malleable it's being used to teach computer programming to fourth graders and college students in a thousand classrooms (among tens of thousands of the GoPiGo kits the company has sold). Last year, Cole's team even partnered with Google to demo an "EmpathyBot" built on a GoPiGo, capable of rolling up to people and recognizing a handful of moods based on facial expression.

Cole actually started the company with engineers and hobbyists in mind; people like himself. He's a tinkerer, and his grasp of electrical engineering and computer

programming is self-taught. Cole studied physics and chemistry at GW, then got a master's in chemical engineering in 2005. Afterward, he and a few pals started a company that made diesel fuel from chicken fat—which "sounds disgusting," he says, "and is even crazier and more disgusting" when you have to go to a plant to buy chicken fat "by the truckload." (They sold the company in 2009). In 2007, he worked for the State Department as a technical adviser in Baghdad, and later went to Afghanistan to help State build a hydroelectric dam. He's now based in Dubai ("a very shiny place to work"), where his wife, **Heera Kamboj**, BA '05, is a U.S. foreign service officer.

Dexter Industries—named for Cole's great-grandfather, a chemist who inspired his interest in science and tech—started after the stint in Iraq, at Cole's dining room table where he was creating and selling sensors for use with Lego-based robotics kits. Then in 2015,



A SOUND DONATION

➔ | HungryForMusic.org

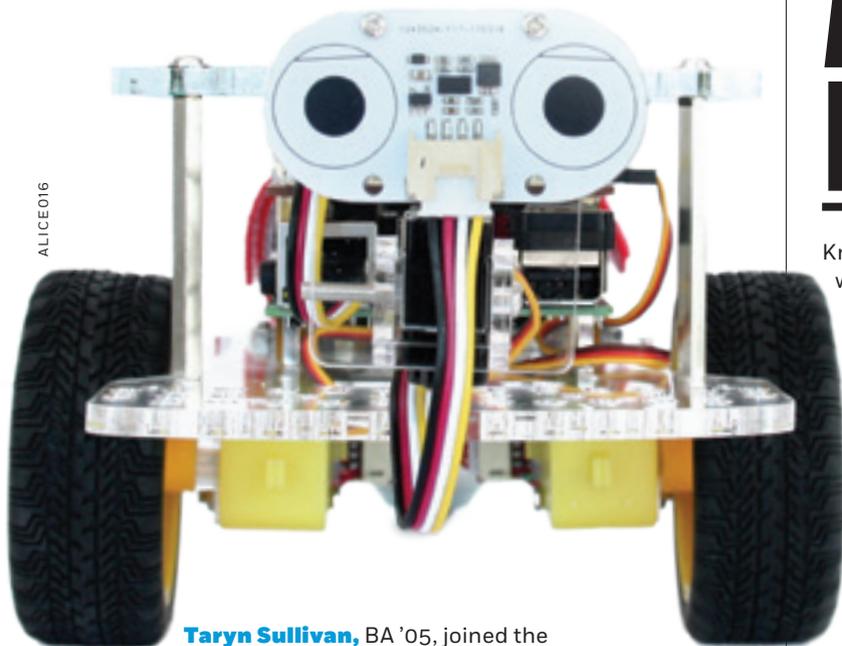
Know someone who has a lot of stuff and doesn't need (or want) more? Consider a non-material gift: a donation in someone's name.

Jeff Campbell founded the nonprofit Hungry for Music in 1994 while taking a GW certificate program in nonprofit management, and since 1999, HFM has provided underprivileged children in 48 states and 20 countries with 10,000 musical instruments.

Hungry for Music started as a benefit concert, also named Hungry for Music, in 1992 and 1993, to raise money for the homeless. From there, it expanded into a 501(c)(3) dedicated to increasing music opportunities for children.

In 2016, the Washington, D.C.-based organization gave away a record 704 instruments. That year, it also set a record for instruments donated in a month: 218 in August. HFM collects and redistributes about 500 instruments per year.

Hungry for Music accepts donations of instruments—if necessary, they are reconditioned and/or refurbished in a warehouse in Chantilly, Va.—and money. —**M.S.**



Taryn Sullivan, BA '05, joined the company as chief operating officer, and she and Cole tilted the focus toward education.

For kids, learning to code has “become an imperative,” Cole says. The highly accessible Raspberry Pi—12.5 million have been sold since its launch in 2012 by a British foundation—was becoming a popular tool to teach coding. Imagine what it could do, Cole and Sullivan thought, if it reached students “riding on the back of a robot.”

GoPiGo takes under an hour to build, it connects over WiFi to a phone or computer, and then it's up and running. The robot can be controlled with a directional pad, with drag-and-drop lines of pre-written code, or with new code written by the user. Dexter also sells add-ons, like a camera and sensors for everything from light to physical orientation. And it offers free and for-sale projects on the website. —**D.F.**

ALICE016

ROBOT: COURTESY DEXTER INDUSTRIES / VIOLIN: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/W

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Serving Up Seconds

Smitten Kitchen blogger and bestseller Deb Perelman, BA '98, MA '00, has a new cookbook.

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Walking Free

Davina Durgana, BA '10, uses data and statistical analysis to fight modern-day slavery.

p. 76

Colonials Weekend

A roundup of the four-day event that drew thousands of alumni, family and friends to campus.

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Artists' Quarter

Ben Thornewill, BA '07, pianist for the band Jukebox the Ghost, released his first solo album.

ALUMNI NEWS



GAMES

Home Spun

By Samantha Cole

Eric Pavony with his dreidel stadium, the Spinagogue, at Full Circle Bar in Brooklyn, which he co-owns.

NATALIE KEYSAR

The “knishioner” of Major League Dreidel, Eric Pavony, BA ’01, has given the spinning top a stadium, new games and its best shot at being fun in hundreds of years. But it’ll take a Hanukkah miracle to keep it going.

In 2008, Eric Pavony, BA ’01, had a vision. A flash in the middle of the night, burnt across the clouds: the Star of David.

This could be the beginning of some revelatory tale of a man on a spiritual journey, and in a way, it is. But Pavony throws this into the middle of an hourlong soliloquy about dreidel—standing outside of a restaurant in Brooklyn—as if it’s something that happens to everyone with a minor obsession over a holiday tchotchke.

When this trip of Jewish symbolism came to him, he was in the middle of developing a new take on Hanukkah’s traditional spinning-top game, giving it a miniature stadium—the Spinagogue—along with new games to play, rules and some chutzpah.

“And I knew instinctively that that’s the shape, that should be the shape of the Spinagogue.”

He would sell around 5,000 Spinagogue game sets, including through retailers like Bed, Bath & Beyond, he made headlines on *Good Morning America*, NPR and in *The Wall Street Journal*, and raised more than \$23,000 in a slapdash Kickstarter campaign.

But before all of that—the vision, the demand—it started as a mess in his mom’s

kitchen. Two years earlier, in the dwindling hours of one of his mother’s annually epic Hanukkah parties, Brooklyn-based Pavony looked around at the scattered bits of festoonery.

Cheerful dreidels covered the latke trays and tabletops around the house. Most of the colorful little tops, he recalls, were untouched by adults and idly tossed around by kids.

“The dreidel was supposed to be this fun game, and yet despite there being all of these dreidels everywhere, no one had picked

one up to spin it, no one had decided to challenge each other to a game of dreidel,”

Pavony says. “I didn’t understand why.”

It’s because dreidel, in itself, is a boring activity. The four-sided tops are a self-contained game of chance: Spin the dreidel, and the Hebrew character that’s facing up when it lands determines your winnings (maybe chocolate “gelt” coins or peanuts or pennies). Spin it again, win again, or lose your gelt, and repeat. It gets tedious after a few rounds.

Pavony ended up flinging decorative dreidels around in a mock stadium constructed out of his mom’s hardback cookbooks. Friends and family gathered around, they broke out the kitchen timer, and the night turned into a raucous booze- and latke-fueled competition for dreidel-spinning bragging rights.

“Up until that point, I never saw anyone scream and high five-over dreidel,” Pavony



“Up until that point, I never saw anyone scream and high-five over dreidel.”

// 60s & EARLIER

Irvin D. Yalom, BA ’52, authored *Becoming Myself: A Psychiatrist’s Memoir* (Basic Books, October 2017), a memoir exploring the relationships that shaped the author and the groundbreaking work that made him famous. Yalom is an existential psychiatrist and emeritus professor at Stanford University.

Edwin W. Besch, MA ’65, a Vietnam veteran, authored *U.S. Colored Troops Defeat Confederate Cavalry: Action at Wilson’s Wharf, Virginia 24 May 1864* (McFarland & Co., April 2017) and *Black Confederates 1861-1865* (2018).

Roderic A. Camp, BA ’66, MA ’67, was awarded Mexico’s highest honor for foreigners, the Order of the Aztec Eagle, for his promotion of Mexican culture in the United States and his work in academia. Camp has authored more than 30 books, including *Mexico: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford University Press, 2017), and hundreds of scholarly papers on Mexican politics. Camp is a professor at Claremont McKenna College in Claremont, Calif.

Karin W. Pedrick, BA ’67, coauthored *Inside Affirmative Action: The Executive Order that Transformed America’s Workforce* (Routledge, March 2018). The book recounts and analyzes interviews with individuals who worked with the government program and assesses why affirmative action continues.

// 70s

Jerry Perkins, BA ’70, was inducted into the Iowa 4-H Hall of Fame on Aug. 20 at the Iowa State Fair in recognition of his support for the program while he was farm editor of the *Des Moines Register* from 1993 to 2008. He currently is the editor of *BioFuels Journal*.

Laura Wais, BA ’71, had a photography exhibition at Canessa Gallery in San Francisco, Calif., in June. The show, “Sand and Sea,” featured two collections.

Harley S. Tropin, BA ’74, president of Kozyak Tropin & Throckmorton in Miami, was recognized in the 2017 *Chambers USA* guide for general commercial litigation.

Howard Williams, LL.M. ’75, an attorney at Brooks Pierce in Greensboro, N.C., was recognized in the 2018 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America* in the fields of litigation and controversy—tax and tax law.

Gregory C. Yadley, JD ’75, of Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick, LLP, in Tampa, Fla., was recognized in the 2017 edition of *Florida Super Lawyers*.

Henry Lowenstein, MBA ’76, authored *The Rescue Man: A “Snafu Snatching” Rescue Pilot’s Extraordinary Journey through World War II* (Van Rye Publishing, June 2017). The biography follows 1st Lt. Frank Philby “Bud” Hayes from his childhood in Idaho through his World War II service, during which he saved more than 700 downed pilots.

Brent Neiser, BA ’76, was appointed to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s consumer advisory board for a three-year term. He is a senior director of strategic programs and alliances for



says.

The following year, 2007, he hosted the first-ever Major League Dreidel tournament at the Sidewalk Cafe in New York's East Village. Thirty-two spinners—most of them players in another passion project of his, the bar-based “Brewskee-Ball” Skee-Ball league—competed for whose flick of the wrist could keep their top spinning the longest, in rings made from old wooden picture frames spray-painted gold.

“Low tech, but it was the start of the awesomeness to come,” says designer and Brewskee-Ball roller John Fisk, who was at the first Major League Dreidel event. MLD reached a zenith during Hanukkah 2016, with a 15-city “America’s Next Top Dreidel” tournament and an online leaderboard updated in real-time. Pavony still hosts an MLD tournament every year at the two bars he co-owns, Full Circle Bar in Brooklyn and Austin, Texas.

Fisk, whose MLD name is “Spincredible Hulk” (a good pun name is crucial to dreidel spinning success, Pavony says) helped design the graphic elements of the

Spinagogue and the games that go beyond endurance spinning, such as accuracy-based “Target Tops” and the full-contact “Dueling Dreidels.”

They then handed the vision over to Scott Kestenbaum, who wasn't surprised that Pavony, his like-a-brother cousin would spend years of effort on what was essentially a hobby between friends. The two knew each other nearly from birth, growing up bored by dreidel at family parties themselves.

“These types of unique, creative, competitive games have been flowing from Eric’s mind for as long as I recall,” Kestenbaum says. “Every Jew growing up feels a little left out when walking down the [store] aisles around holiday time. The Spinagogue idea filled a niche, but important, void in the market.”

Kestenbaum took Pavony’s sketches of the Star of David, from his vision, and turned them into a lightweight, portable, adaptable stadium for dreidel battles, including the mechanism that magnetically snaps the six points of the star into place when assembled.

That, Pavony says, is “one of the biggest

smiles anyone gets when seeing it for the first time: when you open the Spinagogue and one by one reveal each point, and it starts to occur to them, ‘Holy crap, don’t tell me this is the Star of David.’ And they just lose their minds. I love showing it to people for the first time.”

He never intended for Spinagogue to become more than a hobby between friends, but it did, with Bed, Bath & Beyond and website Modern Tribe placing orders faster than his one-man-plus-some-friends operation could keep up.

“It was a wonderful way to get the game to people all over the country around the holiday season,” says Pavony, who had also been selling the game in a few synagogue gift shops and Hebrew schools. Kestenbaum gave Pavony a personal connection at Bed, Bath & Beyond, which ordered 3,500 games in 2011 and 2012.

“This was a silly idea that I just continued to pursue with an insane amount of enthusiasm and drive,” he says. “My life was absurd for a while there ... I didn’t have a warehouse or a staff, it was just me.”

He’d enlist Skee-Ball buddies to help

pick up Spinagogues at the production facility and put barcodes and stickers on them before sending back out to stores. “I literally had my girlfriend at the time, Skee-Ball rollers, anyone I could, going to this little storage place in Bushwick helping me with these big massive orders,” a few thousand games at a time.

Around 2011, he ran out of time and money to spend on the Spinagogue—save for a few shipments to individuals and organizations that requested it directly. Between running the bars and keeping the Skee-Ball league going, it became too much for one person to manage.

In 2014, he ran out of them completely, but kept getting the emails.

“It really pained me to not be able to point them to a place where they could get one,” Pavony says. “I knew they wanted it for good reason and it would bring them joy, and I hated writing those emails back every year. It was kind of a depressing thing for me.”

Then living in Austin, Pavony had put the Spinagogue out of his mind for most of the year.



A good pun name is half the battle, as these Major League Dreidel spinners know:

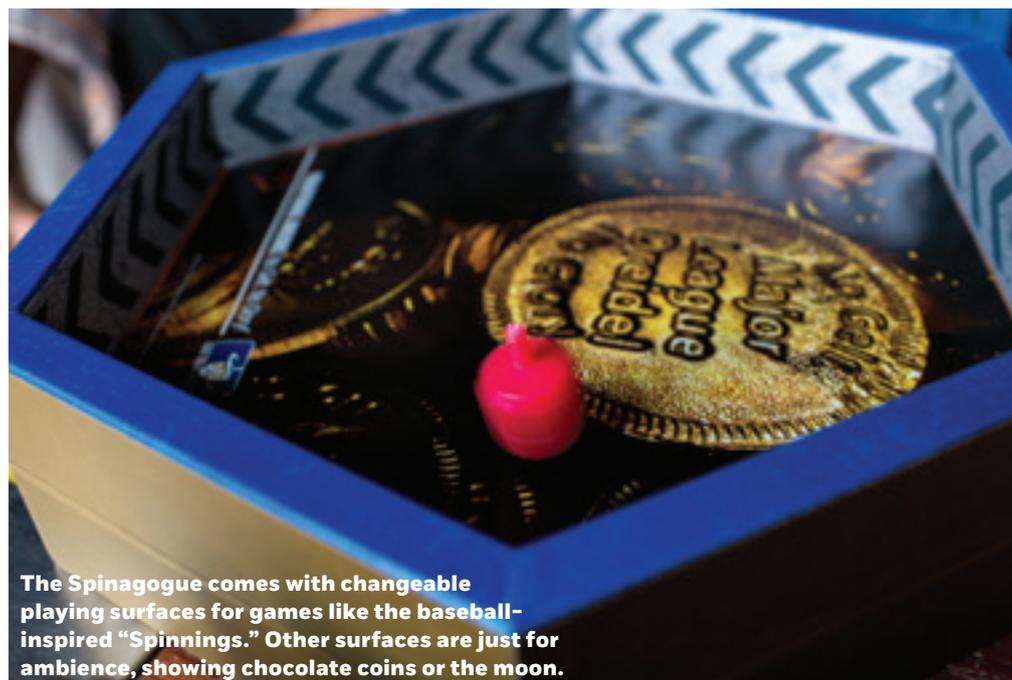
WINSPIN CHURCHILL
 ANDREIDEL THE GIANT
 MY COUSIN SPINNY
 GHOST FACE SPINNER
 DR. DREIDEL
 MENORAH BLAHNIK
 GELTY AS CHARGED
 JIMMY GIMEL
 HAND THAT ROCKS THE DREIDEL
 SPINTENDO
 FRANK SPINATRA

But during one particularly tough Hanukkah season of turning away would-be Spinagogue buyers, a friend and Skee-Ball business partner made a suggestion: a Kickstarter campaign to raise the funds for one more shipment.

“It was amazing. It was awesome. We got so many unbelievable emails and support from people around the country and the world,” Pavony says.

He and that friend, Eric Wikman, put together a Kickstarter in a week’s time, just before the 2016 holidays. They sold 500 games while streaming live competitions during the eight nights of Hanukkah.

The games ordered from that crowdfunding blitz are being shipped to customers this season. And for now, Pavony is still taking orders (online at *spinagogue.com*), but then, eventually, the cycle will continue: Without another crowdfunding campaign (which he doesn’t plan to do), he’ll run out of games and have to go back to sending those rejection emails. Pavony’s currently looking for a gaming company or a partner that can help make the Spinagogue the worldwide phenomenon he believes it could be. ☑



The Spinagogue comes with changeable playing surfaces for games like the baseball-inspired “Spinnings.” Other surfaces are just for ambience, showing chocolate coins or the moon.

NATALIE KEYSAR

the National Endowment for Financial Education in Denver.

M. Elizabeth Ware, MA '76, chief of purchasing services at California’s Department of Water Resources, received the Department Director’s Award for Outstanding Management Excellence and Sustained Superior Accomplishment.

Howard Cohen, MBA '77, was appointed executive director of the Dialogue Institute at Temple University in Philadelphia.

Steven E. Hitt, BA '77, MHSA '79, was named the executive director of CURE Zambia by CURE International, a Christian healthcare network that has hospitals and programs in 29 countries.

Jones Hooks, MBA '77, received the Frederick B. Kerr Service Award from Leadership Georgia, a leadership development program. Hooks is the executive director of the Jekyll Island Authority. The JIA is a state agency responsible for the management of Jekyll Island, a state park.

David K. Owens, MS '78, was elected to the board of directors of Xcel Energy, a utility company that powers homes across eight Midwestern and Western states.

// 80s

Neal Barnard, MD '80, authored *The Cheese Trap: How Breaking a Surprising Addiction Will Help You Lose Weight, Gain Energy, and Get Healthy* (Hachette, February 2017). The book helps readers break their cheese addiction, lose weight, boost energy and improve their health.

Jonas A. Pologe, BS '80, and **Ted P. Delianides, BS '83, MS '84**, founded Kestrel Labs, Inc., which has developed a new approach to pulse oximetry: a noninvasive method for monitoring a person’s oxygen saturation. The conventional approach involves two LEDs; Kestrel’s approach relies on laser wavelengths and can tell if a person, for example, has carbon monoxide poisoning or is anemic.

Sarah Schneiderman, BFA '80, had her art piece, “Lofty Triplefin,” included in the Maryland Federation of Art Spring Members Show.

Raul Herrera, BA '81, JD '84, a partner at Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer in Washington, D.C., will serve for six months as the interim general counsel of the Green Climate Fund at the GCF headquarters in Songdo, South Korea.

Christopher J. Wiernicki, MS '83, received the 2017 Maritime Person of the Year Award, which is given by the Massachusetts Maritime Academy. The award recognizes excellence, service and innovation in the maritime industries. Wiernicki is the president and CEO of the American Bureau of Shipping.

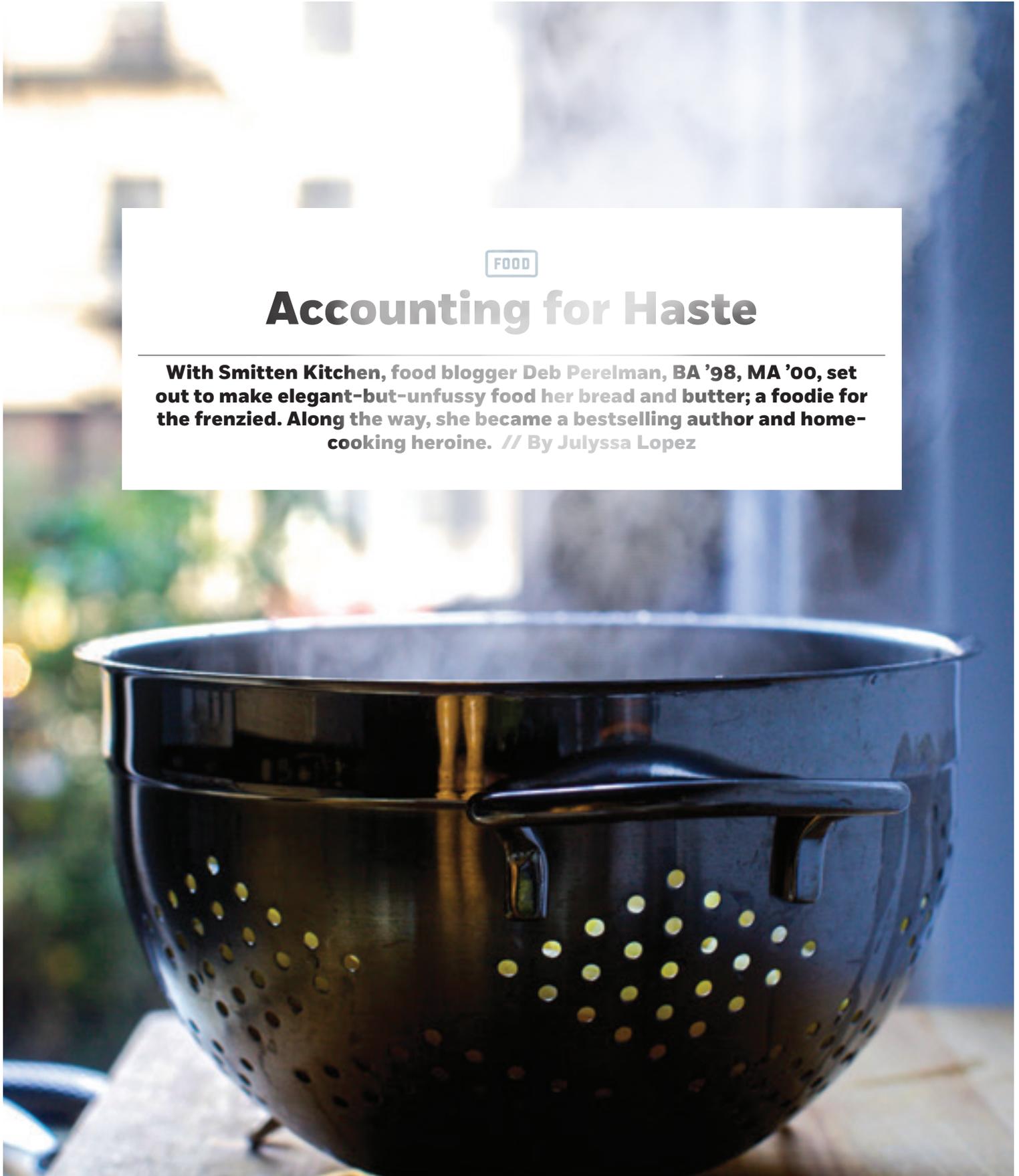
Glenn Davidson, MA '83, is the executive director of enterprise services for the U.S. Department of Commerce. He and his team provide human resources, financial management and information technology to the approximately 50,000 employees who make up the department’s 12 bureaus.

Michele Pacifico, MA '83, an archival

FOOD

Accounting for Haste

With Smitten Kitchen, food blogger Deb Perelman, BA '98, MA '00, set out to make elegant-but-unfussy food her bread and butter; a foodie for the frenzied. Along the way, she became a bestselling author and home-cooking heroine. // By Julyssa Lopez



COURTESY DEB PERELMAN

Deb Perelman is a mom who needs to make dinner on time tonight, or her 8- and 3-year-old kids will freak out. Today's menu? A recipe she's been perfecting for a baked tomato sauce, tangy and zippy, with garlic and Pecorino cheese. On the single, blonde-wood counter in her New York City apartment kitchen, she'll toss together breadcrumbs, cheese and garlic and sprinkle the mixture over a small army of halved cherry tomatoes gleaming in a square dish. Then, she'll pop the pan in the oven and pray it's served before the chants of "I'm hungry" start at 6 p.m.

That approximately 12 million people will read—and even try—her baked-tomato sauce recipe is almost a side note to her.

Perelman, the founder of the popular Smitten Kitchen food blog and a bestselling author who just released her second cookbook, *Smitten Kitchen Every Day: Triumphant and Unfussy New Favorites*, is not a chef or a cooking expert. She describes herself as someone who just likes to cook normal, unfussy-but-delicious food for her family. She doesn't fiddle with haute-cuisine techniques or showy ingredients. She declares on her website that her cabinets are free of "Himalayan pink salt at \$10 per quarter-ounce" and "single-origin chocolate that can only be found through Posh Nosh-approved purveyors." And this is what readers have come to love about Smitten Kitchen: Perelman's unpretentious voice guiding readers through everyday meals.

"Just the other day, I was rambling about how cooking has become so dominated by chefs' visions of what we should be cooking, but what about the rest of us who are okay with humble-but-not-comprised food?"

says Perelman, BA '98, MA '00. "It's like you're supposed to be a chef-y cook or just someone who shreds up chicken cutlets and throws them into tacos. What about those of us who love cooking but are never going to make something from the *Per Se* cookbook?"

Perelman's agent, Alison Fargis, says



Deb Perelman

facilities consultant, was in July inducted as a Fellow of the Society of American Archivists during a ceremony in Portland, Ore. The fellow distinction is the highest honor bestowed by the SAA.

Kimberly S. Couch, JD '84, an attorney at Verrill Dana in Portland, Maine, was recognized in the 2018 edition of *Best Lawyers*.

Elana Zaiman, BA '84, authored *The Forever Letter: Writing What We Believe For Those We Love* (Llewellyn Publications, September 2017). Inspired by the centuries-old Jewish tradition of the ethical will, a forever letter is a way to share values, wisdom and love. Through stories, sample letters and writing tips, the guide book shows how to write a letter that will be read over and over again.

Antonio Salazar, JD '85, was named commissioner of financial regulation at the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation.

Heide Koenitzer Clark, BA '86, MA '89, authored *Monsignor* (CreateSpace, May 2014), *The Robin Stories* (CreateSpace, September 2015) and *Vince Cotta: It's The Family Ties That Bind* (CreateSpace, July 2017).

Alex Mahoney, BA '88, MA '96, a response manager for the U.S. Agency for International Development, won a Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal in the category of national security and international affairs. He was recognized for leading U.S. humanitarian relief efforts in Syria and Iraq by delivering food, medicine, drinking water and other assistance to millions of people. The medals honor excellence in the federal workforce.

Wendy Simmons, BA '89, authored *My Holiday in North Korea: The Funniest/Worst Place on Earth* (RosettaBooks, May 2016), a collection of essays and photographs of North Korea, chronicling her inner journey on one of her strangest vacations.

// 90s

Donna Balaguer, BA '91, a principal at Fish & Richardson in Washington, D.C., was a recipient of the 2017 "Women Worth Watching" award and featured in a special issue of the *Profiles in Diversity Journal*.

Michele Givens, MBA '92, in November, competed in the Mrs. USA Petite Pageant, created to honor the accomplishments of women 5-foot-6 and under and celebrate their beauty, intelligence and community involvement. Givens is Mrs. Virginia Petite.

Laurence Grayer, BBA '92, was named vice president, general counsel and chief compliance officer of Creative Associates International in Washington, D.C. He oversees legal affairs and corporate compliance and provides support in more than 30 countries across Central America, Africa and Asia.

Rusty Mills, MBA '93, chair of the GW Denver Area Alumni Committee, watched August's solar eclipse at the home of fellow alum **Travis Jordan, MPS '10, JD '16**, in Casper, Wyo., after meeting at an alumni event at a Colorado Rockies game in July.



Smitten Kitchen resonates “with 20- and 30-somethings who didn’t have a lot of experience in the kitchen but wanted or needed to learn.” The blog, she says, is accessible and approachable and avoids intimidating culinary gymnastics that might daunt home cooks.

“Deb is their Julia [Child]/Martha [Stewart]/Ina [Garten],” says Fargis, who’s worked since 1995 at Stonesong, a literary agency. “She is the arm-around-the-shoulder that many people need in the kitchen. She confesses her mistakes as much as her triumphs, and I think her readers love her for that—and love that she does it all in a 75-square-foot kitchen.”

Smittenkitchen.com, from its design to its recipes, reflects Perelman’s straightforward ethos. Click the “Surprise Me” tab and you’ll get any one of Perelman’s nearly 1,200 recipes from the last 11 years—maybe her “lazy girl!” wild mushroom pierogies from 2006; the “Moroccan-ish” carrots and yams peppered with coriander, cinnamon and cumin from 2009; the airy tahini challah

buns dripping with chocolate from 2017.

Each entry includes lengthy paragraphs that discuss everything from the hurdles of the recipe to what Perelman has been up to each week.

“Friends, I didn’t mean to abandon you,” she writes in the entry for Moroccan-ish carrots and yams. “But since I suspect you are here because you also have a little rugrat underfoot, I probably don’t need to tell you that the only thing—seriously, only thing—I have done since we last spoke nearly two months [ago] is blink.”

After graduating from GW with a bachelor’s degree in psychology and a master’s in art therapy, Perelman moved to New York City to work as an art therapist, but she found herself bored and looked for a side hobby.

In 2003, she registered for a Typepad account and created a blog called Smitten. Launched at the height of the 2000s blog craze, Smitten functioned as a repository for Perelman’s NYC dating nightmares. *Gawker* later would pick up a post in which she mused about how living in New York

rendered people eternally young, since they didn’t have to hassle over mortgages or Home Depot trips. (The *Gawker* assist, she says, gave her a web-traffic bump.)

But just a few months into her dating escapades, a guy named Alex commented on one of her posts. They met in person and eventually married. The snarky dating entries stopped, and Perelman started brainstorming new blog content.

Perelman had always been peripherally interested in cooking, and in New York, she ate out often, trying new restaurants. As she settled down with Alex, she spent more time poring over Nancy Jenkins books and *Allrecipes.com*, experimenting in the kitchen. But she found many online recipes to be needlessly complicated.

She began documenting her forays into gastronomy on her blog—nothing crazy, she says, just notes on how normal, quotidian recipes turned out in her tiny, Lower East Side kitchen. If a dish flopped, she would revise it and post what she believed was an easier way to make it.

Marika Hughes, MA '93, is a senior national security advisor in the New Zealand Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. She spent more than five years as the private secretary to the New Zealand minister of civil defence. She got married in 2015.

Dwayne Allen, MBA '96, was named vice president and chief information officer at Masonite International, a global company that designs and manufactures interior and exterior doors.

Yahia Lababidi, BA '96, authored *Where Epics Fail* (Unbound), a collection of 800 aphorisms, composed over a decade.

David Poyer, MA '96, authored *Hunter Killer: The War with China—The Battle for the Central Pacific* (St. Martin's Press, November 2017). The novel, the sequel to last year's *Onslaught*, follows Capt. Dan Lenson and the United States as they stand nearly alone and fight an escalating war with China.

S.L. Young, MBA '97, MS '00, through his nonprofit, Saving Our Communities at Risk Through Educational Services (SOCARTES), taught life-skills management and business courses to about 300 inmates at the Arlington County jail, with about 100 earning certificates of completion. Young also contributes to *The Huffington Post*.

Heath Einstein, BA '98, was appointed dean of admission at Texas Christian University.

Kenny Ames, BA '99, joined Red Banyan, a communications firm, as director of client relations in its Washington, D.C., office.

Marco Cercone, MPA '99, is an owner/equity partner at Rupp Baase Pfalzgraf Cunningham LLC in Buffalo, N.Y.

Lonnie Giamela, BA '99, was named a 2017 "Rising Star" by *Southern California Super Lawyers*. He is a partner in the Los Angeles office of Fisher Phillips.

Chris Rawley, MBA '99, in 2016, co-founded Harvest Returns, a financial technology company for agriculture investors and farmers who need to raise capital. In August, Harvest Returns launched its agriculture investment platform.

// 00s

Bill Blackburn, BBA '00, was selected as the 2017 Business Leader of the Year by the Alexandria (Va.) Chamber of Commerce. He is a partner in the Home Grown Restaurant Group.

Amy Cahill, LLM '01, founded Cahill IP, PLLC, in Louisville, Ky. It is the first Kentucky firm to qualify for membership in the National Association of Minority- and Women-Owned Law Firms.

Cara Griffith, JD '01, was appointed president and CEO of Tax Analysts, a nonprofit organization that publishes *Tax Notes*, which provides tax news and analysis. Griffith is the first female president of Tax Analysts.

Robert Lyman, MA '01, director of communications for Joint Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, N.C., received the 2017 Military Leadership



Photos from the Smitten Kitchen blog

"Everyone wanted to be the next *Kitchen Confidential*, or they were hyper-specific, like 'Let me tell you about Thai cooking or bento boxes.' No one was going, 'Hmm, I made this chicken and it was just okay,'" she says.

Perelman renamed the blog Smitten Kitchen in 2006 and focused it entirely on her culinary exercises. She didn't expect a big reaction but the entries seemed to pique the interest of frustrated home cooks. Smitten Kitchen's audience soon grew well beyond Perelman's original blog. She kept an eye on the comments at the end of each recipe and the emails that filled her inbox. (A typical note might be a recipe request from a mom in Denver or a new-ingredient suggestion from a home cook in Boston.)

About three years into the project, Perelman pulled in enough ad revenue to make Smitten Kitchen a full-time gig. The website drew more readers—and notes from agents and publishers mining blog talent.

One of those agents was Fargis, who had helped bakers Matt Lewis and Renato Poliafito publish the 2008 book *Baked*. After

Perelman reviewed *Baked* on Smitten Kitchen, the book's Amazon ratings went up. Intrigued, Fargis began researching Perelman.

"After poring over her site for hours, I, like millions of other readers, fell in love with her self-deprecating voice," Fargis says. "It felt like I was reading emails from a friend about all of her favorite things to cook. Then I made some of her recipes and I was hooked. I wrote to her on Sept. 17, 2008—I still have the email—and asked for a meeting."

Perelman says she had no interest in writing a book at the time—she thought it was unnecessary and that it would seem like she had something to prove. She ignored Fargis' email for a year. But by 2009, as friends and fans told her how much they would love a Smitten Kitchen cookbook, Perelman grew curious about what such a book would look like. She asked a close friend in the publishing industry to assess the agents who had emailed her. The friend singled out Fargis.

"I'm going to completely waste your time because I will never, ever write a cookbook—

cookbooks are for cookbook-writing professionals,” is how Perelman remembers kicking off their lunch.

Fargis pitched a Smitten Kitchen compendium that wouldn't just include a short, one-sentence introduction before each recipe or function as an essay book with pictures. Instead, she thought Perelman could make the book mimic her blog, preserving her signature voice and cheeky entries.

“I don't know what other agents had told her, but not overthinking things seemed to catch her attention,” Fargis says.

For Perelman, it was the first time anyone had offered her a vision of a cookbook that seemed authentic. She walked out of the meeting thinking, *I'm going to write a book.*

Perelman spent about three years developing recipes and putting the book together, and still today, most of her ideas come from outside the kitchen—when Perelman is dining out or talking food.

“I don't look at a bowl of tomatoes on the counter and go, ‘Magic is going to happen!’” she says. “I'm out on the subway looking out the window and I think, ‘You know what would be really nice to do with tomatoes?’”

Perelman writes what she comes up with in a Google Document that, at any time, has more than 1,500 food ideas. She updates

and/or visits the list almost daily. When she decides on a recipe to try, she spends about two days in her kitchen, cooking and refining the dish. For each book, she's also relied on a team of recipe testers.

The Smitten Kitchen Cookbook was published in 2012. The book reached No. 2 on *The New York Times'* bestseller list for hardcover advice and miscellaneous and was the sixth-best-selling cookbook of 2012, moving 114,547 copies. (*Barefoot Contessa Foolproof* by Ina Garten, who attended GW, took the No. 1 spot, selling 428,105.) Since its release, *The Smitten Kitchen Cookbook* has sold about 325,000 copies. For Perelman, talk of a sequel started almost immediately. By then, though, Perelman had two children and still felt exhausted by the first book.

“I started thinking maybe there would be a time where I could do a second book, and then I would be like, ‘Or, I could grout the tiles. Or, literally do anything else on Earth.’” she says.

Still, she had enough recipes left over to easily fill a second book—but she wanted to do something different. She settled on a concept driven less by single, quick recipes and more on meals, each of them a small step up in sophistication and skill level than a standard weeknight dinner. *Smitten Kitchen Every Day: Triumphant and Unfussy New*

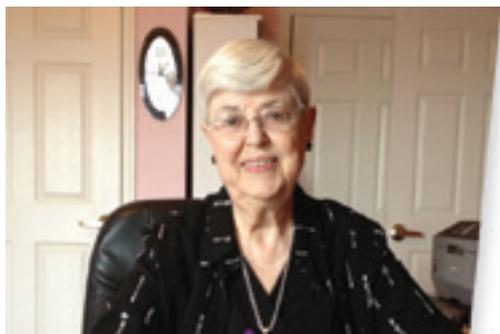
Favorites was born.

“Once I decided I didn't want to write the usual weeknight cooking book, it became a lot more fun for me,” she says.

The new book came out in October. It includes recipes refined over a five-year process and notes on cooking for a family of four. The book also doubles down on Perelman's belief that you can strike a balance between food that is well-prepared without being overwrought.

“I do feel like I've planted my feet firmly in the home-cooking camp,” she says. “And I will defend it until the end of the Earth. I hate when people patronize about home cooking, I hate it when people patronize about mom-blog cooking. I get annoyed because who is making all of the everyday meals? Moms and home cooks feeding guys who mouth off at magazines about home cooking.”

Perelman says she doesn't know if she'll do a third book. But if she did, she has ideas for what it might look like: perhaps a “best of” Smitten Kitchen compilation. Right now, Perelman is back to focusing on her website, still excited about the recipes that keep bubbling up in her head—a chocolate olive oil cake, a spring fried rice with barley, a new twist on corn crepes. But first, she needs to finish tonight's baked tomato sauce. ☐



“Establishing a charitable gift annuity at GW was a great option for me. It provides income I can count on, and I'm able to support GW and its programs at the same time!” - Mildred Reynolds, EdD '78

Mildred's gift will support the GW Institute for Spirituality and Health (GWish) and the Graduate School of Education and Human Development (GSEHD).

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DAK0099

From the GW Alumni Association President

I'm a firm believer in fresh starts. I like the challenge associated with acquiring new information, incorporating it into my existing reality and developing new skills and relationships as a result. I have seen through experience how perceived hurdles or unexpected twists in the road lead to personal and professional growth and opportunity. And that's why I'm so excited about the changes that lie ahead for GW and the GW Alumni Association.

As you've heard, and read about in this issue of *GW Magazine*, GW is excitedly welcoming its 17th president, Thomas J. LeBlanc, into the fold. I've had the privilege of sitting down with Dr. LeBlanc to discuss his vision for the university, and I'm encouraged by his thoughtful questions, his "listen-first" approach and his appreciation for the alumni community and our volunteer leaders. In conversations with him and the GW Board of Trustees, we have begun to explore a more closely aligned GWAA, one that provides the strategic counsel and engaged network that will help shape the next century of this institution.

As the president of your GWAA, I'm grateful to the leaders who have come before me and laid the groundwork for this close relationship with the university. Thanks to their focus on enabling lifetime engagement, gathering a voice for alumni and building a culture of philanthropy, the GWAA Board of Directors is seen as the connector between the university and the alumni, a role we take very seriously. As you may have noticed, I've been actively posting in the GWAA LinkedIn group, and I want to continue this real-time communication to receive input from all of you. GW alumni are an accomplished group of individuals with diverse perspectives and experiences, and I want to ensure you are well represented.

The next year will be a busy time for the GWAA board—we are taking a close look at our operations and structure as we implement a strategic planning process that will more closely align our goals with the Office of Alumni Relations, and the needs of the president and the Board of Trustees as they relate to the entire GW community. We will continue to advocate on your behalf while building relationships with our fellow volunteers in council and network roles across the university. And we will seek out new ways to interact with current GW undergraduate and graduate students, who are GW's most important assets and the future members of our global alumni family.

Now do you see why I'm so excited for this new beginning? Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have questions, comments, concerns, or just want to make your voice heard. I can be reached at Venessa@healthresourcesolutions.com, on LinkedIn or on Twitter: @vmperry6.

It's an honor to serve as your GWAA president – Raise High!

Venessa Marie Perry,
GWSPH MPH '99



Award from the Association of Defense Communities.

Tod Plotkin, BBA '03, and **Sara Evans, BA '04**, founded the Green Buzz Agency, a Fairfax, Va.-based video production company that recently has added *Upworthy*, Ad Council and Lockheed Martin as clients. Since 2014, GBA has won more than 15 industry awards.

Lamont Silves, MS '03, is a senior vice president with Temporal Defense Systems, Inc.

Whit Chaiyabhat, MS '06, was appointed the staff vice president and global crisis manager at FM Global in Johnston, R.I. He leads risk-management programs related to international-travel safety, global-crisis management, business continuity, workplace-violence prevention, and response and global physical security.

Jacob Siefiring, BA '06, was awarded a French Voices grant for his translation of the novel *Achab (séqueles)* by Pierre Senegés (Gallimard, August 2015). His translation of *La réfutation majeure* by Senegés was published by Contra Mundum Press.

Robert G. Borowy, MAccy '04, was admitted as a partner at Deloitte Tax LLP in Baltimore.

Thor Hogan, PhD '04, authored *Hydrocarbon Nation: How Energy Security Made Us Great and Climate Security Will Save Us* (Johns Hopkins University Press, June 2018). The book looks at how four technological revolutions—industry, agriculture, transportation and electrification—drew upon the hydrocarbon wealth of the United States and transformed the country into a nation with unparalleled economic and military potential.

Alessandra Mediago, BA '04, and James Edward Agnew II welcomed their second daughter, Olivia James, on Jan. 16, 2017. The couple's first daughter is Julia Rose.

Nathaniel Wood, MBA '04, an associate director for consumer and business education at the Federal Trade Commission, was a finalist for the Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal in homeland security and law enforcement. He was recognized for creating an easy-to-use online resource to help identity-theft victims quickly report the crime and stop additional fraudulent activity. The medals honor excellence in the federal workforce.

Xavier Manrique, BBA '05, directed his first feature film, *Chronically Metropolitan*, a comedy about a writer who returns to New York City to win back his ex (who is engaged to someone else) and confront his family. The cast includes Mary-Louise Parker, Chris Noth, Ashley Benson and Shiloh Fernandez.

Alison Devenny, BA '07, and Kells Hetherington were married June 10, 2017 in Washington, D.C. Devenny is a director of the Ovarian Cancer Research Fund Alliance, and Hetherington is an independent trader and financial analyst. They reside in Jacksonville, Fla.

Hirsch L. Neustein, BBA '07, an associate at Hyatt Farber Schreck in Denver, was appointed to the Jewish Federations of North America's National Young Leadership Cabinet.

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Valid through December 26, 2017.



UPCOMING EVENTS

OPEN TO ALL ALUMNI

13 / **DECEMBER** / *DENVER*

Celebrate the holidays at one of the most unique party venues in the area—the Denver Zoo!

10 / **JANUARY** / *DAVIDSON, N.C.*

Join Charlotte, N.C.-area alumni for a pre-game tailgate at Famous Toastery before the GW men's basketball team takes on Davidson College.

24 / **JANUARY** / *ONLINE*

Connect with other alumni in your field from around the world during an Alumni Industry Networks virtual networking hour. For more, visit go.gwu.edu/january2018networking

17-28 / **FEBRUARY** / *GLOBALLY*

Connect with your local community of Colonials at a George's Birthday Bash celebration, held in cities around the world each February. For more details, visit go.gwu.edu/GBB2018

1 / **MARCH** / *WASHINGTON, D.C.*

The GW School of Business invites students, alumni, faculty and staff to the fifth annual Richard W. Blackburn Endowed Lecture on Civility and Integrity, established through a gift from Richard Blackburn, JD '67, a distinguished Law School alumnus and GW trustee emeritus.

For more on these events and others, visit alumni.gwu.edu/events



Dana Rice, MD '07, RES '09, RES '13, a urologist at Inova Medical Group in Fairfax, Va., created the UTI Tracker, a mobile app that helps patients with urinary tract infections catalog symptoms, medication and behavioral patterns. Rice created the app to improve patient-doctor communication and give patients an easier way to log their symptoms. For more information, visit UTITracker.com.

James P. Youngs, JD '07, a partner at Hancock Estabrook, LLP, in Syracuse, N.Y., was selected as an *Upstate New York Super Lawyer* and a "Rising Star" for 2017.

Jeff D'Onofrio, BA '09, MEd '10, and **Devon Carter, BA '09, MA '11**, welcomed their son, Truman Carter D'Onofrio, on Sept. 6, 2017.

// 10s

Melissa Dornan, MBA '10, vice president of strategic partnerships at Guidewell Financial Services in Frederick, Md., was elected to a three-year term on the Society of Financial Service Professionals board of directors.

William K. Lawrence, MEd '10, authored his first novel, *The Punk and the Professor* (Apprentice House, May 2017). Set on Long Island, it is a sociological look at dysfunctional suburbia in the 1980s and 1990s, centered around a professor as he looks back at his struggle to stay in school and deal with troubled family and friends.

Joshua Craig Brown, BA '12, and **Alexa Linda Wertman, BA '12**, were married Sept. 2, 2017 at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C. The couple, which met during their freshman year, live in D.C.

Chung Hei Sing, BBA '13, joined Arquitos Capital Management as a senior analyst.

Elizabeth Stephens, BA '13, authored *The Hunting Town* (Amazon Digital Services, July 2017), a romantic thriller about five brothers who forge a bond to stay alive, defend their town and protect the women they love after an unexpected murder brings the Russian mob down on their heads.

Samuel Horowitz, BA '14, received a 2017 *Long Island Business News' 30 Under 30 Award*, which is given to professionals under age 30 who contribute to the Long Island community and make significant strides in business.

Gaurav Sharma, MBA '17, was a Labour Party candidate for the New Zealand parliament.



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HUMAN RIGHTS

Data-Mining Modern Slavery

Davina Durgana, BA '10, is using statistical analyses to reveal a more nuanced understanding of the scope and causes of slavery in the U.S. and abroad. // By Andrew Faught

Davina Durgana is waging war on slavery along a new front: mathematics.

As a senior statistician for the Australia-based Walk Free Foundation, Durgana, BA '10, works to give nonprofits and law enforcement agencies new data that can help them better identify at-risk industries, drive public-awareness campaigns and inform intervention efforts.

More than 40 million people around the globe were victims of modern-day slavery in 2016, according to an estimate released in September, on which Durgana collaborated, by the Walk Free Foundation and the United Nations' International Labor Organization.

The number is broken down into two categories: forced labor, which accounts for 25 million people and ranges from debt bondage and state-imposed labor to coercion and sexual exploitation; and forced marriage, which includes more than

15 million people—more than one-third of them under age 18 at the time of marriage.

On the whole, women and girls make up 70 percent of the victims of slavery.

It's a problem that's proven difficult to dent, let alone eliminate, especially since an issue like forced labor can be hidden in plain sight.

Durgana's work aims to sketch a more complex, realistic picture of the issue.

For instance: In the past, she says, anecdotal evidence about minors ensnared in the commercial sex industry led to them being seen as the primary victims of modern slavery. But she says adult victims of labor trafficking, especially men, are hard to identify and, because of that, "are significantly underrepresented in policy discussions of modern slavery."

"Having better statistics and data, and really looking to measure and count survivors and victims, is critical," says Durgana. "Because, if we don't, we're basically acting as if their experiences didn't happen or don't matter."

The work landed Durgana on *Forbes'* 2017 "30 Under 30" for the science category. And in October, she was back in Foggy Bottom as one of eight recipients of GW's Alumni Achievement Award, the highest form of recognition given annually to a graduate by the university and the GW Alumni Association.

Durgana says that her team, in partnership with the Gallup World Poll—which together produce a Global Slavery Index covering 167 nations—has contributed to date "the most significant continuous investment" of funding and time toward furthering national survey research on modern slavery.

To try to gain new perspectives on the issue, she employs a mix of statistical tools, including multiple systems estimation, a form of analysis that uses data on known victims to estimate the number of victims that may be unreported, the so-called "dark figure," which could offer a glimpse of the full extent of slavery. And Durgana grounds her analytic models with an approach known as human security theory. That tactic considers a range of causes of insecurity—among them: environment, health, politics, food, community, and economic factors—in an effort to "disaggregate what vulnerability



to trafficking looks like,” she says.

“That means that interventions don’t have to be focused just on economic insecurity, that they can also be focused on something much more nuanced,” she says.

Durgana, based in Great Falls, Va., has worked with Walk Free since 2012. Her interest in slavery stems from a trip she made to El Salvador after her freshman year at GW. While there, Durgana met the cousin of a young girl who had been trafficked and later killed.

For now, she says, one of the biggest challenges to curbing slavery is “complicit consumers.”

“People are making purchases without fully knowing the impact of their decisions,” she says. “All trafficking is consumer-driven, so we are fueling the demand that drives a lot of this.”

She says websites like Slavery Footprint (slaveryfootprint.org) and Products of Slavery (productsofslavery.org) can help people begin to be more conscious of the role of slavery in everyday purchases.

“The problem is that we’re not identifying it in our lives because it’s not convenient to think of [trafficking] that way,” Durgana says. “Systemic change is possible, it just requires a lot of different actors approaching the problem simultaneously from multiple angles.”

For more on the Alumni Achievement Award honorees, visit go.gwu.edu/daaavideos



Davina Durgana was among eight people honored in October with the Alumni Achievement Award. The other honorees were:



Jayne Plank, BA '54

Longtime public servant, including service as the first woman elected mayor of Kensington, Md.; director of intergovernmental affairs of the U.S. State Department under President Ronald Reagan; and a cryptologic linguist for the National Security Agency



Rodolfo Rodriguez, MS '69

Founder and chief scientific officer of Advanced Animal Diagnostics, with 50 years of experience in bioengineering and dozens of U.S. patents



Robert Siegel, MD '77

Professor of medicine at the GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences and the GW Cancer Center's associate director for education, training and network development



Anwar Mohammed Gargash, BA '81, MA '84

United Arab Emirates' minister of state for foreign affairs



Michael Punke, BA '86

Author of the novel, *The Revenant*, vice president for global public policy for Amazon Web Services, and former deputy U.S. trade representative and U.S. ambassador to the World Trade Organization



Dana Bash, BA '93

CNN's chief political correspondent



Mindy Finn, MPS '10

Founder and CEO of Stand-Up Republic, former Republican digital strategist and, in 2016, running mate on an independent conservative U.S. presidential ticket alongside her Stand-Up Republic co-founder, Evan McMullin

IN MEMORIAM

Donald Kenneth Snyder, BA '49,

(Aug. 8, 2017, Arlington, Va., 93) worked at the National Security Agency after serving with the Army Air Forces' 430th Fighter Squadron during World War II in England, Germany and France. Following his retirement, he worked at the NSA's archives and later became a docent at the NSA's National Cryptologic Museum. He also served as president of the Glenwood Lions Club and on several Episcopal Church vestries and community boards.

Bob L. Sturm, BA '56, MA '58, (Oct. 11, 2017, Denver, 82) played quarterback and defensive back for the GW football team, helping the Colonials beat Texas Western in the 1957 Sun Bowl. He was elected to GW's Athletic Hall of Fame in 2000 and spent more than 20 years in the U.S. Air Force and National Guard, flying C-130s in the Vietnam War. He retired as a lieutenant colonel and later served as a senior vice president of Merrill Lynch.

Gary B. Bisson, JD '62, LLM '65, (May 25, 2017, Winchester, Va., 80) was, for more than 50 years, a lawyer for the federal government and for organizations serving U.S. interests domestic and abroad. He wrote the legislation creating the Hirshhorn Museum, the National Air and Space Museum and the National Portrait Gallery. Bisson retired in 1994 as a Department of State senior foreign service officer. He loved the Boston Red Sox.

Dana F. White, PhD '70,

(Nov. 24, 2016, Atlanta, 82) was a professor at Emory University in Atlanta for almost 50 years and worked as the principal historical consultant for exhibitions at the Atlanta History Center. He also was the co-creator and narrator for *Making of Modern Atlanta*, a serialized TV documentary on Atlanta history that first aired in 1991.

Wayne P. Laptosh, BA '76, MFS '84, (Dec. 23, 2016, South River, N.J., 63) was a forensic expert with the U.S. Departments of Justice and Homeland Security who traveled the world and lectured on counterfeit documents. He had recently retired.

Gregory Paul Vita, BFA '15, (July 24, 2017, College Park, Md., 26), born and raised in Virginia Beach, Va., was a teacher and resident artist at the Pyramid Atlantic Art Center in Hyattsville, Md., finding his niche

PHOTOS

Colonials Weekend 2017



Thousands of alumni, family members, students and friends celebrated Colonials Weekend in October, a four-day event that combined two large annual gatherings: the alumni reunion and the fall weekend for students, their families and friends. Here's a look at the goings-on during hundreds of events held over the weekend this year. For more photos and video, visit go.gwu.edu/gwcw2017.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Kickoff party on the University Yard, featuring live music; Columbian College Dean Ben Vinson, CNN Chief Political Correspondent Dana Bash, BA '93, and GW Alumni Association Board member April Stubbs-Smith, MPH '96, at the Distinguished Alumni Achievement Awards; members of the GWAA Board of Directors on the steps of Alumni House; a caricaturist at the Vern Harvest; Colonial Madness, the official launch of the men's and women's basketball seasons; and a photobooth at kickoff party.





in papermaking. He enjoyed surfing, skateboarding and music, which inspired his art.

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UPCOMING SHOWS BY GW PROFESSORS AND ALUMNI

ARTISTS' QUARTER



Chord Progression

Between recording and touring with his pop trio, Jukebox the Ghost, pianist Ben Thornewill, BA '07, went into the studio for a series of expeditions into the lost art of classical improvisation. He walked out with his first solo album.

// By Julyssa Lopez



Earlier this year, musician Ben Thornewill locked himself in Brooklyn's glossy, wood-paneled Studio G for two days. He sat alone in a dimly lit room, his hands positioned over an imposing, 100-year-old Bosendorfer grand piano, and he began playing whatever popped into his head. When he'd come up with a new melody or texture, he'd let his fingers meander into unexplored territory until he had recorded nearly nine hours of spontaneous classical compositions.

Thornewill, BA '07, mined the material for the most inspired arcs and tangents and chiseled out 13 songs that make up *First Improvisations*, an album he released in March. Composed of lush, elaborate arrangements, *First Improvisations* is, as Thornewill describes it, "part film score, part whimsy, part Frederic Chopin and part Erik Satie."

The project is a departure for Thornewill who, for the last 11 years, has sang and played keyboard as a member of the sprightly power-pop trio Jukebox the Ghost. The band formed at GW in 2003—Thornewill and drummer Jesse Kristin, BA '07, lived next to each other in a music "learning community" in Mitchell Hall their freshman year. They teamed up with guitarist Tommy Siegel, BA '07, after Siegel posted a flyer in the music department seeking fellow musicians.

Since then, Jukebox the Ghost has grown

into one of Washington's sunniest musical exports. The band—known for its upbeat, optimistic songs, soaring choruses and peppy piano—has to its name four studio albums, plus tours with Ben Folds Five, Guster and Ingrid Michaelson.

But even at its bubbliest, Jukebox the Ghost has always had roots in classical composition. The group's 2010 song "Summer Sun," for example, is an undeniably buoyant piece of pop that was built on Chopin's Nocturne No. 20 in C-sharp minor. And last year, when the band re-released its 2015 self-titled album, Thornewill reinterpreted several songs as classic- and jazz-inspired piano solos for bonus content.

"Pop music has always been my guilty pleasure while hitting me on an intellectual level. But because my background is in classical music, I've always believed in the marriage between the music theory side of things and the typically simplistic pop side of things," he says. "Part of my dream was to find ways to integrate the two."

Throughout his career, Thornewill also has been fascinated by classical improvisation—an art, he says, that gets lost in the regimen of classical music education, which limits experimentation. He remembers asking to write his own version of a Mozart cadenza at a piano camp in high school, but

no teacher would help him. As an adult, he continued to be drawn to improvising and "the pull between the conventionality of classical music and the freedom of pop music." So, during a lull between Jukebox the Ghost albums, Thornewill decided to launch a solo project, and *First Improvisations* took shape.

"When you're recording with a band, a lot of things are meticulously decided and debated and pored over," he says. "For this project, I just played, and whatever I played is what I had to choose from. There's something a little terrifying but also liberating about that because it wasn't overwrought or overthought. It just sort of became what it is."

The album let Thornewill get creative with his approaches to improvisation. At one point, he put his laptop on top of the piano, clicked off the volume and turned on the Netflix series *Stranger Things*. With the show on mute and his hands on the piano keys, he began recreating the score for an early episode of the show.

Thornewill was back in the studio in the fall to work on Jukebox the Ghost's fifth album, which is due out in early 2018. While he's focused on the band's work, he's not ruling out future improvisation projects.

"I called it *First Improvisations* so that someday there could be a second and third and fourth," he says. ☐

INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE

FOLKLORE

A Cultural Roundup of the Moon

Folklorist and alum James Deutsch sheds some (moon) light on humanity’s fascination with Earth’s natural satellite.
 // By Matthew Stoss

The moon is the second-brightest object in our sky after the sun. But unlike the sun, we can look at the moon without scorching our eyeballs. That, Jim Deutsch says, makes our relationship with the little rocky satellite a bit more intimate.

“It is the closest to us and therefore, I think, has the most fascination for us,” says Deutsch, MP ’85, PhD ’91, a program curator at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. He also teaches folklore and American film at GW. “Just looking at the moon—especially a full moon—at certain times of year, when the moon is close, you can see certain features on the moon with the naked eye, which is not something that can be done with any other celestial object.”

Moon folktales, legends and myths* proliferate in civilizations worldwide, and today, we still fixate on the moon. The country stopped to watch the eclipse in August, and the United States, through the resurrected National Space Council (see page 14), has committed itself to a lunar return.

To the right, Deutsch parses some of the moon’s cultural allure. **EW**

***Myth:** A story believed to be true that explains the origin of something and occurred before time (Zeus defeating the Titans).

Legend: A story believed to be true that occurred in history (The Iliad, Odyssey and Aeneid).

Folktales: A story that isn’t believed to be true and probably starts: “Once upon a time ...” (a fairy tale).

Deutsch describes the moon’s hold on us as primordial. Why? For one, it comes out at night when everything seems scarier. The moon’s phases also mean it gives off varying levels of light, which, in the absence of proper science, meant a lot of stuff to past peoples.

Speaking of that ...

Monday is named for the moon. The Latin word for moon is *luna*, and its derivatives pervade the Romance languages. Other languages, like German and its corollaries (English being one of them), also have a “moon day.” The Greeks were among the first to name days of the week for celestial objects. They called their Monday *hemera selenes*.



Many ancient civilizations measured time using lunar calendars, creating 28-day months. The moon’s phases made it easier to track than the sun, which, to the naked eye, just moves across the sky and not much else. There are Paleolithic cave paintings of moon phases, and today, the moon still dictates some holidays. Easter, for example, is the first Sunday after the first full moon, after the vernal equinox.



The moon always has been read as an omen, with its phases seen to dictate everything from weather to menstrual cycles to good agriculture. Guided by a belief in sympathetic magic—“like for like”—crops that grew underneath the soil were planted during new moons when the night was darkest. The thinking: It’s dark underground, so it should be dark when those crops are planted. Conversely, crops that grew above the soil were planted during full moons when it’s lightest.



A lot of people thought the moon could make you crazy. The word lunatic comes from *luna*, and in these modern times, weirdness is still occasionally associated with full moons. Even Aristotle believed that moon phases influenced human moods. The logic? The moon affects tides; humans have water in their bodies, specifically their brains; therefore the moon affects human brain water, controlling moods and, on occasion, inducing madness.





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Yuta Watanabe



Bri Cummings

DATE	OPPONENT	NETWORK	TIME (ET)
MEN'S BASKETBALL			
DEC 3	vs. Temple	Regional Sports Networks**	2:30 PM
DEC 9	at Penn State	Big Ten Network	4:00 PM
DEC 16	vs. Miami*	CBS Sports Network	12:00 PM
DEC 23	vs. Harvard	Stadium^	12:00 PM
JAN 13	at Richmond*	NBCSN	4:30 PM
JAN 20	at VCU	NBCSN	12:30 PM
JAN 28	at St. Bonaventure	NBCSN	12:00 PM
FEB 3	vs. Davidson	NBC Sports Washington	4:00 PM
FEB 10	at George Mason*	Stadium^	4:00 PM
FEB 14	at Massachusetts	Regional Sports Networks**	7:00 PM
FEB 17	vs. VCU	Stadium^	4:00 PM
FEB 21	vs. Richmond	Stadium^	7:00 PM
FEB 24	at Saint Louis	Regional Sports Networks**	8:00 PM
MAR 3	at Dayton	NBCSN	12:30 PM
MAR 7-11	A-10 Championship* (Capital One Arena, DC)	VARIES	VARIES
WOMEN'S BASKETBALL			
JAN 7	vs. George Mason	CBS Sports Network	6:00 PM
JAN 13	vs. Duquesne	CBS Sports Network	12:00 PM
JAN 21	at Dayton	CBS Sports Network	12:00 PM
FEB 11	vs. Dayton	ESPNU	12:00 PM
MAR 2-4	A-10 Championship (Richmond Coliseum)	VARIES	VARIES

*Raise High tailgate before the game

^visit watchstadium.com and check local listings

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