Dear Fellow Bates Alumni,

The Alumni Council is pleased to share our Winter/Spring 2013 newsletter with you. We hope these articles encourage you to explore our second Maine campus, discover the ways young graduates continue to make their mark in alumni life, ponder the history of providing cheer to our sports teams, and share in the fulfillment that volunteering for your alma mater can bring.

Visits to Bates bring back memories and provide us a firsthand look into the future of higher education. For those who chose to visit this past October, activity abounded — as did the festivities of installing a new president, naming our venerable chapel, attending arts performances, and cheering on our sports teams. The Alumni Council was engaged on all fronts, including our own meetings and programming.

We are so honored to serve you. We fall in love again with Bates each and every time we return to our campus(es!) and meet the students and professors. We want to share our enthusiasm and rediscovery with you. Certainly look for us with our green ribbons at the numerous gatherings to be held with our new President in your communities across the country. Refer to the Bates website for news from campus and among alumni throughout the world. Give us a call and reach out to us; we’d like to hear from you and meet you. Our contact information is noted in the Alumni Council roster at the end of the newsletter.

At your service,

The Bates College Alumni Council
BATES’ PHIPPSBURG, MAINE CAMPUS

Gretchen Shorter Davis ’61
Alumni Council member

Just 15 miles south of Bath — down the Phippsburg peninsula — lies the Bates-Morse Mountain Conservation Area (BMMCA). Consisting of 600 acres of coastal wetlands and woodlands, it extends from the Sprague River to the Morse River and to the upland edge of Seawall Beach (Maine’s largest undeveloped barrier beach). The property is owned by the Bates-Morse Mountain Conservation Area Corporation, a non-profit corporation with members from the St. John family (who originally conserved the area), Bates College and the general public. The Nature Conservancy holds conservation easements on the property, and Bates manages it for research and educational purposes. Five trustees serve on the corporation — two from Bates, including the President, one representative of the St. John family, and two public trustees, who live in the area.

This treasure provides the Bates community and the general public with an area for scientific research as well as a place to appreciate coastal scenery at its purest. Last year, many schools, colleges, camps, clubs, and conservation and environmental organizations used the area for further study and to enjoy the beauty of the preserve. Several Bates courses include trips to BMMCA. Five Bates seniors collected data there for their 2011 senior theses; two did so for their 2012 theses.

Visitors are welcome to visit, but cars must be left in a parking lot for the two-mile walk (each way) to the beach that gently ascends and descends Morse Mountain. Gatekeepers work there from April to November to supervise visitors. A recent season saw more than 16,000 visitors hike over Morse Mountain to the beach. The increase in public use has required our gatekeepers to turn away visitors when the parking lot is full.

Laura Sewall, director of the BMMCA, is very enthusiastic about her work. She maintains an office at Bates and works under the Harward Center’s guidance. She is actively pursuing classes to enhance her knowledge of salt marshes, as well as applying for grants to promote research at BMMCA and collaboration amongst Maine’s coastal researchers.

In addition to this conservation area, a nearby house and land donated to Bates has become the Bates Shortridge Coastal Center, which includes an 80-acre woodland and freshwater habitat, scientific field station and retreat center. Students and academic and administrative offices at Bates hold retreats there. The annual meeting of the corporation is held there each June.

I have been on the board since 2005 and want to encourage many alumni to visit this treasure on the coast of Maine. If you haven’t had the chance to walk to the beach, it’s the perfect place for a hike and respite from the world. Many of you vacation in Maine, and this would be a great way to explore the coast and see where many students can take classes exploring environmental issues, learn field research methods or do art and nature photography.
Today’s 20-somethings behave differently than our parents did in their 20s. We are more likely to delay getting married and having kids. We move more frequently — often boomeranging back in with our parents. On average, we will have seven jobs in our 20s.

These trends have led to a new understanding of the 20s as a developmental period: an in-between time characterized by instability, self-focus, and exploration that psychologist Jeffrey Arnett has coined “emerging adulthood.” The myriad implications of this so-called “emerging adulthood” could fuel Bates psychology theses for years.

ELECTING A NARROW PERSPECTIVE, IT IS REASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT THIS INSTABILITY AND EXPLORATION MAY ALSO HAVE AN IMPACT ON HOW 20-SOMETHINGS RELATE TO THEIR ALMA MATERS. I’M NO SOCIAL SCIENTIST. HOWEVER, AS WE LITERALLY AND FIGURATIVELY EXPLORE WHAT WE WANT FROM OUR LIVES, COLLEGIATE AFFINITY IS ONE OF THE FEW CONSISTENT IDENTITIES WE TAKE WHEREVER WE GO. MAYBE THIS IS WHY I SEEK OUT BATESIES IN EVERY CITY I’M IN — AND WHY SOME PEOPLE REMAIN DIEHARD COLLEGE FOOTBALL FANS LONG AFTER THEY GRADUATE.

There is some qualitative and quantitative evidence that Bates College is feeling the impact of an increased role of 20-somethings in alumni life. For example:

- The formation of the BOLD (Bobcats of the Last Decade) Regional Coordinators, a network of young alumni leaders in 10 cities launched in 2012.
- An increase in BOLD giving from 37 percent in 2011 to 48 percent in 2012 — the highest ever.
- A jump in the number of BOLD alums hired by the college in the advancement office from six to 12.
- A Board of Trustees that includes a Class of 2000 alumna and an Alumni Council that includes three members from BOLD classes.
- Recognizing Lewiston City Council member and community organizer Craig Saddlemire ’05 with this year’s Alumni Community Service Award, an honor often reserved for older alumni.
- Increased BOLD-specific events at Homecoming — including a tailgate.
- Heavy BOLD representation at the Regional Welcome Events for President Clayton Spencer, including 140 young alumni who attended the November Boston event.

What does all this mean? For one, it means that it’s a great time to get involved with Bates. When the college asks for support, you should give — supportive alumni are what will keep the college, and your degree, relevant. But you should also contribute your opinion: staff should know what you think makes Bates “Bates.” And they are all ears.

It also affords us each the opportunity to reflect on what Bates has given us. In her Inaugural remarks, newly minted President Clayton Spencer praised Bates for teaching values that “shape a human being who can in turn shape the world.” I, for one, am proud to still have Bates shaping me today. And now that I am finally hitting emerged adulthood, I also look forward to shaping Bates.

So get yourself to that Bates-sponsored Ugly Sweater Holiday Party (I recommend a Colby sweatshirt) because Bates College may just be the longest relationship you’ll have in your 20s.

If you want to spend more of your emerging adulthood hanging out and organizing Bates alumni, you can email me at Larry.Handerhan@gmail.com.
“GIMME A ‘B’........!!”

CHEERLEADING THROUGHOUT THE YEARS

Judy Nicholson ’67
Alumni Council member

If you Google “college cheerleading” today, the top results include: most dangerous women’s sport, eating disorders, steroid use, and catastrophic head injury. Holy cow! What happened? I was thinking Garnet Locomotive!

The earliest mention of cheerleading at Bates that I could find in the Bates Student was an editorial in the 5/22/19 issue. In the piece, the author asked, “Has organized cheering gone out of existence?” So, apparently, cheering had been in existence very early on in the college’s history. The writer went on to urge the Athletic Council to “appoint such a man and this disgusting state of affairs can be cleared up before it is too late.” Not two weeks later, according to the 6/12/19 issue, Cheerleader Powers answered the challenge and “made a valiant attempt to reorganize the squad,” but was stymied by a “lack of material.” He pronounced, “Next year let’s bring back to life one of the most cherished ideals of Bates!”

In the fall of 1919, cheers were “rehearsed” for the Maine football game on Garcelon field, and the fans were led by Cheerleader Dorner. By the fall of 1927, a cheerleading system was set up by the Varsity Club, a group of male athletes that promoted sports in many ways, including choosing the Bobcat as the Bates mascot in 1927. Sophomore men tried out each year for cheer and one senior received a varsity letter annually. I’m seeing a pattern here!

Finally the Bates Student published on 11/16/38 announced the first co-ed cheerleading team made up of two women with three male “assistants.” The “chief” (presumed to be one of the assistants) got a sweater and varsity letter. Isn’t that the cutest thing? And this is my favorite — 3/15/50 — new rules were adopted regarding the composition of the squad. The head cheerleader was to be a man; men got sweaters complete with embroidered megaphone and, after three years, a varsity letter. Women who were allowed to participate were to receive “comparable awards.”

I didn’t go to Bates planning to be a cheerleader. By some stroke of luck, I had never had a P.E. class in my life. And because this was pre-Title IX, women’s sports were not widely available either. When I walked into the Rand gym for the first time, and Dr. Dillon started putting us through the Canadian Air Force physical assessment, I thought I would die. Clearly, I was not in any shape to even dream about trying out for the cheering squad, but right from the first football game, I knew I had to give it a try. So, I tried out each spring for three years. Just before try-outs, my boyfriend gave me a Bobcat charm for my bracelet for good luck — I have two of them. Senior year I was rewarded for my persistence and his support, if not my talent, and made the squad.

Those were the days when a cartwheel or a six-person pyramid would do the trick. Cheering was less like dancing or gymnastics and more like, well, cheering. We had to learn a little bit about the game of football or basketball so as to not yell “go defense” when Bates had the ball. Once we got that down, we screamed ourselves silly as if doing so would make the Hathorn bell ring. We had to learn the cartwheel-into-a-split for basketball and I practiced that for weeks, crashing through closed doors and startling my dorm mates at Rand. When we went into the cartwheel routine at the first home game, I nailed it and looked into the crowd to see my roommate with her hands over her eyes. The squad went to only one away football game a year and in 1966, that game was at Trinity. Much time was spent making new shakers, washing sneakers and doing hair for the big event. It poured that day through
the whole game — my hair frizzed and my sneakers sudsed. I don’t remember if the team won but it was so much fun representing Bates in enemy territory!

Such fond memories, but some years after we graduated, cheerleading itself became a memory at Bates and other NESCAC colleges. Associate Professor Marsha Graef has been in the Bates Athletic Department since 1985. She recollects that there were a few cheerleaders left through Web Harrison’s reign as coach, but cheerleading eventually died out in the late 80s. She theorizes that women who would have been interested in cheer began to be siphoned off by the opportunity to play varsity sports after Title IX was enacted in 1972. Another thought is that cheerleading performed by women at men’s sporting events might not have been seen as one of the “most cherished ideals of Bates.”

The current state of cheerleading at our sister NESCAC schools is similarly sketchy. Tufts has cheerleaders, but there isn’t any information about the squad on the university website. Amherst has no organized squad, but has a student who dresses up as the mascot to lead cheers. Early squads were all-male and disappeared from yearbooks in the late ’60s. The group at Middlebury is co-ed, a competitive squad the size of which fluctuates from year to year. MiddCheer is committed to one competition a year and if the members feel like cheering at an athletic event, they are welcomed by the coaches and teams. Last year at Colby, a freshman organized the Mule Mob. They wear blue T-shirts, which the college bought, sit together in the stands and “aspire to resemble what you see on ESPN when Division I schools face off.” According to its creator, Will Hochman, the Mule Mob is still evolving, and it’s a lot of fun.

Cheerleading is huge in clubs, middle schools and high schools all around the country, especially in the south and west. So it’s not surprising that there was some conversation during my reunion in June that cheerleading might be making a comeback at Bates. Professor Graef has been approached about a cheer squad and is supportive. Yet students are the ones who ultimately propose new clubs or teams and are responsible for getting them off the ground (another learning experience). There are college requirements that need to be satisfied, and, if funds need to be raised or coaches found, the students have to take that initiative, too.

What would cheerleading look like today? As with everything, it would take on a distinctly contemporary form. The cheerleading club would be co-ed and cheer at both male and female sports events. There is also a lot of interest in competition. The types of performances put on by today’s cheerleaders are so different from my era, it makes my knees cry. These students are products of dance training and gymnastics. They are strong athletes, and with all the flying and flipping, must have very keen proprioception. According to a recent AP release, “the Academy of Pediatrics is calling for school sports associations to designate cheerleading as a sport and make it subject to safety rules and better supervision.”

There is no lack of spirit at Bates, as demonstrated by the fun we all had at Homecoming in October. There are traditions old and new. Heckling of officials is alive and well. The athletes are committed and sportsmanlike. President Spencer was in the house. And the Bobcats beat Colby! What more? I would love to see a cheerleading squad (and a marching band, if it’s not asking too much) in the future. Just like the good old days!
On a recent weekend trip to Seattle, I had the opportunity to spend some time with friends from high school. I braced myself for the question that I typically get from my non-Batesie friends who I haven’t seen in a while: “So you’re really involved with your college, huh? You’re really busy as it is. Why do you devote so much time to this?”

Like many of us, my life is full. I have two young children, I teach high school social studies full-time, and my husband (Ryan Bouchard ’01) travels fairly regularly. In my “free” time, I am the President of the Alumni Council, Secretary for the Class of 1999, and a class agent. But whose life isn’t busy? We all have things that are important to us, and if we strike the right balance in our lives, we may be able to find some time for meaningful volunteer work.

If that’s the “how,” the “why” is a bit more complicated. I arrived at Bates at 18 years old after moving eight times during my childhood. My high school years were very disjointed — I moved twice — and my education had much bigger gaps than I realized until I started digging into my academic work at Bates. Quite simply, I was in way over my head and couldn’t figure out why I had been accepted for admission. I soon realized that if I was going to get through Bates with a degree and some level of success, I was going to have to not only work incredibly hard, but also try to fill in my ability gaps (in my case, writing and critical thinking), as well as figure out what on earth to do with the rest of my life. With the help of a few life-changing professors and a slew of amazing, lifelong friends, I got my act together, and even determined that I wanted to be a high school teacher. Thank you, Bates College!

Since graduating 14 years ago, I have grown more and more appreciative of my Bates education and the fact that they even accepted me in the first place. I often think of how differently my life might have turned out if I had gone somewhere else, and I never like the scenarios that play out in my head when my thoughts move in that direction. For all of this, I am happy and grateful to serve Bates as an alumna. If you are already committed to some alumni work for Bates, thank you! If not, we would love for you to become more involved.
“The purpose of the Alumni Association shall be to establish and perpetuate fellowship among the alumni and mutually helpful relationships between them and the college, and to unite all alumni in supporting the College, promoting its welfare, and encouraging education as a way of life through ties to the college.”

— from the Bates Alumni Association By-Laws

The Bates Alumni Council is the presiding body of the Bates Alumni Association, and we are here to serve you and invite you into a deeper relationship with our alma mater! For questions and comments, please contact us. The Alumni Council is at your service!

**ALUMNI COUNCIL ROSTER**

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS — DATES TO REMEMBER!

Alumni Council on Campus/AC Meetings
January 24–27, 2013

Mount David Summit
March 29, 2013

Alumni Council on Campus/AC Meetings
May 2–5, 2013

Commencement
May 26, 2013

Reunion
June 7–9, 2013

Bates Dance Festival
July 1–August 10, 2013

Parents and Family Weekend
September 27–29, 2013

Alumni Council on Campus/AC Meetings
October 31–November 3, 2013

Homecoming Weekend
November 1–2, 2013

For more information, please see bates.edu/alumni.

Bates alumni, parents and friends are invited to welcome Clayton Spencer as the eighth president of Bates College at the following events:

Feb. 6: Washington, D.C.
March 5: Chicago, Ill.
March 7: Seattle, Wash.
TBD: Los Angeles, Calif.
April 2: San Francisco, Calif.
May 8: Portland, Maine
May 9: Portsmouth, N.H.

See bates.edu/inauguration/welcome-events for more details and to register!