

▶ **Foreign Service Project**

Summer service, an invaluable experience for students and Cubans alike

▶ **Worth Barn**

Young, passionate alum helps save historic barn.

Georgian

A Publication of George School, Newtown, Pennsylvania

Volume 72 • Number 1 • Fall 2000

Steve Weimar '75

Graduate Brings Math to World's Fingertips

By Carol J. Suplee

When Steve Weimar '75 stops to ponder how his passion for social justice, his love of math and philosophy all have converged on this moment in his life, he's, well, . . . surprised.

With a philosophy degree from Haverford College, Steve currently finds himself at Swarthmore College immersed in the exacting world of math and computer technology as the co-director of a most remarkable and creative Web site, The Math Forum (www.mathforum.com).

"I don't know why I should be surprised," Steve said. "There was Dad [Russ Weimar '48, a math teacher, who while working at George School from 1956-1992, taught himself programming.] And the values by which Mom and Dad lived permeated family life. I know it's in my bones that I should have chosen something worth doing for the world, for people."

The Math Forum, a complex, yet thoroughly accessible on-line learning community for all ages, provides a forum for people throughout the world. Math problems and solutions are available for intellectual stimulation. And the site's section called "Ask Dr. Math" provides a question and answer service used by math students and their teachers. Students send in math questions and over 300 math doctors provide personal answers. The team of doctors answering the questions is made up of Swarthmore College math students and college educators from around the country.

The resourceful site has earned acclaim, not only for its extraordinary outreach, but also for its extensive resources related to how social factors affect math education. Articles about the Forum have appeared in *The New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times* and countless other newspapers and magazines throughout the

(Turn to page 2 to read more)



As co-director of the remarkable Web site, The Math Forum (www.mathforum.com), Steve Weimar '75 utilizes his talents as an educator and an innovator.

The Math Forum

(Steve Weimar, continued from page 1)

country. *The Swarthmorean*, an independent weekly, reported that during one month The Math Forum received as many as 800,000 visitors who stayed for an average of 15 minutes.

Developed originally as The Geometry Forum by Steve's co-director, professor Gene Klotz, The Math Forum is now transforming how children and teachers use and enjoy mathematics. The site is also changing attitudes about math; kids who once felt intimidated by the subject are feeling empowered.

"We get letters from kids that say, 'In class, I don't always get it. It's so different when I am writing to you.' The Math Forum is anonymous, yet personal," Steve said. "The kids come to us expecting something different."

What brings a lifelong idealist, philosopher and social activist like Steve into the circumscribed, calculable world of math and computer technology?

At George School, as dorm prefect and peer counselor, Steve's family-nurtured values crystallized. "It was an example of a true community where we took care of each other and worked together," he said. "I saw that we could build on that sense of community to make a better world."

Math kept pursuing Steve. As a new math teacher (1980-83) at Germantown Friends School (where Russ also taught in the 1950s), Steve pioneered new math and technology curricula on the leading-edge computer of the day, a Commodore 64. Math went on hold while he headed the Philadelphia Chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR)



Photos by Gregory Benson

A week-long workshop at Swarthmore College gave educators and software developers an opportunity to develop math problems using technology. Steve (pictured standing) and other workshop participants study a math problem that was developed by assembling various software components.

and freelanced as a consultant developing education programs for conflict resolution and professional development.

Steve and his wife, Ann Renninger, former George School teacher and Newtown native, worked together at Swarthmore (where Ann is a professor of education) on "Kids Network," which integrates science and technology in teacher education curricula.

Early on, Steve served The Math Forum as a consultant and volunteer, then became a co-principal investigator

with the advent of the National Science Foundation (NSF) grant in 1996, which funded the site. As principal investigator, Steve was responsible for researching material for The Math Forum. Steve became involved in a broad array of responsibilities—all aimed at doing more and doing it better.

He is thrilled by the way the Math Forum has reached out to parents, students and teachers on so many levels. Kids respond to "Ask Dr. Math" and "Problem of the Week," with enormous enthusiasm. They connect via the Forum to other classes across the country and the world, learning from peers and volunteer mentors, including many prominent mathematicians.

Steve explained that from his experience, "Many students say, 'Math is not for me. I don't feel good about myself.'" By helping students to understand and appreciate math, Math Forum educators are responsive to students' confidence or lack thereof.

Not only does the site cater to students, the forum is also the teachers' friend, offering a rich array of resources, such as the popular Teacher2Teacher program. Steve said the staff has been

delighted to see how teachers—some of whom are in less advantaged classrooms and may not have up-to-date textbooks—are logging on to the site and are using the forum adeptly.

The flood of requests and the enormous response to The Math Forum has posed a particular dilemma. The better the Forum becomes, the more the public wants.

"We are deeply aware of our responsibility to deliver," he said. "Sometimes we fear falling short of our own expectations."

Since The Math Forum was acquired in July 2000 by Web Course Tool (WebCT), it has moved from a non-profit organization to a commercial enterprise.

Even though The Math Forum is self-sustaining (it produces and markets software programs which benefit its on-line community) many of its fundamental goals have remained the same.

"We are supporting work that matters, empowering students and teachers to do more," Steve said. "We are helping them out of their isolation so they can be free to take initiative. We want to awaken the sense of possibilities related to math and show people that it can make a difference in their lives." ■



Steve is discussing how students can use a software component to not only present a problem, but to also use it as a tool to help solve math problems.

New Scholarship Furthers Diversity

By Wendy Browne

In July 2000, David's 21-year tenure as head of school ended, but his legacy will continue to affect generations of students to come in part because of the establishment of the David L. Bourns Scholarship that will benefit urban youth.

While heading the school, David believed it was imperative that George School be accessible to students of diverse social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. His commitment to social justice made it essential to find ways to help families with limited financial resources send their children to George School.

"Because of our value system and attention to issues of social justice," David explained, "Quakers have a special interest in the poor, not just because of what we can do to support and help them, but because of what we can learn from them," he said. "In our society, we realize that we can learn a lot from one another, especially when people become educated and empowered."

Under two decades of David's leadership, the percentage of the school's budget allotted to financial aid nearly tripled.

Luis Rodriguez '90 understands the difference that such a scholarship can make in a young person's life. Two factors which helped bring Luis to George School were David's policy of bolstering the financial aid program and his involvement with the Albert G. Oliver Scholars Program.

David was a founding trustee of the Oliver Scholars Program, which matches outstanding students of color with top college preparatory schools, including George School. So, it is not surprising that David's service to the school is being honored through the establishment of a scholarship that will benefit urban youth.

With his family, Luis immigrated to New York City from the Dominican Republic when he was seven years old. Luis started attending the public school about four blocks from his home on the Upper East Side. The transition was difficult because he could not speak English, but Luis worked hard to catch up to his peers.

When he reached junior high school age, Luis attended a small, experimental magnet school, located on the upper floor of the elementary school. In eighth grade, Luis remembers being called to the



Photo by Collins Weirro

"George School works on the principle of inclusion," Luis Rodriguez '90 said, "and David was a perfect representation of that principle."

principal's office and being told about the Oliver Scholars Program, a program that identifies promising students and guides them into top private schools. As one of his school's two best students, Luis was recommended to the Oliver Program. At the time, Luis recalls, he had no notion of what a private school was, but he was proud to have been chosen.

After attending elementary and junior high schools a short four-block distance from his home, it was not easy for Luis and his mother to embrace the idea of his going away to boarding school. But his mother wanted the best education possible for Luis.

Of his first visit to George School, Luis says he recalls "turning off the highway, and feeling 'this is my place.'" Luis was offered a full scholarship by George School. Without it, he says, for him George School would have been entirely out of reach.

Luis is enthusiastic about his four years at George School, which he says "served as a great educational experience, both inside and outside the classroom." After going on to graduate from George School in 1990 and then Harvard University in 1994 with a double major in political science and African-American history, Luis took a position with Fortress, an investment banking firm in New York City.

Today, still working for Fortress, Luis is the company's vice president.

Luis is now on the George School Resources Committee, so he can give something back to the school in return for what it has given him.

"In addition to Luis," David said, "there is a countless number of others who have also benefited from the Oliver Scholars Program. Kassem Lucas '90, who studied at Yale and just passed the bar exam, is now a lawyer and Tamara Dildy '88 who is an emergency room physician was just featured on a national television network for her work at Johns Hopkins." David explained, "All of our Oliver Scholars are wonderful examples of young people who not only made important contributions to George School, but who are still making important contributions, to our society."

In honor of David and his commitment, the school created a scholarship to provide more students with a George School education. So far, more than 216 alumni, parents and friends of the school have contributed just over \$800,000 in cash and pledges.

When David learned about the David Bourns Scholarship and that it would contribute to his goal of providing quality education to more students, he felt honored and pleased that his mission would be continued. ■

Students Give to Bourns Fund

As their graduation day approached, Class of 2000 Senior Executive Committee members Kristin Collier and Nicole Fields heard about the new Bourns Scholarship and began a grassroots fund-raising effort of their own. With the goal of contributing to the David Bourns Scholarship the class collected donations at a table set up in the dining hall during lunchtime. Their fundraising efforts yielded a 50 percent participation from the class, a participation rate that Kristin says reflects "the students' affection for David and their desire to further his vision of a diverse school community."



Photo by Joe Wallace

Summer Service Project

Returning From Cuba with Much More

By Ayeola G. Elias

In June, a group of 12 students and five adults traveled to Holguín, a town in eastern Cuba of about a half million people. The trip was led by Director of Studies Fran Bradley and Head of the Language Department Cheri Mellor. Nancy Starmer, who would soon be the new Head of School, also participated.

The group brought shampoos, toothpaste and other toiletries, medications, paintbrushes, school supplies, clothing, computer hardware, and many other things for their hosts and other members of the community. These may not seem like luxurious gifts, but because many goods are scarce and expensive in Cuba, the group knew these items would be greatly appreciated.

With an eagerness to do service and luggage filled to the buckle, the group set out on the school's second student service project in Cuba since 1978. As reported in the last *Georgian*, Fran succeeded at the arduous task of obtaining permission from the American and Cuban governments to take students to Cuba for this service project.

The purpose of this trip, like most George School trips, is to give students the opportunity to learn about another culture while doing service.

The setting for doing service was ideal: At the Quaker church in Holguín, the group worked eight-hour workdays, weeding the perimeter of the church and painting the interior walls with coats of yellow and green paint—colors chosen by members of the church. The days were long and hot, but the service provided participants with the satisfaction of knowing that they contributed to something their Cuban friends would enjoy and appreciate.

The setting for learning about the Cuban way of life was also ideal: no hotel rooms, no professional tour guides. Just about every student had a family to him or herself. In most cases, these families had a high school-age brother or sister to pair up with the George School student.

Some families had running water; others did not. Some families had a car; most did not. The living conditions in Holguín differed greatly from that of the average American family. But despite the scarcity of material things, the Cubans demonstrated an enthusiasm for life, an abundance of love for everyone and a generosity toward their American visitors. What the Cubans showed their American visitors was worth much more than all the supplies the group managed to bring.

"In our house, the whole family moved into one room during the two weeks that we were with them, just to accommodate us," Nancy Starmer explained. "I'll never forget our host grandmother greeting us each morning with cups of steaming, sweet Cuban coffee. The group came back enriched in many ways, but particularly, I think, by the gift of friendship and connection."

Lauren Perez '02, said she returned from Cuba with a love for the country and an understanding of the importance family and community hold for Cubans. "They have fun. They go to work, but work is not their purpose in life. They appreciate their families and they are really community based," Lauren explained as she described neighbors greeting one another in the streets with kisses on the cheeks and warm hellos. "Everyone is together as a community."

Kristin Van Fossen '01 had a similar experience. "The people were poor, but they weren't unhappy and they were very generous," Kristin said in her interview for the *Bucks County Courier Times*. "They'd give you everything they had, even though they had nothing."

As it turned out, Kristin and several other students would also give everything they had. They left all their clothes in Cuba and returned home with just the clothes on their backs and the gifts received from their Cuban families.

As trip leader Fran Bradley explained, some of the obvious benefits students gained were "the opportunity to speak Spanish daily and the opportunity to



Photos by Ayeola G. Elias

Top photo: A typical street scene in Holguín, Cuba. Bottom photo: clockwise, top left: Paul Goldman '02, Lauren Perez '02, Adam Tabor '01, Kalindi Attar '01, Kristin Van Fossen '01, and Nat Ward '02 help paint the inside of Quaker Evangelical church in Holguín, Cuba.

learn about another culture while making friends for life." But in addition to that, he said the participants learned enough about Cuba to act as voices and promote understanding about Cuba among Americans. "Not only can we tell people of the hardships in Cuba, but we can help dispel some of the myths such as there is no religion in Cuba."

Most importantly, what Fran hopes students learned from the trip is that "the people we have sometimes seen as the enemies of our country, have the capability of extraordinary generosity in

spite of the deprivation of their condition." And to borrow an idea from George Fox (founder of the Religious Society of Friends), Fran said, "I hope we learned the joy of walking cheerfully over the earth 'answering that of God in every one.'" ■

Young Alum Helps to Save Old Barn

By Ayeola G. Elias

When Sam Moyer '93 learned that George School could possibly lose its 186-year old Worth Barn to lack of funding for its stabilization, he knew he had to do something.

With just twenty-five-years of life under his belt and success as an associate producer for "Our Stories"—a program on the leading cable network Oxygen.com, Sam had absolutely no fund-raising skills when he decided to take on the project of saving the barn. Nonetheless, with his love of old buildings and his need to help George School hold on to one of its oldest, Sam decided to take a stand.

On a mission to save the barn, Sam recruited others to help achieve this goal. Within a few weeks, Sam organized and became clerk of the 15-person Save the Worth Barn Committee. And within a year, that is exactly what the group did—they saved Worth Barn.

Made up of alumni and parents (some of whom are barn experts), the group was able to raise the necessary \$200,000 needed to stabilize Worth Barn. Through letters, phone calls and

an open house, the committee educated people about the state of the barn, recruited support and received close to \$50,000 in donations. Last winter, thanks to what Sam described as "the tireless efforts of [George School parents] Kathy and Tom Steel p '89, '91, '96, '02," the Barn Committee raised \$4,000 selling Christmas trees.

In addition, the George School Committee and Newtown Friends School (the neighboring elementary school), contributed \$150,000 to save the barn.

"Somehow, we've truly achieved some of our goals. We've got a lot more to do, but we've also got a great deal of dedication, and that is a pretty special thing," Sam explained.

At this time, the building's roof is in desperate need of repair. In several spots the foundation is deteriorating and the frail windows, doors and parts of its frame need to be replaced.

With the money raised to date, work on the barn's stabilization will begin this school year. The inefficient drainage system will be repaired to redirect water away from the building. The foundation will be reinforced, new windows and

doors will replace the old ones, and parts of its interior timber frame will be repaired.

"The group has accomplished much of what it set out to do—preserve the barn for future uses for years to come," said Jim McKey, the director of advancement. "Now, the barn will be there for whatever purposes George School, Newtown Friends School and Pennswood Village (the neighboring retirement community) envision."

According to Sam, "We are carrying our culture forward; we are building bridges, even though it seems we are but rebuilding an old barn. In standing up for this barn, we are making ourselves accountable representatives of our generations. This project to me is about community, it is about beauty, and it is about time, specifically, the future." ■

During the first three weekends of December from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the committee will host another Christmas tree sale in the barn in an effort to raise an additional \$8,000 for other necessary improvements. For more information, call Kathy Steel at (215) 598-7187.

What's New

New Head



Photo by La Shirada Clark/Philadelphia Inquirer

Not only was September 4, Nancy O. Starmer's first day as head of school, but it was also her first day as a George School history teacher. Here Nancy stands in front of a portrait of John M. George, one of the school's founders.

New Logo



Photo by Ayeola G. Elias

A prefect, who helped welcome students to Marshall Center on Opening Days, is wearing a transition tee-shirt. The new, leafy logo is pictured above the old, bare-branched logo. See back cover for clearer version of the logo.

New Statistics

Students Enrolled: 541; 53% girls/47% boys; 289 boarding/252 day

States Represented: 27

Countries Represented: 76 students from 33 countries – Australia, Bermuda, Canada, Cape Verde, China, Cuba, England, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Honduras, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Switzerland, Taiwan, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, Yugoslavia



Photo by Kathy Steel

Standing in front of Worth Barn, Sam Moyer '93 presents a painting of the barn to David (head of school 1979-2000) and Ruth Bourns in appreciation of their support of the building's stabilization.

New Teacher Diversifies Photography

Marie Duess, parent of Mai '01



Photography teacher Danielle Picard-Sheehan points to the pinhole camera she built into her van.

George School's photography teacher Danielle Picard-Sheehan drives a van—a van which in addition to being an automobile also happens to be her camera. Intrigued?

With an impressive résumé and enthusiasm for her profession, it's hard not to be intrigued by her and by the concept of her van. Last year, this creative teacher was hired as the newest member of the school's arts department.

About four years ago, Danielle was awarded a Leeway grant (Philadelphia-based Leeway Foundation is a private charitable organization which promotes and supports women in the arts.) Using the grant, Danielle purchased a utility van and the equipment needed to convert the van into a large-scale, mobile, pinhole camera. Her goal was to

be able to photograph large scale, mural landscapes.

The van is a light-tight box, consisting of a maze of black curtains that allow access to the inside of the camera area without exposing the negatives. The shutter is a piece of tape over a tiny aperture that allows Danielle to control the time of exposure, usually consisting of one to three minutes, creating somewhat stark photographs.

Using her van, Danielle can now blend into the environment she photographs and remain inconspicuous. With an automobile made into a camera, Danielle can capture the starkness of large houses and other interesting objects in the environment. One photograph of which Danielle is most proud is of a Ferris wheel in motion. "The large images created with this camera incor-

porate the elements of risk and surprise inherent in the pinhole process," Danielle explained. "Having accepted risk and surprise as part of the process, I have begun to respond more intuitively to objects in our landscape."

"This project evolved out of my desire to examine and record the way our society develops and manipulates the landscape to fit our needs."

This kind of passion for photography is contagious, and Danielle loves infecting others. With a BFA from the Massachusetts College of Art and an MFA from Tyler School of Art, Danielle has spent most of her career teaching this form of art. Initially intending to be a painter, Danielle fell in love with photography when she took a required course in media arts. She found she could be more expressive with a camera than

with a paintbrush. Because of the impression left on her by a tough but spirited teacher, Danielle decided to share her love of photography and try to inspire others.

Corey Spells '02 loves Danielle's classes. "She gives great assignments, and she's very enthusiastic about our pictures. She always makes us feel good about our work."

According to several of her students, Danielle is an inspiration, teaching them not just conventional techniques, but alternative processes, which include working on the department's computer. Danielle explained that in the future, she would like to have a digital lab with five computers so that more students could work on projects simultaneously. "I would like to have a well-balanced program which incorporates black and white alternative processes and digital imaging."

Students work with computer imaging to make digital collages and other creations. The latest technology-related project Danielle assigned required that students choose a historical event as their topic and combine two images to create a digital collage.

Danielle's approach to teaching photography is to be strict, yet reasonable about deadlines. She wants her students to develop the exacting skills they need, but does not push them to a point where they won't take pleasure in the work they are doing.

Just as Danielle built her unique and creative van camera, she strives to give students the opportunity to grow and find their creativity. "I love working with the students and seeing their growth and their artistic expression develop through their experiences," Danielle explained. "It's exciting working with students in an environment in which our dialogue stimulates creativity." ■

NOTE: Pages removed from this document to protect the privacy of GS alumni.

Alumni may login to the alumni community at <http://alumni.georgeschool.org> to view the full version of this issue.

Fiftieth Reunion Gift

Reunion Class Returns with Gift

By Patrick Sweeney

When Lynn Howell Thompson '50 and Betsy Lundquist '50 roomed together at George School, they had no idea that half a century later they would coordinate one of the most successful class campaigns in the school's history.

With 82 percent participation (80 donors), they raised \$127,886. The class was able to dedicate the money to three separate projects: the stone bridge restoration (\$10,000*), an endowment fund for the professional development of faculty (\$91,281) and the Annual Fund (\$26,605).

Betsy explains, "There was a committee of 15 of us who formed the catalyst for raising the money." She adds, "Our classmates contributed out of love and respect for George School." With a professional background in fund raising, Betsy coordinated the efforts so that everyone in the class re-

ceived a personal phone call—or a letter if they were not reachable—from someone on the committee.

Betsy started off by getting suggestions for ways to help the school from Director of Advancement Jim McKey.

Jim suggested that they raise funds to augment the funds by the Class of '42 for the bridge restoration project. They decided to do that, but not stop there.

"We sent out a letter to our classmates asking for their opinions. And the overwhelming majority said they wanted to honor faculty. After all, the buildings at George School are great, but buildings don't make an education. It's the faculty who make the difference." Betsy explains, "for the year 2000, we suggested our classmates give either \$2,000, \$200 or \$20. And to honor our 50th year since graduating, we also suggested our classmates give either \$5000, \$500 or \$50. And it worked."

When Betsy returns to campus, which she does every five years, she says, "It doesn't seem the same, but I don't think it should. You reminisce about things that happened near this tree, or in that building." She still laughs as she recalls "fussing," (an early term for "dating") and a rule which essentially meant that you had to be a ruler's distance away from your date. "But, of course, the place has changed, as it should." She pauses, then adds, "[The changes] seem like the changes you would want to see."

The important part for Betsy is that, "As we go through life, many of us from the Class of '50 have formed great bonds and connections. There are so many members of the class who still get together regularly."

When she's not fussing or raising funds for George School, Betsy is the National Chair of Volunteer Services for Red Cross, where she oversees the supervision and development of training courses.

Just to give you a quick sense of how George School becomes a part of you, Betsy relates that her husband Bruce was elected president of the class at a reunion—even though he never attended George School. "He's been enormously supportive of my efforts to assist George School. And, there's no doubt, that my support has rubbed off on him."

** (In 1992 the Class of 1942 raised over \$10,000 for the bridge restorations.)*

KOB for the Class of 1950

By Lorraine Cain

A pocket of time remembered

when maybe yesterday

is not

captured us

wrapped us

ribboned us

with our masks, our dreams

our seams and perfections

our mirrored reflections

ribboned us

as one heart

*thunderously thumping the
daily rhythms*

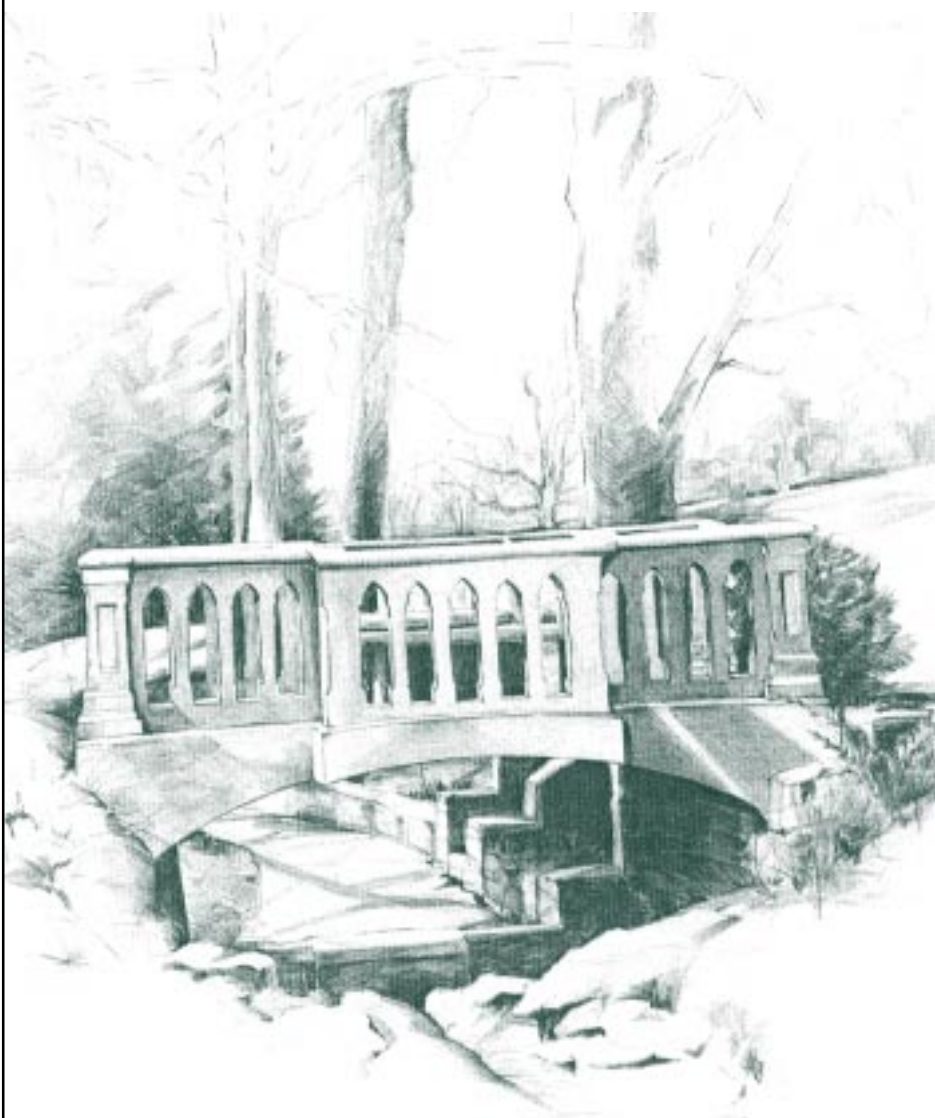
*of youth, beauty, loves and
lessons*

asleep and awake

to only one thing

being young

Lorraine Mulford Cain '50 created a KOB (Kindness of Bearer) with a poem and bridge drawing (at left) in celebration of her class's 50th reunion. Years ago, a specially folded note named KOB was passed from friend to friend at the end of evening study hall. Lorraine distributed her KOB to class members during their May 2000 reunion.



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