THE END OF THE ZERO-SUM GAME: CLASS OF 1979 REUNION STORIES REFLECT WORK/LIFE SHIFT CHANGE
SHOW MAN: AFTER FIVE DECADES IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS, LOU ROBIN, X’46, IS STILL ROCKIN’
IN THE HALLS: SYLVIE ANGLIN, A NEW LEADER FOR THE LOWER SCHOOL
LAB NOTES: CLASS NOTES & ALUMNI NEWS
Dear Friends,

Falling in love with my profession is a personal, and an annual, event prompted by the beginning of a new school year each September. It is all the easier since coming to Chicago just over seven years ago. To me, nothing is more important professionally than to maintain and improve upon the aspects of our Schools that define a Lab education.

We do this by hiring and retaining outstanding adults who influence the lives of our students daily; by building a student body that reflects the incredible diversity of our community; by celebrating the wonders of learning, creativity, and thoughtful debate beginning at age three and continuing until graduation from University High School.

You have heard much in recent years about the intense planning and community involvement that have gone into the Lab+ Campaign. Lab+ is the most ambitious campaign in the Schools’ history, unprecedented in scope and size. Its success will bring new resources to every aspect of the Lab experience, enabling transformative investments in Lab’s historic campus, addressing essential programmatic needs, and reinforcing the Schools’ commitments to diversity and innovative teaching.

In June, the University of Chicago’s Board of Trustees approved two key elements of the Lab+ Campaign:

1. The Campus Planning and Facilities Committee approved the entire schematic design of the Laboratory Schools’ renovation and expansion project.

2. The Financial Planning Committee authorized funds to implement the first construction phase of the project, which will allow us to move forward on the Early Childhood Campus, as well as key renovations to our existing historic campus. (Maybe you’ve seen the scaffolding all over Blaine Hall or its new roof!)

The Campaign aims to raise at least $40 million over five years. Already, alumni, parents, and friends have contributed nearly $35 million in gifts and commitments toward this goal—an unprecedented level of generosity and support.

Soon, we will be able not only to celebrate more than a century of academic excellence, but also to look forward to the next 100 years with the strongest of expectations and promises. Lab is an institution that holds a revered place in the University quadrangles to learn about the plants and animals that make the pond their home.

Most city children don’t have a chance to visit a pond regularly, says Ms. Campbell, which makes the short walk to Botany Pond a special treat for her preschoolers. Visiting at different times of the year helps the students understand the differences between seasons. Because the children are so young, explains Ms. Campbell, they notice details of the changing seasons that grown-ups take for granted. “They just take it in with such enthusiasm that as an adult, you can’t help but feel what it would be like to experience spring for the first time.”

To answer their many questions (Why aren’t there any frogs? Why doesn’t ice cover the whole pond in winter? Where do the fish go when the snows come?) she brought in an expert: Lab and University of Chicago Professor of organismal biology Michael LaBarbera. The children’s questions helped the teachers decide what direction to take the class next. For example, after the kids wondered why the pond had no frogs, Ms. Campbell brought in tadpoles for the class to raise, with the intention of releasing full-grown frogs into the pond. But none of the tadpoles survived to maturity. “It led to a discussion about how this is part of nature and why frogs lay so many eggs: because not all of them will live,” she says.

Between fish, lily pads, and the occasional brood of ducklings, “there’s something for everyone” at Botany Pond, she says. Best of all, from her perspective, is the way the children’s interest in nature brings them together: “It’s a great way to build community.”

lablife, published three times a year, is written for the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools’ community of alumni, parents, faculty, and staff.

Director
David W. Magill, EdD

Contributors
Laura Demanski, AM’04
Camille M. Drenth, AM’03
Kay Kirkpatrick, MAT’72
Richard Miresan
Katherine Mahlert
Laura Pule
Benjamin Rechel, AB’03
Emily Rosen, AM’10
Elizabeth Stetina
Debra Winner
Beth Wittbrodt

Design
Good Studio

Photographers
Darrin Dry
Chris Krader
Marc Monaghan

Lab Notes Correspondents
Dianna K. Ehlert
Dianna K. Ehlert

Publishers
University of Chicago Laboratory Schools
1152 E. 58th Street
Chicago, IL 60637

E: 773-834-3043
F: 773-834-3044

Please send comments to
news@ucls.uchicago.edu

Volume 4, Number 1
© 2010 by the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools
Reproduction in whole or in part, without permission of the publisher, is prohibited.

For today’s students, ribbonwork without computers would be an absurd concept. But the Computer Science Department and started in 1984, showed them that it is possible to build a computer using only the CS program and maintain and regularly update the

Lab Notes Correspondents
Dianna K. Ehlert

In this issue

01
Third and fourth graders build civilizations on Botany pond; a Q&A with interim Lower School Principal Sylvie Anglin, middle school App- titude

02
Lab Notes in action: Building community is key for parent-representative Lauren Polito

10
After five decades in the entertainment business, Lou Robin, ‘46 is still rockin’

22
Middle School travels add authenticity to classroom curriculum

26

30
In Remembrance

A year U-High truly got itself together

Laura Putre
Kay Kirkpatrick, MAT’72
Laura Demanski, AM’94

Lablifelife, published three times a year, is written for the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools’ community of alumni, parents, faculty, and staff.

Director
David W. Magill, EdD

Contributors
Laura Demanski, AM’04
Camille M. Drenth, AM’03
Kay Kirkpatrick, MAT’72
Richard Miresan
Katherine Mahlert
Laura Pule
Benjamin Rechel, AB’03
Emily Rosen, AM’10
Elizabeth Stetina
Debra Winner
Beth Wittbrodt

Design
Good Studio

Photographers
Darrin Dry
Chris Krader
Marc Monaghan

Lab Notes Correspondents
Dianna K. Ehlert
Dianna K. Ehlert

Publishers
University of Chicago Laboratory Schools
1152 E. 58th Street
Chicago, IL 60637

E: 773-834-3043
F: 773-834-3044

Please send comments to
news@ucls.uchicago.edu

Volume 4, Number 1
© 2010 by the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools
Reproduction in whole or in part, without permission of the publisher, is prohibited.

For today’s students, ribbonwork without computers would be an absurd concept. But the Computer Science Department and started in 1984, showed them that it is possible to build a computer using only the CS program and maintain and regularly update the

Lab Notes Correspondents
Dianna K. Ehlert

In this issue

01
Third and fourth graders build civilizations on Botany pond; a Q&A with interim Lower School Principal Sylvie Anglin, middle school App- titude

02
Lab Notes in action: Building community is key for parent-representative Lauren Polito

10
After five decades in the entertainment business, Lou Robin, ‘46 is still rockin’

22
Middle School travels add authenticity to classroom curriculum

26

30
In Remembrance

A year U-High truly got itself together

Laura Putre
Kay Kirkpatrick, MAT’72
Laura Demanski, AM’94

Lablifelife, published three times a year, is written for the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools’ community of alumni, parents, faculty, and staff.

Director
David W. Magill, EdD

Contributors
Laura Demanski, AM’04
Camille M. Drenth, AM’03
Kay Kirkpatrick, MAT’72
Richard Miresan
Katherine Mahlert
Laura Pule
Benjamin Rechel, AB’03
Emily Rosen, AM’10
Elizabeth Stetina
Debra Winner
Beth Wittbrodt

Design
Good Studio

Photographers
Darrin Dry
Chris Krader
Marc Monaghan

Lab Notes Correspondents
Dianna K. Ehlert
Dianna K. Ehlert

Publishers
University of Chicago Laboratory Schools
1152 E. 58th Street
Chicago, IL 60637

E: 773-834-3043
F: 773-834-3044

Please send comments to
news@ucls.uchicago.edu

Volume 4, Number 1
© 2010 by the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools
Reproduction in whole or in part, without permission of the publisher, is prohibited.

For today’s students, ribbonwork without computers would be an absurd concept. But the Computer Science Department and started in 1984, showed them that it is possible to build a computer using only the CS program and maintain and regularly update the
Building community is key for parent-volunteer Lauren Polite

Chances are you’re spotted Lauren Polite: setting up booths at Rites of May, dashing to a breakfast meeting, organizing the Book Swap. In 2009-2010, she added another role to her already-packed volunteer schedule: Parents’ Association (PA) president. She now spends more than 25 hours a week on Lab-related activities.

Ms. Polite’s energy has proven infectious—the PA especially flourished under her leadership. Every board volunteer, classroom helpers, and mentors to new families.

Ms. Polite became a Lab parent in 2005 and first volunteered in the Blaine Bookstore. She joined the PA board in 2006 and became president-elect in 2008. She’ll have a second term as president this year. She started at Lab at the age of 3, where her parents had met and fallen in love. The family is now a four-generation Lab family; Ms. Polite has had many outstanding volunteers who have contributed their love, time, and resources. Lauren’s leadership, thoughtful involvement of others when making decisions, outreach to new parents, and support of our faculty, staff, and administration have set a new standard.

The PA is charged with building community among and educating parents, and advocating on their behalf for Lab's best interests. Lauren says, “The PA notes that PA initiatives are themselves community builders, whether designed to educate (“How to Help Your Kids, Tackle Homework”) or advocate (the recently formed committee to address parents’ security concerns).”

But encouraging others to get involved is her priority. “There are so many ways to be involved, she says. “I would never want a parent to feel that their talent cannot be used or that their time is not well spent. That’s the goal—to give enough opportunity so that all parents can find their way to be connected to the school and contribute where they can.”

Parents’ Association:
> Attend the informative bi-monthly meetings, which are open to all parents.
> Donate to the auction of one of the many parent-managed activities, from Picture Day and Blaine Bookmark Bookstore to Giant Gym Night and beach party.
> Participate on a standing committee (Scholarship, Finance, community life, etc.)
> Run for a formal position on the PA board, including division-level council.

Contact: Lauren Polite, parents@ucls.uchicago.edu

In the classroom:
> Volunteer to be one of three parents in each N/K/LS class who handle communications and collaborate with teachers
> Chaperone a field trip, help with a project, or share your skills at any level grade
> Host a week-long Lab Art Fest Contact: your child’s teacher

Big community events: Bazaariville and Rites of May:
> Run a carnival game or tell a ghost story at Bazaariville
> Contribute a cultural tradition, craft, or delicacy at Rites of May
> Design, make or to man the Bookstore Contact: the PA, parents@ucls.uchicago.edu

New parent mentoring program:
> Become a new parent “mentor” to an incoming family, answering questions and offering insight
> Plan small parent orientation and orientations, which occur each fall

Contact: Monica Wilczak, Alumni Relations and Development, mwilczak@ucls.uchicago.edu

Tour guides:
> Take prospective parents on a campus tour Contact: Wrangler, Admissions, erwanner@ucls.uchicago.edu

More information and a volunteer form are at http://blogs.ucls.uchicago.edu/parents/
A new leader for the Lower School

Third grade teacher Sylvia Anglin became interim principal of the Lower School on July 1, following the retirement of Beverly Biggs. "Because Sylvia is keenly aware of Lab's special culture and knows so many within it," says Director David Magli, "she was the natural choice to serve in an interim capacity until a permanent replacement is identified." Ms. Anglin recently spoke with LabLife about her life and passion for Lab.

You visited Lab for the first time in 1994, as a graduate student in education. What was your first impression?

I grew up going to public schools in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. I was not from the private school world. But the second I set foot in this place, I knew that I needed to be here. It was the energy; it was the way that it felt like really belonged to the children. Everywhere kids were going in Blaine Hall, they were so purposeful and completely turned on by what they were doing. So I was excited.

What positions have you held at Lab?

I did my student teaching here and then worked for two years as a museum educator at the Adler Planetarium. In 1997, I lucked out and got hired to teach in the Lower School. I have a nice perspective now, because I’ve taught all the grades—first through fourth. And for the past two years I’ve served as Faculty II chair.

What will your focus be as interim principal?

My first priority is the faculty and getting to know who they are as teachers: learning about their strengths, understanding what is happening in the classroom, and figuring out how best to support them. My second priority is to be fully present for students and their families. Third, I want to understand the resources we have here: in the Schools themselves and in the community. I go through the same process that all families have to go through, every year.

You have two children in the Lower School. How does being a Lab parent influence you?

I’ve always liked the structure of animals and biology, so this was really fun," says seventh-grader Sandy Bivby. “Students go through the owl pellet until they have a complete skeleton, and then they have to reconstruct that skeleton. So it kicks off our study of human body systems, and that careful work really reinforces learning.”

Science teacher Mark Wagner first developed the project, in which students use probes and tweezers to pull apart barn owl pellets and then sort through the debris. Their task is to keep searching until they can reconstruct the skeleton of a vole, mouse, shrew, small bird, or rat. “They think it’s gross when I first hear about it, but in my experience they get totally caught up in the project,” says Ms. Bivby. “It’s very age-appropriate for 11- or 12-year olds,” who enjoy “picking away and then finding and sorting things.” When students can’t find a bone they need, they trade with classmates or visit the bone bank—“plastic tray with extra parts—to complete their skeletons. The work is “very tactile; it’s very social and conversational,” says Ms. Bivby.

Owls regurgitate it. Seventh graders reconstruct it.

Owl pellets sound disgusting—little balls of bones, fur, feathers, and other body parts that these predators cough up after eating their victims. But to seventh grade scientists, dissecting owl pellets this spring was “really cool.”

The project doesn’t just explain the food web and the relationship of birds to prey to their ecosystems. Says Middle School science teacher Sandy Bivby, “Students go through the owl pellet until they have a complete skeleton, and then they have to reconstruct that skeleton. So it kicks off our study of human body systems, and that careful work really reinforces learning.”

“Reconstructing the skeletons kicks off our study of human body systems, and that careful work really reinforces learning.”

“I’ve always liked the structure of animals and biology, so this was really fun,” says seventh-grader Christine Ober-Hong, who rebuilt a mouse skeleton. Sometimes dust and fur from the pellets made her sneeze, but otherwise she liked the work. Says classmate Keaven Goldfarb, “We kind of learned about the skeleton in third grade, but I didn’t really remember that. After this, I think I can identify most body parts and bones.”

How kids were going in Blaine Hall, they were so purposeful and completely turned on by what they were doing. So I was excited.

“Reconstructing the skeletons kicks off our study of human body systems, and that careful work really reinforces learning.”

“I’ve always liked the structure of animals and biology, so this was really fun," says seventh-grader Christine Ober-Hong, who rebuilt a mouse skeleton. Sometimes dust and fur from the pellets made her sneeze, but otherwise she liked the work. Says classmate Keaven Goldfarb, “We kind of learned about the skeleton in third grade, but I didn’t really remember that. After this, I think I can identify most body parts and bones.”

Harris Wold Award in honor of the retired teacher, scholarship for a senior who also intends to pursue a career in education; and the Total Songline Award.

Music

Harry Wold Award in honor of the retired teacher, scholarship for a senior who also intends to pursue a career in education; and the Total Songline Award.

"We kind of learned about the skeleton in third grade, but I didn’t really remember that. After this, I think I can identify most body parts and bones.”

“I’ve always liked the structure of animals and biology, so this was really fun,” says seventh-grader Christine Ober-Hong, who rebuilt a mouse skeleton. Sometimes dust and fur from the pellets made her sneeze, but otherwise she liked the work. Says classmate Keaven Goldfarb, “We kind of learned about the skeleton in third grade, but I didn’t really remember that. After this, I think I can identify most body parts and bones.”
App-titude

Want to use your iPhone to test math skills like multiplication and square roots? There’s an app for that. Wouldn’t your iPad be better if it worked like a chalkboard? There’s an app for that. One’s called TheMathMaster, the other Chalkboard, and freshman Charles Du and Louie Harboe developed both while they were still in Middle School.

The duo had been computer aficionados since fifth grade. Over the years, Sam has taught himself ten programming languages through books, online study, and some courses at Lab. (In addition to taking AP computer science, he has taken programming courses taught by Baker Franke during the summer.) And these days, Louise spends many hours a week working on web and design projects and offers downloadable icons at his website, graphicap.com. But they “caught iPhone fever,” as Sam puts it, after watching a speech that Apple CEO Steve Jobs gave over the Web when they were in seventh grade. They worked out TheMathMaster over the course of a month in 2009; Sam programmed, while Louise designed the interface. They submitted the program to Apple, which approved it for sale in the App Store soon after.

Following that success, the team decided to design an app for the then-unreleased (Pat) using an iPad simulator from Apple’s Web site, they designed Chalkboard, a drawing program that takes advantage of the device’s touchscreen interface to let users draw with their fingers. Not having an actual iPad to test the idea meant the original release had more bugs than the boys would have liked, though a later revision corrected most of the problems.

And the two aren’t finished yet. Sam wants to commercialize a project he made for his science teacher this year that tracks one’s called TheMathMaster, the application process and brings transparency to the issue. "The applicant pools at some of the elite schools have reached 30,000 this year—and the size of the applicant pool means that selective institutions are out there and what might be a good fit" and to ensure that each student applies to a range of schools (from likely to unpredictable), so that each end up with choices.

“Our kids are well-informed and well-prepared for the process,” says Sam’s mother, Carol Rubin, who spent a term as an admissions officer at Dartmouth College while Louie designed the interface.

They submitted the program to Apple, which approved it for sale in the App Store soon after.

More seniors in the U.S. are applying to colleges than at any time in our nation’s history. It’s a result of a combination of demographic shifts (there are more college-age people) and social shifts (more families see college as an option and an economic necessity for future careers). And the Internet continues to re-shape college application processes, in particular the online Common Application, which allows students to enter personal information and standard essays just once (although many schools require the applicant to answer questions unique to that institution). College counselors, teachers, and seniors are all better able to track applications online, adding a new level of transparency to the process.

But it is a misconception to think that technology alone is the reason students are applying to a larger number of colleges these days. The sheer size of the applicant pool means that selective schools (Louvie noted that 7-12% of all applicants) are no longer as predictable. Says College Counselor Patty Kovacs, "The applicant pool means that selective institutions are out there and what might be a good fit" and to ensure that each student applies to a range of schools (from likely to unpredictable), so that each end up with choices.

“Our kids are well-informed and well-prepared for the process,” says Ms. Kovacs. “Our goal is to find the best fit for them.” And that translates into students who are happier with their choices once they arrive on campus.

Theater Arts
Theatre Arts
Theatre Production
New Emily, Sara Powers
Technical Theatre
Alex Fryer
Costuming
Karen Chang
Renaissance
Alex Fryer, Franica Kennedy
Movie Review
American Mathematics Competitions
School Winner for AMC 12
Certificates of Distinction for Qualifying for American Mathematics Exam
Charles Jiang, 1st; Joe Armitage, 2nd; Joao Raimund, 3rd; Billy N. Zhang, 4th; Ananya Ramdas, 5th
American Mathematics Competitions
Math
American Mathematics Competitions
School Winner for AMC 12
Certificates of Distinction for Qualifying for American Mathematics Exam
Charles Jiang, 1st; Joe Armitage, 2nd; Joao Raimund, 3rd; Billy N. Zhang, 4th; Ananya Ramdas, 5th
Math
American Mathematics Competitions
School Winner for AMC 12
Certificates of Distinction for Qualifying for American Mathematics Exam
Charles Jiang, 1st; Joe Armitage, 2nd; Joao Raimund, 3rd; Billy N. Zhang, 4th; Ananya Ramdas, 5th

Technology continues to re-shape college application process

More seniors in the U.S. are applying to colleges than at any time in our nation’s history. It’s a result of a combination of demographic shifts (there are more college-age people) and social shifts (more families see college as an option and an economic necessity for future careers). And the Internet continues to re-shape college application processes, in particular the online Common Application, which allows students to enter personal information and standard essays just once (although many schools require the applicant to answer questions unique to that institution). College counselors, teachers, and seniors are all better able to track applications online, adding a new level of transparency to the process.

But it is a misconception to think that technology alone is the reason students are applying to a larger number of colleges these days. The sheer size of the applicant pool means that selective schools (Louvie noted that 7-12% of all applicants) are no longer as predictable. Says College Counselor Patty Kovacs, "The applicant pool means that selective institutions are out there and what might be a good fit" and to ensure that each student applies to a range of schools (from likely to unpredictable), so that each end up with choices.

“Our kids are well-informed and well-prepared for the process,” says Ms. Kovacs. “Our goal is to find the best fit for them.” And that translates into students who are happier with their choices once they arrive on campus.

More seniors in the U.S. are applying to colleges than at any time in our nation’s history. It’s a result of a combination of demographic shifts (there are more college-age people) and social shifts (more families see college as an option and an economic necessity for future careers). And the Internet continues to re-shape college application processes, in particular the online Common Application, which allows students to enter personal information and standard essays just once (although many schools require the applicant to answer questions unique to that institution). College counselors, teachers, and seniors are all better able to track applications online, adding a new level of transparency to the process.

But it is a misconception to think that technology alone is the reason students are applying to a larger number of colleges these days. The sheer size of the applicant pool means that selective schools (Louvie noted that 7-12% of all applicants) are no longer as predictable. Says College Counselor Patty Kovacs, "The applicant pool means that selective institutions are out there and what might be a good fit" and to ensure that each student applies to a range of schools (from likely to unpredictable), so that each end up with choices.

“Our kids are well-informed and well-prepared for the process,” says Ms. Kovacs. “Our goal is to find the best fit for them.” And that translates into students who are happier with their choices once they arrive on campus.
Developing nations in the third and fourth grades

If you could found your own country, what would it be like? In Weslandia, a 2002 book by Paul Fleischman, a boy named Wesley concocts his own society in his backyard. Weslandia is organized according to Wesley’s wishes and sustained by the fruit of a mighty plant he calls the swig. After reading the book, Lisa Sokenic’s third-grade and Stephanie Mitzenmacher’s fourth-grade classes were inspired to imagine nations of their own—with all the beliefs, languages, economic systems, and lore that a thriving community needs. Working in small groups, students wrote songs, imagined stories, invented dances, and designed flags for their new societies. Jessica Palumbo’s third-grade students started their version of this “civilizations” unit by studying geography and exploring ancient civilizations. “My class studied the Sumerians and their system of cuneiform writing,” says Ms. Palumbo. “[we] visited the Oriental Institute and the Field Museum and took a class on archeology prior to actually beginning the project.”

Inspired by Lisa Sokenic’s group also invented a plant to provide resources their society would need. Fourth-grader Nora Sukenic’s group, for instance, had a flower named Stella. “Without it, we would have nothing,” she says. The students’ decision-making called for collaboration and consensus—in the end, something very much like a democratic process. Working through the unit, teachers challenged kids to answer some large life questions: How would their society interact with others?

What role would it play in a global community? What resources could it contribute to the larger good? What needs would it share with other societies, and what alliances would it form to meet them?

By February, the newly chartered societies were ready for a “cultural exchange.” The classes invited parents and faculty to a presentation, during which they shared the ins and outs of their societies, performed national songs and dances, and displayed hand-sown flags and three-dimensional models of their gardens.

And who can argue with some of these “beilifes”? We don’t Beilive in war; we Beilive in peace; we never bother our animals.

Science teacher Gerold Hanck recommends online alternatives to Nicholas Carr’s The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains.

Nicholas Carr’s The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains builds on his essay first published in The Atlantic, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?”

Reviewing a variety of evidence, Mr. Carr concludes that the Internet may be reshaping our society and our brains in a way that makes it more difficult for us to concentrate, to remember, and to think deeply and critically.

As a teacher and an Internet user, I am sympathetic to many of Mr. Carr’s concerns. I do value deep reading and the unique experience of losing oneself in a challenging book. I agree that the Internet’s numerous distractions (links, ads, emails, social network updates, etc.) make it harder to concentrate and easier to get sidetracked when you read online; and I agree that the Internet has tremendous potential for reshaping society in unforeseeable ways, both good and ill.

But I find myself in the ironic position of not recommending this book because most of the ground it covers has already been covered more thoroughly and in much more detail on the Internet! The Edge Foundation and Encyclopedia Britannica both have dozens of articles that detail all of the points Mr. Carr raises. (See “How Is the Internet Changing How You Think?” at www.edge.org and “Your Brain Online,” on the blog at www.britannica.com.)

Mr. Carr makes it clear that all of us, children and adults alike, need to be aware of how a heavy Internet diet can potentially benefit or harm our minds. Like our bodies, strong minds are built through the right combination of exercise and good nutrition. Such nourishment and exercise often begin with puzzlement or the recognition of dramatically new experiences or problems.

But why do we need our minds flabbergasted, weaker, and less well developed?

"We are what we eat...and what we email, text, tweet, and game."

Students’ decision-making called for collaboration and consensus—in the end, something very much like a democratic process.

Trash to treasure

Packing peanuts, yogurt tubs, and itty-bitty cardboard boxes. Throw them away and they’re trash, but clean, collect, and organize them and they’re treasure—especially for imaginative kids and teachers.

“Teachers never throw anything out and find uses for everything,” says nursery school teacher Carrie Collins. A few years ago, and colleagues Amy Poynton and Maureen Ellis started the Nursey/Kindergarten Reusables Center in Blaine Hall to collect materials for hands-on classroom projects. Parents donated everything from wrapping paper rolls to fabric, wood scraps, and kids turned them into rain sticks, self-portraits, and miniature buildings. At first, delighted teachers stored reusable items in lockers, but with time it was hard to manage the growing supply.

That changed last spring, when the Reusables Center moved to a new space adjoining a basement teachers’ lounge. Lab parent Mary Kohrman Hayes volunteered to organize the materials in recycled plastic bins donated by IKEA; tidy containers and shelves hold egg cartons, seashells, shoeboxes, and more. Students can easily pick out items to use for their projects. Now Ms. Hayes is working with U-High students to create a photo catalog of available items, so pre-readers can “shop” online before visiting the center.

Nursery and kindergarten students have made rockets, robots, jewelry, mosaics, animals, sculptures, and musical instruments with reusable materials. “Our idea was to not only supply them with things they could use for creative craft or science projects,” says Ms. Collins, “but to increase their environmental awareness and keep these things out of landfills.”

Donations to the Reusables Center can be left in a cabinet outside Blaine 108, where there is also a bulletin board with a list of items.

Recommended reading

Science teacher Gerold Hanck recommends online alternatives to Nicholas Carr’s The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains.

Nicholas Carr’s The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains builds on his essay first published in The Atlantic, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?”

Reviewing a variety of evidence, Mr. Carr concludes that the Internet may be reshaping our society and our brains in a way that makes it more difficult for us to concentrate, to remember, and to think deeply and critically.

As a teacher and an Internet user, I am sympathetic to many of Mr. Carr’s concerns. I do value deep reading and the unique experience of losing oneself in a challenging book. I agree that the Internet’s numerous distractions (links, ads, emails, social network updates, etc.) make it harder to concentrate and easier to get sidetracked when you read online; and I agree that the Internet has tremendous potential for reshaping society in unforeseeable ways, both good and ill.

But I find myself in the ironic position of not recommending this book because most of the ground it covers has already been covered more thoroughly and in much more detail on the Internet! The Edge Foundation and Encyclopedia Britannica both have dozens of articles that detail all of the points Mr. Carr raises. (See “How is the Internet Changing How You Think?” at www.edge.org and “Your Brain Online,” on the blog at www.britannica.com.)

Mr. Carr makes it clear that all of us, children and adults alike, need to be aware of how a heavy Internet diet can potentially benefit or harm our minds. Like our bodies, strong minds are built through the right combination of exercise and good nutrition. Such nourishment and exercise often begin with puzzlement or the recognition of dramatically new experiences or problems.

But why do we need our minds flabbergasted, weaker, and less well developed?

"We are what we eat...and what we email, text, tweet, and game."

At the end of their student work and ability in studying Mandarin Chinese.

Chinese Book Awards

Chinese unserer students won the first prize in the Annual Chinese Book Award in 2010.

Chinese Language

Chinese teacher Mrs. Spink teaches Mandarin Chinese.

The students are proud of their efforts and the work they put into the language. They have been practicing Chinese language skills throughout the year and have been learning about Chinese culture.

Chinese teacher Mrs. Spink teaches Mandarin Chinese.

Students are proud of their efforts and the work they put into the language.

Chinese teacher Mrs. Spink teaches Mandarin Chinese.

The students are proud of their efforts and the work they put into the language.

Students are proud of their efforts and the work they put into the language.

Chinese teacher Mrs. Spink teaches Mandarin Chinese.

Students are proud of their efforts and the work they put into the language.

Students are proud of their efforts and the work they put into the language.

Students are proud of their efforts and the work they put into the language.

Students are proud of their efforts and the work they put into the language.

Students are proud of their efforts and the work they put into the language.

Students are proud of their efforts and the work they put into the language.

Students are proud of their efforts and the work they put into the language.

Students are proud of their efforts and the work they put into the language.

Students are proud of their efforts and the work they put into the language.
LIFELAB

SUTHERLAND CELEBRATES

15 years of outstanding kid lit

Catherine Tuskan

Tad

by Tony DiTerlizzi

1997 | The Leaf Men and the

by Antoinette Portis

2005 | Arrowhawk

by Jon J. Muth

2001 | Gershon’s Monster: a

story for the Jewish New Year

by Linda Bailey and Bill Slavin

2009 | A Couple of Boys

by Marla Frazee

1996 | Math Curse

by Greg Couch

2000 | The Cello of

George & Ben

by Lane Smith

2003 | The Spider and the Fly

by Fred Marcellino

1999 | Ouch!

by Natalie Babbitt and

Pablo Bernasconi

2006 | Captain America: Mission

(Incidently) in Flight

by Pablo Barnaccio

2007 | John, Paul, George & Ben

by Lisa Smith

2009 | A Couple of Boys

Now the Best Week Ever

by Marla Frazee

2002 | A Penguin Story

by Jan Steinbeck and Laura Smith

2004 | A Friend in the Park

by Paul Bekaert

2006 | Arctic Bear

by Lisa Stever and Gail Bicknese

2003 | How to Make an Apple

Pie and See the World

by Jan Steinbeck and Laura Smith

2001 | The Spider and the Fly

bySUMMER

by Linnea Riley

2005 | Have the Best Week Ever

by Pablo Bernasconi

2008 | IHOH!

by Louis Sachar

FROM THE SYLLABI

Based in Winnetka, the Do Your
P’Art foundation brings together
children from public and private
schools throughout greater Chicago
to collaborate on art projects.
Last spring, students in the Lower
School did their p’art. Although
their project was titled “Art in the
Box,” art teacher Gina Alicea wanted
her students to think outside the
metaphoric cardboard enclosure.
Writing with Lisa Sukentic’s and
Stephanie Mitzenmacher’s forth-
grade classroom and fifth-graders
from Skokie’s Middleton School,
Ms. Alicea asked the youngsters to
become architects of the future and
envision what Chicago might look
like in 100 years.

For a complete list of winners, visit
http://library.uic.edu/Chicago/su/ Sutherland_Awards/Previous__Winners.html

 created and funded in honor of
Zena Sutherland (a former
University of Chicago faculty
member still considered among
the world’s most influential
scholars of young people’s
literature), the Zena Sutherland
Award for Children’s Literature is
one of the only kid-selected book
awards in the United States.
Each year, Lab librarians review
new children’s books and narrow
the group to 20. Sixth graders
work from November to March
negotiating the finalists; they then
promote each book, writing and
making persuasive presentations
in support of their “candidate.” Third,
fourth, and fifth graders vote on
best illustration, best text, and best
overall.

Lower School artists build 2110
Chicago in miniature

The children’s first assignment
when they pored off at the
Middleton School was to draw
their imagined city, using Daniel
Buckminster Fuller’s visionary ideas
for inspiration.
A few weeks later in Kolver
Gym, after learning about artist
Lavinia Newton’s three-dimensional
paintings made with found objects,
the students transformed their
cityscapes into abstract, miniature
dioramas. A line of plastic Easter
eggs became a row of houses.
An empty Coke can turned into a
portable restaurant that flew through
the air.

Like Newton’s assemblages, which
were monochromatic and set in
rectangular cartons, the youngsters’
crated creations, conducted from
recycled materials, were spray-
painted bright green. In April the
installations, along with some 400
boxes from other schools, were
exhibited at the Merchandise Mart’s
annual Artropolis show.
Do Your P’Art’s mission is to use
art to foster communication among
kids from different backgrounds.”It’s
wonderful to see,” says Ms. Alicea.
“Watching them make art together,
it’s just cool.”

Sports Highlights:

Girls Soccer
The Maroons won the ISL and
Regional championships for the fourth
consecutive year and made it to the
2A Sectional championship game for
the fifth straight year, concluding their
season with a 15-8-2 record.
Senior Gabbie Clark was named to the
IHSSCA All-State team; she scored a
team record of 45 goals this season.

Boys Tennis
Seniors Bill Stueben and Evan Levin
were sectional champions. Five players
qualified for state level competition,
including Tyler Anderson.

Boys Track & Field
Five runners qualified for State, and
junior Robert Meyer was sectional
champion in the 2600 and 3200 meter
races.
Girls Track & Field
Five runners qualified for State, and
senior Sherry Fu was sectional
champion in the 3200 meter race.

Baseball
Senior Mark Woerner pitched a no-
hitter against Morgan Park Academy,
and the team placed second in the
Regional Championship.

Created and funded in honor of
Zena Sutherland (a former
University of Chicago faculty
member still considered among
the world’s most influential
scholars of young people’s
literature), the Zena Sutherland
Award for Children’s Literature is
one of the only kid-selected book
awards in the United States.
Each year, Lab librarians review
new children’s books and narrow
the group to 20. Sixth graders
work from November to March
negotiating the finalists; they then
promote each book, writing and
making persuasive presentations
in support of their “candidate.” Third,
fourth, and fifth graders vote on
best illustration, best text, and best
overall.

For a complete list of winners, visit
http://library.uic.edu/Chicago/su/ Sutherland_Awards/Previous__Winners.html
Coast to coast: alumni celebrate in DC and LA

This spring, two sisters helped Lab alumni and friends gather at the classic Washington, DC, Cosmos Club and in a Bel Air home overlooking Los Angeles to mingle and rekindle old friendships.

Director David Magill spoke at both events, providing an update on campus life and the Lab+ Campaign. The DC gathering hosted in May by Peter Kovler, ’69, AB’74, and his wife, Judy Lansing Kovler, X’62, attracted 85 guests to the French Renaissance venue, including members of the Obama administration: Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, ’78; Senior Advisor to the President Valerie Jarrett, X’73; Staff Director and Chief Economist on the President’s Economic Recovery Advisory Board (and former Lab Board member) Austan Goolsbee; Chief of Staff to the First Lady (and former Lab Board chair) Susan Shen; and a slow

of recent graduates heard remarks from current Board Chair John W. Rogers, Jr., ’76, as well as Marilee Shapiro Ashen, ’29, who shared her 20s-era memories of Lab. Eighteen days later and on the opposite coast, Sherry Lansing, X’67, calledoused as part of the annual Interview and Project Experience, an assignment in the cultural identity unit of the seventh grade humanities curriculum. For the project, students seek out and interview an individual whose life experiences are different from their own. For the interview, one student assisted. Jerry Kleiner, owner of the Hyde Park restaurant Park 52, with a dinner service. Another pair of students interviewed Lab security guard Mike Sevis. And one student chose to question a girl her own age who had recently arrived in the larger world?” This is the question Sam Nekrosius and his fellow seventh grade teachers posed to their students last winter as part of the annual Interview and Project Experience, an assignment in the cultural identity unit of the seventh grade humanities curriculum. For the project, students seek out and interview an individual whose life experiences are different from their own. In this practice, the teachers present students with a variety of potential scenarios, demonstrating how to follow up on curts responses, draw out explanations from vague answers, and control a conversation that has gotten off-topic.

“The pedagogical goals of the project are tailor made for adolescents. “Seventh graders are very inward focused,” says Mr. Nekrosius, “and when they talk in class discussions, it is from a self-referral perspective.” The Interview and Experience Project encourages students “to look past themselves and their role in the larger world”—a valuable lesson at any age.
With the historic art fair up the street and the University campus bedecked for reunions for dozens of undergraduate and graduate classes, Lab’s 2010 Alumni Weekend had a festive back-drop as more than 500 guests returned to campus from as far away as Australia and as close as 58th Street.

“We have dramatically increased opportunities to get alumni to reconnect with each other and the Schools,” says Elizabeth Evans, ’81. “And it’s paying off. Alums are having a great time with each other.” In her role as co-chair of the Alumni Leadership Committee (Matthew Shapiro, ’84, is her fellow co-chair), Ms. Evans made the reunion rounds, welcoming guests to the All-Alumni Dinner and checking in at a number of class dinners. The Class of 1960 stayed close to home with a catered affair in Judd 126. Others ventured farther afield, from Ukrainian Village to Lincoln Park to the West Loop.

And Scammon Garden looked gorgeous in the rain even as alums decamped to Kovler Gym for the Saturday brunch.
Early Childhood inspires

"THE DESIGN HAS A TRANSPARENCY THAT SYMBOLIZES THE FUTURE AND IS PURPOSEFULLY SCULPTURAL IN A WAY THAT SUGGESTS THE INTENSITY AND INTELLECTUAL QUALITY OF TEACHING AT LAB." — Architect Joe Valerio

These renderings illustrate the proposed design for Lab’s new Early Childhood Campus (ECC), which will be built on the site of the long-vacant Doctors’ Hospital on Stony Island Avenue. The ECC is part of the first phase of Lab+, which received University of Chicago Board of Trustees approval this past June. The University approved not only the entire schematic design of the Laboratory Schools’ renovation and expansion project but also authorized the funds to move forward on the ECC and other low-glamour but high-impact renovations to our historic campus. (The new roof over Blaine Hall—which students likely do not even realize they are enjoying—was also part of Phase One.)

The new ECC building, a primarily glass structure, will be punctuated with Indiana limestone (the material that makes the University’s gothic buildings seem . . . well, gothic). Says lead architect Joe Valerio, “The design has a transparency that symbolizes the future and is purposefully sculptural in a way that suggests the intensity and intellectual quality of teaching at Lab. We wanted to create a structure that captures the imagination but for which each form has a distinct purpose.”

When talking about the new building (which will house all classrooms for grades N–2, as well as related administrative offices, a gym, a kitchen, and music and art rooms), Mr. Valerio highlights several aspects of the new space:

The entry hall will honor the connection between home and school so valued by John Dewey. With both an off-the-street car drop-off entry and a pedestrian entrance on Stony Island, the sunny, wide-open, 2,000-square-foot entrance hall will allow children a gentle transition from home (as they take leave of parents or guardians) into their school day. The littlest children won’t have far to go, as all N/K classrooms will surround the entry hall. Grades 1–2 will be just up a central stairway on the second floor.

The library is the ECC’s symbol of knowledge transfer and discovery. For the first time ever, Lab’s youngest learners will have library space right-sized to increase their independence, even as they explore new media and learn to read. This signature space, a visually powerful one from both inside and outside the building, sits like a “treehouse” overlooking the park, the Museum of Science and Industry, and Lake Michigan.

Generally in education, and specifically at Lab, there is a strong desire to connect the youngest learners to the outdoors. Achieving this goal requires a lower profile building that is more spread out. The Stony Island site will allow this to happen beautifully. It is a large space offering Lab a full one-and-a-half acres of land. (For comparison, the historic campus is four acres.) And, with playground space, courtyards, and even roof-top gardens, the new ECC will match every two-and-a-half square feet of indoor space with one of outdoor space.

“Learning Labs”—unassigned space that will allow child-directed learning to unfold unfettered. Such spaces exist nowhere else on the Lab campus and are afforded by the unique opportunities of this site and structure. Each hallway will be punctuated by courtyards, which bring in daylight and the outdoors. Between these courtyards, six Learning Labs the size of regular classrooms will offer flexible space to meet teachers’ programmatic needs, even as these needs unfold.

Interested in learning more about the origins and evolution of the Lab+ project? Visit http://www.ucls.uchicago.edu/support-lab/the-lab-plus-campaign/.
After five decades in the entertainment business, Lou Robin, X’46, is still rockin’!

BY ELIZABETH STATION

Lou Robin isn’t a name-dropper. When he mentions the show-biz legends he’s known over a long career as a concert promoter and manager, the Lab alumnus is casual—like he was just happy to be along for the ride.>>>
Lou Robin isn't a name-dropper. When he mentions the show-biz legends he's known over a long career as a concert promoter and manager, the Lab alumni is casual—like he was just happy to be along for the ride.

Since the 1950s, Mr. Robin has promoted some 5,000 jazz, folk, rock, country, and comedy shows with his company, Artist Consultants. He's worked and traveled with a Who's Who of talent from the Beatles to Benny Goodman to Bill Cosby. Most notably, he managed the country music stars Johnny Cash and June Carter Cash from 1973 to 2003.

Contributing to performers' professional success was financially and intellectually rewarding, says Mr. Robin, but "the most fun to me personally was always to stand on the side of the stage at the Hollywood Bowl, just before the show we were presenting. There would be 17,000 people sitting in the audience and I would think, 'Well, I guess I'm not the only one who likes this music.'"

One memorable evening in 1963, Mr. Robin put together a triple-bill at the Hollywood Bowl featuring jazzman Dave Brubeck, entertainer Sammy Davis, Jr., and an unknown 21-year-old nightclub singer named Barbra Streisand. "It was her first concert," he says, "and it became an incredible night."

Now 80, Mr. Robin works five days a week from his office in Westlake Village. "No two days are ever the same," he reflects. "I feel blessed to be able to do what I love."

FROM CHICAGO TO LA
Growing up in Hyde Park in the 1930s and 40s, Mr. Robin attended Lab from second to ninth grade. He was close to his older sister, Jeanne Robin Rousso, ’39, and his school chums began organizing jazz shows on campus in 1952 with an auspicious—and sold-out—debut: Duke Ellington.

After graduation Mr. Robin and his friends got day jobs, but they kept promoting concerts on the weekends and after hours. By 1959 they were successful enough to try something new—Duke Ellington at the Civic Opera House—in 1944. After the family moved to California in 1945, Mr. Robin enrolled at Claremont Men’s College. "I decided it would be fun to be a disk jockey and get a job working nights, playing jazz at a small station near the college," he recalls. He and his school chums began organizing jazz shows on campus in 1952 with an auspicious—and sold-out—debut: Duke Ellington.

THE JOHNNY CASH YEARS
By the 1970s, Mr. Robin’s promotion of performers such as the Tijuana Brass, the Beach Boys, and Stevie Wonder had gone global. "We would take an artist to Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and all over North America, do a tour, where they wanted to perform or we thought they should," he says. Shifting to country and western music, Mr. Robin did his first tour with Johnny Cash in 1969, including a famous concert filmed inside San Quentin State Prison. "That was quite an event," he says. "and a little nerve-racking. Johnny played a lot of prison concerts, but I never got used to hearing that second steel door slam behind my back as I entered the facility."

Although he kept promoting concerts, Mr. Robin made the leap to managing Cash and his wife, June, in 1973. "A manager’s duties are basically to watch over the career development of the artist and keep that artist in the forefront of what’s happening in their part of the music world," he explains. The job involves dealing with record companies, music publishers, and booking agents and figuring out "a general philosophy of career that allows a performer to earn enough money to pay his own operating expenses and live comfortably."

Over the years, Mr. Robin traveled all over the globe with Cash. "He was one of the few artists who was popular worldwide, and either an associate or I was with Johnny wherever he went." Of course, there are stories from the road. On a concert tour in Northern Ireland during the years of political violence, Mr. Robin made an unusual deal with a Belfast promoter. Catholic and Protestant faction leaders were promised tickets to Cash’s two shows, and “in return, it was agreed that they wouldn’t blow up any buildings while we were there.” In the 1990s, Mr. Robin booked and accompanied the Highwaymen—a foursome of Cash, Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, and Kris Kristofferson—on a tour through Asia. From a packed convention center in Singapore to a private party in the Hong Kong hills, says, everyone seemed to know and enjoy the music.

Working for the “Man in Black” had its artistic and financial ups and downs. "When you manage, you’re very close to the family, says Mr. Robin. "You deal with the problems when they come up, you deal with the good times and the difficult times."

Remarkably, Mr. Robin never had a written contract with Cash in his three decades as an "managing the relationship remained strong throughout."

After years on the road, Mr. Robin appreciates spending time with his own family. He and his wife, Karen, have been married for 38 years. He has two sons, Steve and Mike, who are television producers in Los Angeles. Each son has a family that includes a set of identical twin daughters. "We have a fun time with all those grandchildren," he says.

IN 1963, MR. ROBIN PUT TOGETHER A TRIPLE-BILL AT THE HOLLYWOOD BOWL FEATURING NIGHTCLUB SINGER NAMED BARBARA STREISAND.

JAZZMAN DAVE BRUBECK, ENTERTAINER SAMMY DAVIS, JR., AND AN UNKNOWN 21-YEAR-OLD NIGHTCLUB SINGER NAMED BARBARA STREISAND.

Steve, Karen, Lou, and Mike Robin

Today, Mr. Robin handles business affairs for the Cash estate in conjunction with the trustees and the family. There is a tremendous amount of ongoing interest in Cash’s music, he says, but Internet sales have eroded demand for CDs. As a result, "one has to be a little more creative than just sitting back and enjoying all the benefits of record sales." For Mr. Robin, that means negotiating the business and artistic use of Cash’s music, image, and likeness in the licensing of merchandise, television, and feature films, like the 2005 biopic Walk the Line.

In his free hours, Mr. Robin enjoys listening to jazz, especially Tony Bennett and the older big bands. He’s sited up new musical talent on American Idol and planned to watch Million Dollar Quartet in New York over the summer. His massive record collection now resides at the University of Texas North Music Library.

Not surprisingly, he has no plans to quit working. “I get restless on the weekends when I’m just sitting around,” he admits. "After you’ve been on the mow, at I have, for 40-some years, you don’t suddenly stop.
Lab Middle School students are on an educational expedition. It’s a journey that usually takes place in the classroom, but once a year it sweeps most of them out of Chicago for an extraordinary adventure.

Middle School trips have been part of the Lab experience for decades—getting out into the world is a fundamental aspect of a Deweyian education. And working in an unfamiliar setting can bring a new kind of authenticity to the learning experience as kids strengthen friendships, develop leadership skills, and make appropriate connections to their curriculum in new and unexpected ways.

SIXTH GRADE—WISCONSIN
Stay six miles north of Chicago, sixth-grade students hit Burlington, Wisconsin’s Camp MacLean. The experience is a world away from their metropolitan lives and one to which generations of alumni can relate. “The first sixth-grade trip was 70 years ago,” says science teacher and organizer Debbie Kogelman. “Every year, I have a parent who went to Lab who now has a child going on this trip. They are always so excited about this opportunity for their kids, because when the kids come back, the parents can share it with them.”

With swamps, prairie grass, fields, and a lake, the camp sprawls across hundreds of acres. Students bunk in cabins. They entertain themselves with skits. And they stalk each other across the campground in the game of “Predator and Prey.”

SEVENTH GRADE—MICHIGAN
Seventh-graders have a substantially more rugged experience—more so this year as they arrived at Pretty Lake in Mattawan, Michigan, amidst a torrential downpour and 40-degree temperatures. Kids had to cook meals over a fire and sleep in (leaky) tents. But even as another nighttime thunderstorm brought lightning strikes to the campground, “the kids made the best of a tough situation,” says Mr. Nekrosius. Near the end of the week, the storm had passed, making it a bit easier to work on leadership and cooperative exercises like figuring out how to bring an entire team over or through different obstacles, supporting one another while scaling a climbing wall, and navigating a high ropes course.

“I am a huge believer in getting kids out into the woods,” explains Mr. Nekrosius. “At Lab, we demand so much of these kids academically, but when you get them away from here and give them a week with no homework, a week without their coaches and tutors and technology . . . you see them take on roles that they’ve never taken on before. They come away with a different idea of who they are and what they’re capable of.”

And with a newfound respect for a hot shower.

EIGHTH GRADE—WASHINGTON, D.C.
Students spend much of their Middle School humanities course exploring the concept of identity and what it means to be an American. Then, as they near graduation, their capstone trip to Washington, DC, gives eighth-graders a chance to examine through firsthand experience their ties to the nation in which they live.

At Arlington National Cemetery, this year’s eighth-graders laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and visited graves of Iraq War veterans. There, they saw tombstones of young men and women only a few years older than themselves. In addition to trips to the major monuments, the Library of Congress, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Smithsonian Museums, students journeyed to Mount Vernon and Monticello, where walking through former slave quarters added a powerful depth to what they learned in the classroom.

Washington trip marks the end of the academic year and celebrates the end of middle school. But for the students, it is also a beginning: their first step toward high school. Students spend much of their Middle School humanities course exploring the concept of identity and what it means to be an American. Then, as they near graduation, their capstone trip to Washington, DC, gives eighth-graders a chance to examine through firsthand experience their ties to the nation in which they live.

For many, it also means the beginning of new friendships. And for each student, it lays the foundation for a new level of awareness of their country’s place in history—and their own.

Working in an unfamiliar setting can bring a new kind of authenticity to the learning experience.
When Jessica DeGroot, '79, was a U-High senior, "moms stayed home," she says, "and computers were the size of refrigerators." Ms. DeGroot’s family was typical. Her father was a successful professor of endocrinology; her mother raised five children. A few of her school friends’ mothers worked part-time or did volunteer work. But work-life balance—and the liberating/enslaving role of technology—had not yet become an issue.

Thirty years later, Ms. DeGroot volunteered to collect the life stories of her classmates to share at their reunion in 2009, just as she had done for their 20th reunion. When the updates came rolling in, Ms. DeGroot couldn’t help herself: she had to analyze the data. "Our class represents a major turning point on these issues," says Ms. DeGroot. "Very different from what our parents did, and probably very different again from what the current Lab children will do."

FOLLOWING THE THIRD PATH

A nationally known expert on work-life balance, Ms. DeGroot is the founder of the ThirdPath Institute, a nonprofit dedicated to helping individuals and organizations redesign work to make time for other priorities. ThirdPath’s long-term goal, according to its literature, is to "influence larger systemic change—both within organizations and at the public policy level." The change they seek is a future in which "no person is required to choose between work and children, work and an aging parent, or work and some other life interest. Instead they can follow a 'third path,' one that allows everyone to integrate work with other life priorities."

It’s a topic that has intrigued Ms. DeGroot from the time she graduated from Lab. At Hampshire College in the mid-1980s, she wrote her senior thesis on professional women who had returned to the workplace and the pressure this caused in their families. Ms. DeGroot began her career as a child-care referral specialist, then took a position as a work-life manager at a bank. In the early 1990s she enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School, where she created an independent major, Organizational Change and Workforce Diversity. After graduating in 1994, she continued to work with Stewart Friedman, a Wharton professor, on a project showing how organizations could benefit from more flexible work arrangements. Their research eventually led to the article "Work and Life: The End of the Zero-Sum Game," published in the November–December 1998 issue of the Harvard Business Review (HBR).
APPROACH WORK AND FAMILY—UNLIKE 30 YEARS AGO, MARRIAGE

There has been a “megashift” in how people approach work and family—choices, not requirements—“but we’re only halfway through this shift,” she says. “Because of outdated assumptions about who gets promoted at work, I’m guessing many of my classmates felt like they were forced to choose. Some chose to focus on their careers, and didn’t have as much time for family or didn’t have a family at all. Others chose to drop out of work to focus on family.” Thirty years from now, Ms. DeGroot predicts, workers will not have to face such stark choices.

Ms. DeGroot’s work with ThirdPath—and her marriage and family life—have been written about in numerous publications, including The New York Times (2008), Parenting (2004), Working Mother (2002), and Fast Company (2000). In her own story she shared with other ‘79 alumni, Ms. DeGroot describes her family as a “lacker family.” “Neither of our kids have been much involved with that many organized sports or activities after school,” she writes. “Instead we spend a lot of time just ‘hanging out.’ The family epitomizes what ThirdPath calls a ‘shared care’ arrangement, a 50–50 split between them: ‘Jeff’s in charge two days a week, I’m in charge two days a week. We try to impress on Wednesdays.’

One common arrangement was the dual-career family (ten respondents), with full-time jobs and full-time childcare. Equally common (ten respondents) was to be single—either divorced or never married and raising children. Others were divorced with children (five respondents), or in a relationship without children (four respondents). “It was fun to see how many of my classmates had chosen different paths from the ones our parents had modeled,” she says, “including a growing number of families where fathers play an active role in the everyday care of their children.” (Seven respondents, including Ms. DeGroot herself).

Below are a few brief excerpts from the stories of the Class of 1979, illustrating the diverse choices alumni have made.

Dick Burks, electrician

In 1990 I came to St. John, Virgin Islands, for a two-week vacation, and I ended up staying for the past 18 years. I live on my sailboat in Coral Bay Harbor on the east end of the island. Coral Bay is a small community of about 300 people—mostly West Indians, ex-Hippies, and boaters. It was a wonderful place to raise my two daughters. My kids call Coral Harbor “the park,” Coral Bay town “the land of grey ponies.” I am now happily remarried to my second wife, Mary.

Derrick Ford, lawyer

I’ve been married for six years (we dated for 13 years and had our first date at Jimmy’s). We have two months-old daughters, Natasha and Yasmeen, and realize now that it is not easy being older parents."

Edward Gilpin, financial manager

In 2006, on a whim, I decided to leave behind the High maintenance and self-absorbed clientele of Hollywood, selected a handful of clients to keep, and moved back to the Midwest to try to relax. I sold my house in LA just ahead of new home in this great small town, Douglas, on Lake Michigan. Three months later, I packed up Angus (the dog) and am happily settling into the life of living in a small town.

Harry Gray, musician and teacher

We adopted a baby girl, Asia, from China in 2004, and gave birth to Venus in 2006. We moved our family of four to northern California in 2005, to a beautiful neighborhood in the seminatural environment of El Sobrante, about 10 miles north of Berkeley. The girls can walk around our block and visit our friends, their adoptive aunts, uncles, and siblings, who are musicians, teachers, carpenters, and other craftspersons, along with a diverse blue-collar and retiree mix. Four retired racchearces are pasted at the end of our block. I am proud to be an equal partner in raising my two little darlings.

Jul (Hamp) Love, human resource manager

My parents moved in with us and we are now a half years ago, and to accommodate them we built on an “in-law” addition, which expands the bedroom and library for Dad’s vast collection of books. Mom is in an assisted living facility near us. Dad, on the other hand, seems to have no plans of giving up his mental acuity. There are times I call him our 89-year-old child.

Alan Hurst, IT professional

My husband, Randy Hensley, and I became legally married in Vancouver, BC, over Thanksgiving weekend 2003. We have no kids, preferring to ‘raise a couple of tortoises and be grandparents to our best friends’ four children.

Randee Kallish-Saturno, former development director

I am no June Cleaver, but I have to say it has been so much fun being the chauffeur; the cook, and the problem-solver. Getting to the happenings at school, getting to know all the friends, and managing a home where all are welcome and good food is usually available.

Hans Massaquoi, lawyer

It seems that I went to work in January of 1991 and never left. I’m sure that if you look close enough you’ll notice the fluorescent lights burn on my skin. Thirty years after high school I remain unmarried and childless. I’ve been fortunate to have had a few wonderful relationships, and marriage and “a” child are still not out of the question. (Who am I kidding?) My parents are very understanding, and never a “grandchild” was on the horizon. They are adopted grandparents to our best friends’ four children.

WHAT IS CLEAR FROM HER CLASSMATES’ STORIES, MS. DEGROOT SAYS, IS THAT THERE HAS BEEN A “MEGASHIFT” IN HOW PEOPLE APPROACH WORK AND FAMILY—UNLIKE 30 YEARS AGO, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY ARE CHOICES, NOT REQUIREMENTS—but we’re only halfway through this shift,” she says.
A year U-High truly got itself together

An editorial from the Midway

It’s not often that students, parents, faculty members and administrators unite to achieve a common goal as frequently as they did this year. Even before classes started, when three Lab Schools security guards had to choose between lower salaries or losing their jobs, students, parents, faculty members and administrators came together in sending letters to save the guards’ contracts.

Then in October, Student Council President Jack Brewer demanded that students have a say in reviewing Commencement performances, and with administrators, designed an ad-hoc student-faculty committee to do just that.

Student Council members stepped up again in January when many freshmen felt the new Computer Science requirement unhelpful and detrimental. Freshmen Class Officers petitioned administrators and Computer Science teachers, attempting to remove the requirement for the future. They didn’t succeed, but they changed Student Council’s longtime reputation as passive bystanders. That same initiative stretched beyond U-High’s campus. When an earthquake devastated Haiti, also in January, a dozen school groups organized drives and gathered donations within a week, and continued for that and other causes.

But the school pulled together most when Senior Faith Dremmer, an 11-year Lab Schools student, died after a bicycle accident during Spring Break.

Teachers and administrators cut their breaks short to devote to communicating with press, contacting families, and comforting one another. Almost everyone called or sent letters, posters and gifts to Seniors Kaia Tammen and Julia Baird, who were severely injured in the accident, and their families.

Faith’s friends crafted an all-school Celebration of Faith, orchestrated with sincerity and bittersweet emotion only a week after the accident on the third day of Spring Quarter.

U-Highers also organized a scholarship in Faith’s honor, designed memorial wristbands, constructed paper cranes for good luck, and perhaps most importantly, supported each other, their parents, their teachers and their administrators. Many felt closer to their classmates, teachers and counselors, or motivated to revitalize stagnant friendships. Even those who didn’t know Faith personally felt pain through their peers.

As the school united, it seemed to many that U-High was, indeed, one, inseparable family. But it wasn’t hugs and kisses all the time. In January, several students were expelled after they stole iCart laptops, leading to stricter computer policies. Not to mention less severe incidents, including graffiti insulting a retiring teacher painted on the school roof during the Senior Prank.

Regardless, from behind the missteps of several students, what U-Highers achieved when they came together—not for themselves, but for the entire Lab Schools—shone through.

And not just once or twice.
WHY ALUMNI MATTER

YOU TIE US TO OUR TRADITIONS.
YOU ARE OUR EMISSARY, OUR EXAMPLE OF WHAT DEFINES A LAB GRADUATE.
YOU HELP MAKE THE POWERFUL EDUCATION YOU EXPERIENCED POSSIBLE FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF STUDENTS.

In only a few years, with the partnership of volunteer alumni leaders, the number of Lab and U-High alumni who are giving back to the Schools has increased by nearly 40 percent.

Your gift to the annual fund gives Lab the greatest flexibility to put your donation where it will matter most, whether recruiting talented faculty, providing much-needed financial aid, or purchasing new equipment for athletics or the arts.

GIVE ONLINE NOW:
www.ucls.uchicago.edu/support-Lab

Connections 2011
Saturday, March 5, 2011

Alumni on the Field
Sunday, October 3, 2010
Join other Lab alumni as they take on a team of Parker alums in our first-ever alumni soccer match.

Chicago Alumni Reception
Monday, October 18, 2010
Details to come. Check your mail and our website soon!

Alumni on the Road–New York
Thursday, October 21, 2010
Hosted by Felix Baker, ’87, and Julian Baker, ’84