DEMOCRACY



FOR YOU O DEMOCRACY

Come, I will make the continent indissoluble, I will make the most splendid race the sun ever shone upon, I will make divine magnetic lands, With the love of comrades, With the life-long love of comrades.

I will plant companionship thick as trees along all the rivers of America, and along the shores of the great lakes, and all over the prairies, I will make inseparable cities with their arms about each other's necks, By the love of comrades, By the manly love of comrades.

For you these from me, O Democracy, to serve you ma femme! For you, for you I am trilling these songs.

WALT WHITMAN from Leaves of Grass (1892)





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FEATURE

DEMOCRACY

















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On the Cover: Sculpture by Sam Aspinwall '90 outside of the Wender Arts Building at Putney

TOC photo: Kerry Michaels '75 fuses activism, art, and nature in her work. Learn more on p. 16.

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Putney faculty and staff practice social distancing while harvesting spinach in March

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DEAR PUTNEY ALUMNI, PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS, AND FRIENDS,

When the *Putney Post* board met to kick off this issue, the theme seemed urgent, obvious: *Democracy*. We were excited to tackle that theme, find the best of many appropriate stories, and tell them well. We were willing to take the risk of addressing a big topic and maybe not getting it quite right—whether by leaving out something obvious, or being too fluffy, or being too serious. Still. *Democracy*. Yes.

How little we knew then.

I first wrote this letter on St. Patrick's Day. Butte, Montana, the "most Irish city in America," had shut its bars and restaurants and canceled its parade. Cities were quiet. Europe was initiating lockdown. We all nervously awaited what would happen next. Here at Putney, our normally quiet life was quieter still.

Now, two weeks later, Vermonters and many others are under orders to stay home, we have made the decision to postpone the 2020 reunion until 2021, and our students will not return to campus this year.

How quickly things change.

Usually the time delay of our production schedule means that alumni write of cross-country skiing adventures and their friends read updates as the rhododendrons blossom. Or the rivers in a Long Fall story are long frozen by the time you read about them.

We don't know what the world will look like when you receive this issue. Six hours is a long time right now. Six weeks has become an unfathomable eternity. And yet, that is how long it takes for us to get this issue from our desks to your hands.

In her letter on p. 25, Emily Jones talks about community. As we face a global pandemic and quiet times of anxiety locally, Putney is doing what it can to navigate these unsteady times thoughtfully, trying to balance care for ourselves with responsibility to our local community. We are sending eggs and fresh spinach to the Putney Foodshelf. Some of our day students have volunteered to work at local farms that need healthy labor. We are teaching our students from a distance, although we have some international students and others on campus for whom going home was not a good option. We're finding ways to keep our school community connected electronically, which is a stretch both culturally and logistically, but, in Emily's words "a skill worth learning." Last Thursday, 20 of us gathered at a distance on the soccer field for our first Sing of the spring. Putney persists and its deeply rooted spirit endures.

Recently, a lovely email thread circulated among Putney's class of 1958, a reminiscence of life at Putney during the 1957 flu pandemic. To quote Susan Elmendorf '58, "If there are some gains to the quality of life during this weird, terrible time, it may be renewed communication with old friends."

It is in that spirit that we send this issue your way. Wishing you all health and happiness,

ALISON FRYE Editor | *Putney Post* | April 3, 2020 NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT TO THE PUBLIC WEAL, THAN TO FORM AND TRAIN UP YOUTH IN WISDOM AND VIRTUE. WISE AND GOOD MEN ARE, IN MY OPINION, THE STRENGTH OF A STATE; MUCH MORE SO THAN RICHES OR ARMS, WHICH, UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF IGNORANCE AND WICKEDNESS, OFTEN DRAW ON DESTRUCTION, INSTEAD OF PROVIDING FOR THE SAFETY OF A PEOPLE. —BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO SAMUEL JOHNSON (AUGUST 23, 1750)

EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY

Progressive education is designed as education for democratic society. As the viability of our democracy is challenged, there are increasingly pressing questions about how the school itself operates as part of the body politic. Putney has varied over its history in its approach to the political world, at different times overtly espousing particular political philosophies and at others seeking to bring different voices into the community. In 2020, finding the right path is thorny, not least because so many people are clear that the answers are obvious.

We do not uphold the First Amendment here—not all speech is permitted on campus. Although we encourage students to seek out those with whom they disagree, on campus our boundaries are defined by, "We believe that all people are created equal." So racism, homophobia, discrimination on the basis of gender identity, or any myriad other opinions based on personal identity are all unacceptable here. At the same time we urge students to try to get out of the southern Vermont "bubble" and learn from their political opponents. But, as I asked the trustees in January, when does reaching across the aisle become tantamount to appeasement? At what point do we move from reaching out to "find a middle ground" to reaching out so as to "know thine enemy?" We have clear opinions here about lying, cheating, and stealing.

I have long asked our teachers to avoid pushing a political viewpoint in class, but how to manage when simply telling the truth is a political act? We use school labor and fuel to take students who want to canvas and get out the vote—I'm not clear if we would do the same if a student wanted to go canvas for a candidate who violates the basic ethics of the school. If the democratic system continues to be dismantled, how shall we navigate between the imperative not to widen the enormous social divides in our country, and the imperative to stand up for democracy?

"Education for democratic society" rolls nicely off the tongue, but is a deeply complex challenge even at the curricular level. When our faculty debated the requirements of the Putney Core, we used "they will be voters in our country" as a touchstone. What history and law do they need to know? Is an understanding of statistics more important than calculus? We agreed that "Ethical, Cultural and Social Justice Perspectives" would be our first curricular throughline, followed by Inquiry and Research, Argumentation, Literacy and Communication, and Collaboration. I find myself always pleased to find the word *Ethical* at the start of the list. Since we think that Putney's curriculum consists of everything we do here, our education for democracy includes both our formal education and our way of life.

We have been charged by the board of trustees to graduate students who can work effectively across race, class, and cultural divides. This was an enormously idealistic charge when it was written in 2015, and seems even thornier today. But in spite of the questions of how this plays out in today's political morass, these are skills that will serve students all their lives. The first step must be to teach them to listen carefully, especially to people they don't already agree with—not something teenagers do naturally. We do not teach formal debate which, as Jonathan Ellis and Francesca Hovagimian opined in the *New York Times* recently, encourages bending of facts to fit a point of view, and favors a closed-minded style of argument. We do teach the skills of a "spider discussion," in which students moderate and learn to listen and include. For contentious issues about which reasonable people can disagree, we use "civil disagreement discussions," a fishbowl model to teach students to inquire of others about their points of view rather than merely reiterate their own. We also hold Putney Panels sometimes after dinner, in which a moderator asks questions on a particular topic of a panel of students, faculty, or both.

These are useful tools, but our most effective way to teach the habits and skills of a democracy is to let the students learn by lived experience. They nominate and elect not only the student heads of school, but also the student trustees, student head of dorms, and the members of the standards committee. The students in these positions carry real power, and annually we can observe how well the community has chosen. When the question was called recently about the way in which the work committee members were appointed, the student body divided into discussion groups to explore the pros and cons of different systems of election/selection for this critical team. Ultimately, they chose to make modest changes to the system, giving the student body more oversight in the process. This chance to practice the handling of power gives students more real experience in political democracy than the "hobby politics" of following the daily news as one follows the sports pages. (For more on this topic, see the work of Eitan Hersh at Tufts.)

Perhaps the most powerful lesson in democracy that students learn here is that of obligation to community—an obligation that precedes one's own individual wants. The interdependence of the student body and the refusal to allow any single student to simply be a passenger creates an understanding of each individual's responsibilities to something outside themselves. In my wide experience of Putney alumni, this seems to be the most enduring outcome of a Putney education.

None of this is easy, and in a recent assembly English and ethics teacher Nathan Zweig unpacked the phrase in our Fundamental Beliefs in which we are exhorted to "take risks, if need be, for moral growth." He suggested moral growth in three kinds of risk: risking comfort, with the gain being freedom of action; risking certainty, the gain being freedom of thought; and risking being wrong, with the gain being connection. These are all critical attributes of citizens of a democracy, as Mrs. Hinton knew. We can't teach these explicitly, but can only plant the seeds in our way of life and nurture the growth when and where we see it.

It is not an easy time to be a teenager, although it is hard to find a time when it was. We need to raise dandelion children, not orchids, if they are to be strong enough to be useful citizens in the world we are leaving them. I do believe that the body politic is better for having Putney-grown people in it, and we will continue to analyze the ethical and practical questions of how to educate for democracy at a time when the democratic system itself is in danger.

RE:DEMOCRACY COMMUNITY CHAT

POSEY '20 subject: democratic debate tonight THERE IS ANOTHER DEBATE TONIGHT. YOU CAN STREAM IT ON NBC NEWS. WATCH! BE INFORMED!

NAYDERSON '20 SUBJECT: VOTING ACROSS GENERATIONS 2020 FOR MY SOCIAL DOCUMENTARY STUDIES CLASS I A selection of emails shared in the Putney community during a two-week stretch in February shows the many ways this work is part of our daily lives on the hill.

ALICE '20 SUBJECT: WANNA TALK ABOUT RURAL HEALTHCARE? I AM CURRENTLY DOING A PROJECT ON RURAL HEALTHCARE. IF YOU FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE INSIGHT INTO THIS AND WOULD BE WILLING TO TALK TO ME, PLEASE LET ME KNOW!

AM DOING AN INTERVIEW PROJECT ABOUT WHAT INFORMS PEOPLE'S Decisions around voting in presidential elections across generations. In order to do this, I hope to interview people who will be voting for the first time in 2020 elections or primaries. NAOMI LINDENFELD SUBJECT: NEED A RIDE TO THE POLLS?

NFFFRING RIDES TO ANYONE WHO NEEDS A RIDE TO PIITNEY OR RRATTIFRORD TO VATE TAMARRAW RETWEEN 3 AND 6 PM. IF YOU ARF OR ARF NOT GOING TO VOTE AND WOULD LIKE TO ACCOMPANY TO THE POILS RRATTIFRORO TO SEE WHAT THE PROCESS IS LIKE, I WOULD BE HAPPY TO BRING YOU WITH ME.

SARAH WILES SUBJECT: VOTER REGISTRATION INFO FROM FRIDAY ASSEMBLY

STATES WHERE 17-YEAR-OLDS CAN VOTE IN PRIMARY IF THEY'LL BE 18 BY NOVEMBER 4, 2020: Colorado, connecticut, Delaware, illinois, Indiana, kentucky, maine, Maryland, mississippi, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Vermont, West Virginia

BODHI '22 call for bernie! ZEKE AND I HAVE JUST STARTED CALLING AND CANVASSING FOR BERNIE TO TALK TO PEOPLE IN PLACES LIKE TEXAS WHO ARE GOING SUSANNAH '20 SUBJECT: SCHOOL MEETING TONIGHT!

THIS IS A REMINDER THAT THERE WILL BE AN ALL-School meeting tonight at 6:45 in the faculty Room. We will be clarifying any questions About the work committee election/selection Vote that will be happening on friday.

ELIJAH '21 SUBJECT: BE INFORMED

JUST RECENTLY PUT TOGETHER A VIDEOS ABOUT IHF CANDIDALES PR FIIR 2020. I D ENCOURAGE FV WHO'S TH NG ARNIIT FIFCTION IHF WANTS TO BE INFORMED **ON THE** CANDIDATES TO WATCH THEM.

TO VOTE SOON TO GET PEOPLE MOBILIZED! EVEN IF YOU AREN'T THE BIGGEST BERNIE DIEHARD, IT'S STILL A GREAT EXERCISE IN DEMOCRACY AND A WAY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SYSTEM EVEN IF YOU ARE TOO YOUNG TO VOTE. WE HAVE HAD SOME GREAT CONVERSATIONS WITH SOME REALLY INTERESTING PEOPLE.



Most of us stumble through our daily interactions with technology. We forget our passwords, or have never listened to a podcast, or are anxious about updating to Windows 11. Most days we're happy to find the remote control and remember to charge our phone. The ideas of big data and open systems are so far beyond our comprehension that we give them no thought. Our brains simply don't stretch that far.



Thankfully, people like Innocent Obi, Jr. '12 are working behind the scenes, weaving information together as they analyze, question, and solve problems most of us don't know exist. Democracy in action takes many forms. Some of that work is less visible, less sexy. It's slower.

EMPOWERING AND INFORMING A CITIZENRY IN THE MODERN AGE

BY ALISON FRYE

Next for Innocent: Working as a research associate at MIT's Civic Data Design Lab.

Innocent completed his master's degree in data science and computational science at University of Michigan's School of Information last spring, and recently joined MIT's Civic Data Design Lab, which synthesizes big data for the public good. Civic data? Urban information architecture? What?

In practical terms, consider that it's questions like the following that spark Innocent's creative mind: How can we design better software that will help the people who rely on the government? How much of the government's work is redundant? Inefficient? And what would it look like if that were to change?

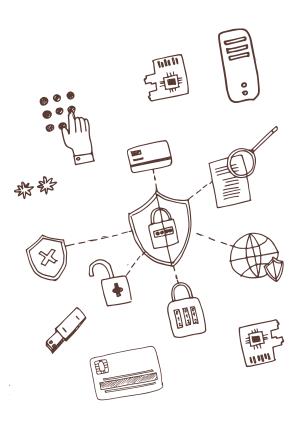


INFRASTRUCTURE, INFORMATION, AND EFFICIENCY

Imagine our multilayered system of government, with its alphabet soup of agencies and offices, and an entire country relying in some way on its successful functioning. Now consider that many of those offices exist in their own technology silos: they can't easily share information, they use highly varied computer software, and have their own systems of security clearance and encryption. A central part of the Obama administration's vision was a focus on modernizing our government's tools, processes, and practices to ensure that it delivers the best outcomes to citizens.

During the Obama presidency, Innocent worked at the Beeck Center for Social Impact and Innovation at Georgetown University with Sonal Shah, who helped create and was the former director of the White House Office for Social Innovation and Civic Participation. The Beeck Center works to create and promote ideas focusing on how the public, private, and social sectors can collaborate to support innovations that produce better outcomes for society. The group sought to strengthen what they called the "architecture for innovation" in government. Working with White House organizations such as 18F, the United States Digital Service, and other stakeholders across federal, state, and local government, Innocent and his colleagues documented and recommended better ways that our government could use technology, data science, and more effective processes to deliver better outcomes for citizens.

They identified and solved problems. They created and institutionalized effective channels. They improved efficiency



for the many stakeholders in systems deeply woven into the fabric of American life: juvenile justice, health care, education, and more. For example, prior to the creation of 18F and the United States Digital Service, federal agencies did not have a common process or set of tools to use in evaluating new government tech initiatives from a user-centered design perspective. "[18F] would try to understand the entire process of applying for things like food stamps, federal student aid, and Medicare in order to find and remove redundancies and inefficiencies with the goal of bettering the citizen's experience," says Innocent. The Beeck Center team not only highlighted successes in government innovation, they also focused on understanding the failures, such as the rollout of healthcare. gov. "It was the first time our government really tried to design something with a software-first, agile approach. It was not completely successful, but we learned a lot from it and tried to instigate a more iterative and risk-tolerant approach to innovation that mirrored how complex software gets delivered outside of government."

THE HUMAN IMPACT

While the work Innocent and his team proposed and evangelized helped people in far-reaching ways, one innovation in particular stands out for him. In the

U.S., the process of preparing a federal budget requires a lot of coordination across different government agencies that usually do not work together. In 2006, the Budget Formulation and Execution Line of Business was created to reduce the inefficiencies, redundancies, and risks that existed in the federal budgeting process. In order to carry out this goal, MAX.gov was created as a simple tool to support file sharing and document collaboration across agencies. In only a matter of years, it became the de facto government collaboration tool.

While it may seem small, MAX.gov transformed the way our government agencies work and collaborate. "If you build one central platform where information can live, and you build a secure fence around it, anyone from any agency can use it if they have the right credentials. In this example, MAX.gov made it easy for OMB to reach out across the federal government to collect the data they needed for prepare the federal budgeting."

How powerful is the impact of centralization? "Before, hundreds of government agencies (and sub-agencies of sub-agencies) were not all speaking to each other, and were using a variety of software. Each of those layers is a potential security risk, and you couldn't easily translate data from one agency to another. It also gets really expensive." By building one central platform, they created the ability for federal officials to safely access and use sensitive information. "We're trying to highlight solutions that can be scaled," explains Innocent. "We want to encourage the use of tools like MAX.gov in agriculture, education, transportation...across the federal government."

MAX.gov's utility was spread through word-of-mouth by career officials on the ground. Today it has been used by organizations ranging from Health and Human Services to 30 different American Indian tribes. When the appropriate non-governmental agencies can easily access secure information, multi-agency, multi-stakeholder collaboration becomes the rule and not the exception. MAX.gov and other government innovations like it are engendering "open-source" mentality in government. From openly sharing tech across agencies to opening government data to the wider public, our government becomes more

amenable to new ideas, new perspectives, and new ways of doing business.

BRINGING DEMOCRACY FORWARD

Is the process of bringing new ideas into government political? Innocent believes so, but stresses that it should be seen as a non-partisan matter. "Most representatives agree that we need a centralized process to allow new technology that is effective, appropriate, and secure. However, by focusing so much on technology, we tend to forget about the citizen and whether the technology we are building is actually solving problems. Oftentimes it's the small, boring stuff at the edges, like MAX.gov, that makes our government 8 more effective and more Learn More responsive to citizens and their needs."

Innocent also stressed the importance of bringing the next generation of technologists into the work of government. As the federal workforce begins to retire, he believes we need a younger, techenabled group to continue the work of making our government run.

"The Departments of Defense and Treasury still use floppy disks because they're secure. Our data is constantly exposed. We have to be up-to-date on data security," he emphasizes.

We asked Innocent whether technology can save democracy. His answer? "It's not a technology question. It's a people question. It's a function of ethics, morality, and a system we subscribe to. It's not the job of technology to save democracy; it's a function of the people who comprise a democracy to save it. Technology has made it easier to communicate and to organize people, but you still have to lead, you have to think, and you have to build structures and systems that work. Technology enables us, but it won't save us." Democracy in action takes many forms. Some of that work is less visible, less sexy. It's slower. Even so, it's every bit as important.

MAX.gov

With the goal of encouraging tech innovation and modernizing the archaic ways our government works and collaborates, MAX.gov was launched in 2007 and further integrated during the Obama Administration.

An office of federal employees within the General Services Administration (GSA) that collaborates with other agencies to fix technical problems, build products, and improve how government serves the public through technology

SANDED DEN OF BRODEN



hen future Earthlings look back on challenges facing the human race in 2020, the reason they may be able to look back at all is because of **Caitlin Baggott Davis '95** and – others like her who are working to preserve the planet while saving humanity from itself.

"We're on a steady path towards climate chaos and erasure of economic security," says Baggott Davis, executive director of North Star Civic Foundation (North Star), a Portland, Oregon-based organization working to

address pressing local, state, and national issues.

If Baggott Davis's pronouncement seems like an exaggeration, consider the findings of a recent study by the Federal Reserve, revealing that millennials own only 4% of the nation's real estate. At the same age, baby boomers owned a third.

WE LEARNED TO SEE THE STORY BY LOOKING AT THE DETAILS, THE HINTS IN THE LAND. WHY WERE Some trees burn-Scarred? Why were trees on this side of the hill different from the other side?"

> Pictured above: Governor Kate Brown signed Oregon's minimum wage bill into law in March of 2016. Caitlin Baggott Davis '95 celebrates the signing, flanking Governor Brown, back row, just right of center. Inset: Caitlin Baggott Davis '95, founder of Oregon's Bus Project, and executive director of North Star Civic Foundation

"This is a huge drop in opportunity from one generation to the next," says Baggott Davis, explaining that home ownership is a gauge to predict the long-term fiscal health of a generation and of the economy overall. For millennials, a generation already in its peak earning years, the statistics are alarming.

Housing issues aren't the only crises facing millennials—and millennials aren't the only ones facing multiple crises, according to Baggott Davis. "The three problems we all face are a collapsing democracy, a dying planet, and unequal economic opportunity." She describes these multiple crises as "linked both by the common characteristics of being urgent, polarizing, and technically complex, and because solving one will require solving the others, too."

The *Putney Post* interviewed Baggott Davis to find out what's in the secret sauce that's seen the five-year-old organization introduce a landmark Oregon minimum wage law and how North Star plans to bring to heel other challenges to communities across Oregon.

Tell us about your minimum wage proj-

ect. In 2015 there were three competing proposals to increase the minimum wage. Essentially for \$15, \$13.50, and a very likely legislative deal closer to \$11 per hour, which



was too low for working people in Oregon's urban areas.

These were political numbers, not measures of cost of living. Our belief was that no one who works full time should live in poverty. But more than a quarter of Oregon households couldn't meet this basic goal.

We commissioned research to learn about costs of living in different parts of the state, in urban and rural areas. We met with employers in every region to understand how different proposals would affect their stability and looked at regional economic resiliency. Out of these conversations, we identified a new path forward—three different minimum wage standards pegged to the living costs in each region. That idea was passed into law in 2016.

A write-up in *The Atlantic* magazine heralded the new law, saying "Oregon's tiered system...addresses one of the chief concerns some economists have about raising federal or state minimum wages: that rural areas will struggle to weather a decrease in jobs that may come with the increased cost of labor."



Is the minimum wage project emblematic of North Star's projects? Very much so. This process highlights a core tenet of our organization. We believe in the power of data and deliberation with new people at the table and an open-minded approach that doesn't leap towards the obvious solution.

Your website says: We bring a spirit of discovery, disruption, and collaboration to accelerate broad-scale change in the areas of wealth inequality, climate change, and open democracy. What does this mean? North Star is an experiment with an entrepreneurial and "risk positive" approach. The issues we tackle are gnarly problems. Solving them requires taking risks-experimenting, seeing what works, and what fails. We think that philanthropy is pretty well-positioned to take these kinds of risks, to be a laboratory for the public good.

We need to experiment and push the boundaries, to take public interest issues facing communities, and accelerate change around solutions at the scale of problems, not tinkering around the edges. We bring

in new information and new people. Sometimes this means bucking norms and truisms that others are holding as sacred.

Can you give an example? In this presidential election, the word "electability" is on everyone's lips. The mainstream media uses it this way: For Democratic candidates to be "electable," they need to appeal to the conservative voters who "put Trump in office." But the people who put Trump into office were the ones who didn't vote in 2016 or voted for a third-party candidate. The math on that is clear. Trump's election was caused by decreased participation on the left, not increased participation on the right. The truism that "electable" means more conservative is false.

What would it look like if we said that to be electable a candidate has to appeal to primarily Black and Latinx voters? To Green Party and Working Families Party voters? To millennials and Gen Z voters, who make up the largest national voting bloc?

How do you get more people to partic-

ipate? For North Star, our approach is to help direct resources to the communities that I was just talking about, to amplify their voices and build their civic power-voter registration, education, community organizing. Through our Vibrant Communities Fund, we move our own funds and also provide a path for other donors to move resources into communities where powerful, thoughtful, long-term organizing results in building permanent political strength. And we focus on geographies where that civic participation is likely to make a difference-where the conversation is most dynamic. It's non-partisan and not tied to the election cycle.

Tell us about the Bus Project, which you headed from 2013-2015. The Bus Project was an organization started by a group of friends in 2002. In a bar! We were in our early 20s, just out of college, looking to make a difference in George Bush's America, after 9/11. Oregon had endured a Republican legislature for a decade. We got hundreds of volunteers to tour Oregon in a bus, knocking on doors for progressive candidates. The Senate flipped, and then the House.

We also registered our generation to vote. We got about 20,000 people registered every year. But it was frustrating because there were still nearly half a million Oregonians who were eligible but hadn't registered. We just couldn't raise enough money to reach everyone. I asked myself, "Why do charities fund this? Why doesn't the state have skin in the game?" So we developed a policy, Automatic Voter Registration, by which the state automatically registers everyone-it's great! Sixteen states have passed it now. It should be the national law.

Did your time at The Putney School inform your experience working at the Bus Project and now at North Star? My approach to problem solving is grounded in the experiences I had at Putney. I think of Tom Wessels, our science teacher, who took us into the forest and asked us, "What happened here?" And then he wouldn't talk for a while. We learned to see the story by looking at the details, the hints in the land. Why was there a rock wall here? Why were some trees burn-scarred? Why were trees on this side of the hill different from the other side? northstarcivic.org

Learn more: North Star **Civic Foundation**

The Bus Project nextuporegon.com

I learned both curiosity and patience at Putney. And that leads back to looking at the housing crisis, at income inequality, at our democracy and asking a different set of questions about it. For instance, we have a hous-

> ing problem that many look at as a shelter and affordability problem. It is that, but it's also fundamentally a wealth-building problem for people of color and for this generation. This gets back to the federal reserve study about home-buying. Home ownership is economic security. What does it mean

for an entire generation to be locked out? What happens if we focus on solving the shelter part of the problem, but ignore deep wealth inequality?

Any last words of wisdom? Often, when we talk about civic life, change agents, and missions, we are talking about challenges, about duty. I think one of the core traits of civic life is also joy. Joy from the affection, friendship, and connection of individuals trying to improve their communities together.

Also, I have taped to my desk a fortune from a cookie that reads: Do not fear failure. So, there's that, too.

JOSH LAUGHLIN ^{*}82 DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP

BY BRIAN D. COHEN

Josh Laughlin is of Putney. That he represents both the town and the school reflects both his current commitment and historical roots; his grandfather, Edward H. Dodd, noted editor, publisher, and author, and an old friend of Carmelita Hinton, settled in Putney in the 1950s with his children, Lisa '52, Roxanne '54 (Josh's mother), and Ted '58, all attending The Putney School. Edward's involvement in the Historical Society, in bringing Landmark College to town, and running a subsistence farm on Windmill Hill made him a de facto town father, moving and shaping the town from within. Edward died in Putney in 1988.

Josh grew up in New York City and attended The Putney School, graduating in 1982. Following Putney, he traveled for a year and then studied agronomy at SUNY Cobleskill and horticulture at Cornell. After college he bought a piece of land in Putney, serving on the Putney Fire Department and as an emergency medical technician at Rescue Inc. in Brattleboro, while designing and building his own home in 1989. Josh returned to the city to complete a degree in emergency medicine at Columbia University, before realizing the stress of urban crisis wasn't his calling and returning to Putney to stay. He married Alice Luhrmann '87 and started Tavern Hill Woodworks.

As they began to raise a family and start businesses in the community, Josh and Alice found their own involvement in civic organizations increasing, Alice as chair of the Putney Town School Board and Josh as chair of the Town Select Board. Emily Jones, Putney's head of school, observed his skillful management of the town and, hoping to enhance the relationship between the town and school, recruited him for the board of trustees of The Putney School in 2011. He has been chair of the board since 2016.

The State of Vermont and The Putney School share parallel working models of the concept of democracy. John Dewey, perhaps our country's most influential philosopher on education and democracy, born and raised in Vermont, believed that "the foundation of democracy is faith in the capacities of human nature; faith in human intelligence and in the power of pooled and cooperative experience." Dewey believed that education played the essential role in creating citizens who possessed the capacity and will to make participatory democracy work. Mrs. Hinton, a devout adherent of Dewey, who according to one account met the great philosopher on a transatlantic passage (a story that remains to be told), echoed Dewey in her aspiration that through education one "definitely progresses along the long slow road toward achieving a civilization worthy of the name." (from Putney's Fundamental Beliefs). In Mrs. Hinton's words there is no sense that you're doing all this for yourself alone; a Putney education intends you to participate in, help build, and improve the world around you, and to act as a critically thinking, informed, and cooperative contributor to our political and social life. Mrs. Hinton saw The Putney School as the embodiment of education for democracy as Dewey envisioned it.

One of John Dewey's favorite sayings was, "Democracy begins in conversation." In Vermont, one of the purest forms of democratic conversation, Town Meeting, persists. The opportunity to present your ideas, opinions, and petitions, and to debate and vote on issues of public concern is a still vital inheritance of pre-Revolutionary local control. Town Meeting has convened in Putney since 1770 to work out the tasks of running a town, from snow plows and fire trucks to schools and personnel. Daily matters are overseen by the Select Board that Josh chairs. The Select Board's governing rationale is explicitly operational; its representatives are elected by town residents and entrusted to run the town, efficiently, like a business, with orderly, direct mechanisms to provide the best service within economic constraints.

Putney residents don't need to be reminded of Tip O'Neill's adage that "all politics is local"—Josh knows most of his constituents by name. His most important role in Town Meeting and on the Select Board is to make people feel their concerns are being addressed by translating legal and governmental complexities into plain English, explaining the meaning of specific statutes and articles, and boiling down exactly what is at stake in each decision.

The nature of governance of the board at The Putney School is somewhat less straightforward, its directives and responsibilities less prescribed, and its constituency defined quite differently. While the Town of Putney represents a wide disparity of income and age, the school exists for the benefit of an age band of four years from a primarily self-selecting and generally much wealthier community and who then then leave (except maybe to return to serve on the board). The Putney School's board can be more aspirational and creative in thinking because its basic purview is not operational and because the mission and demographic of the school is in every way more intentional. Though The Putney School board is not a representative board, it does include two students who are full voting members, who participate in every deliberation, and vote with the board as a whole. Referring to the student research and initiative that led The Putney School to align its investment policies and funds to the school's ideals, Josh prizes the participation, opinions, and perspectives of the student board members, and knows students can get the attention of the full board and make change happen. As a Putney student, Josh was not involved in school government but felt very much part of a community that was self-supporting and in which everybody cared about everybody else.



Josh during his student days

In both decision-making bodies, Josh aims for consensus, and the two groups of highly independent-minded and often opinionated folks arrive at agreement more often than one might expect. Josh has a steadiness, unshakability, and seriousness of purpose about him that encourage resolution of matters at hand. Democracy is hard work, as are running a town and a school, and friction is inevitable, but without humor, lively exchange, and enjoyment of each other's company, the process can be drudgery. Always, Josh reminds those present to think of those not there to speak up. Josh reflects on the differing challenges faced by town and school. Democracy may begin in conversation, but most town residents don't show up at Town Meeting, nor are their voices easily heard. The persistence of disadvantage and inequity in our political and social systems and the disparity of wealth (and opinion) in the Town of Putney remain disturbing issues. Josh also recognizes that the voices heard at The Putney School represent far less socio-economic diversity than the town that surrounds it and far less identity diversity than the country as a whole.

For Josh there's always something that has to be thought about or responded to coming at him from somewhere in his Putney world. He wears this responsibility without discomfort or strain. He shows that leadership in a democracy, beyond the contribution of informed voice, is the coordination of those many voices towards the advancement of all.

KERRY MICHAELS '75 ON CHANNELING URGENCY AND ENCOURAGING ACTION THROUGH ART

I STARTED CREATING THESE in the midst of a tornado of emotions about the current state of the world. But these speak to the hope I feel when I look at the fierce strength of the generations that are following us; a hope that the world is waking up and taking action, particularly when it comes to climate and environmental issues.

Creating the images is different than most of the work I have done as a landscape and fine art photographer, as there is a ticking clock that starts as soon as you pick a flower, leaf, or berry: they start to lose their vivacity almost instantly. Usually, I decide to do a VOTE image after I've read something particularly alarming in the paper, or have seen something inspiring. I search my yard and garden looking for natural letters to forage. Also, sometimes on walks, I just see a letter appear in the woods, and then must pick it and hunt for the other letters. Natural "Es" are hard to find. While I prefer the letters to be totally natural, sometimes I do cheat to create a letter or to make one more legible. Then I lay out the word on a background. This can take a while to get the letters and kerning right—I often do several iterations, swapping out letters to get it legible. Sometimes by the time I get it right, everything is too wilted, and I have to start over.

Creating these images is like throwing hope out into the world. It is one thing I can do to express my deepest conviction that voting matters. People die for the right to vote and it is inconceivable to me how cavalier people can be with something this precious.

The reaction to the VOTE photos has been powerful. I think they speak to many people who are alarmed by the state of our country and are filled with despair at what has happened in the last four years—but also still hope that we can start to bend the arc of justice and sanity in the right direction. I have had several requests from candidates and "get out the vote" efforts and am donating the use of the images. To me, voting is the keystone to change.

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See more of Kerry's work at flyingpointphotography.com

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A. A.

REFLECTION ON A LIFE OF SERVICE he day I talked to Tim Rieser '70, he mentioned matter-of-factly that he'd spent the day meeting with or talking to people from the United Nations, Haiti, Vietnam, Egypt, and others from the United States in and out of government. It was a typical day for Tim, Democratic clerk of the Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations and senior foreign policy aide to Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy, the most senior senator on Capitol

Hill. Perhaps best known for working with Senator Leahy to lay the groundwork that enabled the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Cuba in 2015, Tim has spent 35 years working in the Senate. Tim's frontline work has provided him an opportunity to learn the inner workings of our government, as well as the power to help Senator Leahy influence U.S. foreign policy and diplomacy, solve international problems, and help people in need in the poorest countries. We share pieces of his story below.

BY ALISON FRYE

Tim Rieser says of his work, "Senator Leahy has let me do this job in ways that few senators would."

What has kept you engaged in your work? When you went to work in Washington in 1985, did you imagine that you would still be there 35 years later? No, I didn't imagine that. But Senator Leahy has let me do this job in ways that few senators would. The job is always interesting, and often rewarding. I regularly meet with people from all over the world-from the middle of the Amazon to the streets of Hanoi. Some still live the way their ancestors did a thousand years ago. I've also met plenty of famous people, but always to talk about problems that need help from the Congress to solve. It's a bit like being a lifelong student and getting paid for it, but it's not just theoretical-you can also be an activist. It can be very frustrating not

always being able to do what needs to be done, like stopping the war in Syria. But we try our best.

Thanks to the writers of the Constitution, only the Congress can appropriate funds to operate the federal government, and the Appropriations Committee decides how much, and for what purposes, to use that money-from protecting forests and endangered species to controlling the spread of contagious diseases, providing food to hungry people, defending human rights, and countless other things foreign and domestic. There are so many needs and limited money so we have to try to balance how we spend it and decide what else to focus on because you can only accomplish a few new things each year.

In addition to my usual appropriations job, which involves working with the Republican staff to draft the annual foreign operations funding legislation, I also work on other things when I see an opportunity or need that isn't being addressed and that Senator Leahy would want something done about. That has kept the job interesting because I can work on different types of projects-like starting a program for Senator Leahy to help people who lost limbs from war injuries, or advocating for the release of social activists and journalists imprisoned for reporting on corruption or other abuses of power. I spent ten years working on the international campaign to ban antipersonnel land mines, and I got involved with Cuba because Senator Leahy felt U.S. policy toward Cuba was a failed vestige of the Cold War that someone needed to try to change.

It seems we're living in especially partisan times politically. Has this change in culture affected your work and how the appropriations committee gets things done? Senator Leahy was first elected in 1974 and I came here in 1985. He had been a prosecutor in Vermont and I had been a public defender in Vermont. So we both had backgrounds in justice and the law. Congress was a very different place 35 years ago. Everything was much simpler. No computers. No Internet. A lot of bipartisanship. And the legislation that I helped write was only 50 pages long. Today it's 350 pages and much more complicated. Despite that, the nature of the work of the Appropriations Committee has not changed that much. Even though Senator Leahy's counterparts have been Mitch McConnell, Judd Gregg, and Lindsey Graham, all conservative Republicans, he and they have worked together as I have with their staffs, despite our disagreements.

In this job you *have* to work together. We are a group of about 15 staff—Republicans and Democrats, some of them half my age—who work for different senators or representatives. Our job is to produce, and ultimately reconcile, the House and Senate bills. There are always thousands of items in disagreement between us, ranging from the placement of a comma to billions of dollars in spending. We sit around a table for weeks and discuss each item. Sometimes it drags on for months.

IF YOU WALKED INTO THE ROOM AS AN OUTSIDER AND LISTENED, YOU WOULD HAVE A HARD TIME IDENTIFYING WHO ARE THE DEMOCRATS AND WHO ARE THE REPUBLICANS. AT THAT POINT WE ARE WORKING AS A TEAM, AND YOU COME TO VALUE EVERYBODY'S OPINION...

Each of us has our own priorities and perspectives, but we all do what we can to help produce the best outcome. Each of us has areas of expertise, some substantive, some technical, and we depend on each other. If you walked into the room as an outsider and listened, you would have a hard time identifying who are the Democrats and who are the Republicans. At that point we are working as a team, and you come to value everybody's opinion and everybody's willingness to pitch in. Compromise is at the heart of it. You never get everything you want. It takes a certain kind of person who is okay with that and who sees it as one of the necessary aspects of the democratic process. But you fight for what you think is important, and it can get heated.

I'm often frustrated that we are failing to address the biggest and most urgent problems, while wasting time debating things of little or no consequence. But you make the most of what you *can* do, and we can do a lot. The public doesn't know most of what we do, because it doesn't make the headlines. Often, especially these days, we are stopping bad things from happening, which no one hears about.

Despite the frustrations, there are plenty of examples of doing good things. And as you wield more influence, which comes with Senator Leahy's seniority, the demands on you increase. It's not a bad thing. You want to be able to use your position to do as much good as you can, but the flood of people asking for help can be hard to handle. Although we work long hours often late into the night, we are constrained by politics, the budget, and the fact that sometimes what we're asked to do is not the job of the federal government.

Did your experience at Putney fuel your interest in service? What was it like to come of age during that time in history? Although I didn't clamor to go to Putney, my parents wanted me to go and it was the best experience I could have imagined at that age. There's no question that my time there and the people I met had a lasting influence. Many of them are among my closest friends today. Actually, I think the most valuable thing I acquired was an affinity for physical labor-splitting wood, rebuilding a stone wall, even digging a ditch. I learned that from Bob Gray and I'll always be indebted to him for it. I would say the same about an appreciation for art and art history, thanks

to Bill Hunt, and learning to cross-country ski from Johnny Caldwell.

At that time in your life you develop something of a social conscience, at least you should. It was during the Vietnam War, and there was a lot of concern and anger about what was happening. There was a lot of social activism that rubbed off on many of us. It's intangible and hard to quantify, but it had a life-long impact on me. I also attribute a lot to my parents, who gave me an appreciation for empathy and a good sense of what's right and wrong.

We were angry about what was happening, but we also saw the genesis of an inspiring popular movement that I wish still existed. We went to anti-war protests in Washington and I ended up at Woodstock along with some other Putney friends. Looking back, we really thought that vision and positive energy were what the future was going to be like, and that the country's leaders would share those values. Things obviously didn't turn out that way, which has been one of the most disappointing things to me.

We do see some of that popular mobilization today focused on climate change. There is intense human competition for too few resources. The consequences are already becoming severe, with so many conflicts over land and huge numbers of people searching for water and food and temperatures where they can survive, while others live in extravagant luxury. Future generations will have to find ways to deal with it because we have failed to do what is needed, and the consequences will be that much worse, and the time available to deal with it will be that much shorter.

What do you consider to be your greatest professional accomplishment? Where do you feel you did the most good? It's

difficult to say because some of the smaller things are the most rewarding, like starting a program to get low-cost eyeglasses to people in the poorest countries. Or to dig wells for nomads in Niger. Or to protect the shrinking habitat of great apes. Or to prohibit U.S. aid to foreign military forces that violate human rights. Or to get drugs to people with schistosomiasis, a tropical disease most Americans have never heard of. I've learned that the amount of money we spend is not a measure of what you accomplish.

Cuba is certainly something I feel good about, although much of that work is being

undone by the Trump White House. I'm convinced that the trend of history is in our favor because the people of both countries have a lot in common and want better relations. It was an incremental process of getting to know the Cuban authorities and them getting to know us that started in 1999 when Senator Leahy and I first went to Cuba. We had many interactions over the years. They developed a degree of trust toward us because they knew the Senator was strongly opposed to the U.S. embargo. But he and I also didn't hesitate to tell them when we disagreed with their policies. We have always been respectful, not lecturing them. That was very important. One of the most useful things we did was help change the way our governments talk to each other. While we have big disagreements with the Cubans, the way we had communicated was fraught with arrogance and it fueled resentment, and it prevented the kind of diplomacy that can solve problems.

For the past 20 years I've worked with Senator Leahy to address some of the most difficult problems that have persisted since the Vietnam War—the use of Agent Orange, the millions of unexploded bombs and landmines that continue to kill and cripple innocent people, and finding the remains of U.S. and Vietnamese MIAs. It was a Vietnam veteran, Bobby Muller, a friend of the Senator's and mine, who urged us to tackle these issues. Over the years, Senator Leahy and I have been to Vietnam many times.

Both governments agree that as a result, attitudes have changed dramatically from resentment and distrust to appreciation and wanting to cooperate together to solve problems that we feel a responsibility to address, and that Vietnam needs help with. We are getting rid of the bombs and cleaning up the former U.S. military bases contaminated with Agent Orange, and helping the disabled. It has been the most rewarding of anything I've worked on, and it continues. Senator Leahy and I lived through the war and this has enabled us to do something positive about what we feel was a catastrophe for both countries. Ted Osius '79 was a great ally on this. He did an outstanding job as the U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam, and the Vietnamese people loved him.

The emotional and political obstacles were difficult to overcome, but it has changed our relations with Vietnam in very positive ways. It was like a door that Senator Leahy felt we needed to walk through, a door that



had been closed for many years because our government was not willing to take the initiative. We had to fight the lawyers at the Pentagon who were worried that we would be opening ourselves up to legal liability. Senator Leahy had to convince the Secretary of Defense, who ultimately agreed that it would be good for both countries.

We're talking about democracy in this issue, from the nitty gritty to the big picture. You do this work daily. What do you see? We meet and hear about people being persecuted by repressive governments all the time. We see the trauma they and their families suffer. If you are a political opponent of a government calling for free and fair elections, or a social activist who is critical of government corruption or other abuses, you are targeted, threatened, wrongly imprisoned, and quite possibly killed. I've met many people like that, including some who were later assassinated. Senator Leahy has supported and defended such people all over the world. And while our own system has many flaws due to greed, abuse of power, racism, and injustice, we have the institutions created by Madison, Jefferson, Washington, and the others that make it possible for us to counter those destructive forces far more effectively than in most countries.

I'm frequently in the Capitol building, often at night when few others are around, and you can't help but think about the Tim, fourth from the right, at the Bien Hoa Airbase, an Agent Orange cleanup site in Vietnam

people who wrote the Constitution and how indebted we are to them. Each of us is here for only a relatively short time, and I've long felt that our job is to do what they would have wanted us to do. They were far from perfect, and the world has changed in ways they could never have imagined or anticipated. But they anticipated a *lot*. They understood a lot about human nature, and that greed and unchecked ambition can destroy democracy.

I think those of us who have been lucky to work in these jobs have a responsibility to try to do what they envisioned for us. Sometimes I remind other staff of that. When something is being proposed that I think would weaken the checks and balances in the Constitution and give too much power to the President—whether a Republican or Democrat—I've reminded them that there's no way Madison and Jefferson would have wanted us to do that.

We deal with kings and autocrats of all types. At the moment we're dealing with one in our own country. Sometimes in our negotiations with the House I've threatened to hang a picture of George Washington on the wall to remind people of who came before us and why we're here. The other staff make fun of me a bit, but they also know that I've been here longer than any of them and it's because I believe in the place.

POSEY '20

wants to see the Global Warming Solutions Act signed into law in Vermont, so she has spent her time and energy in this, her senior year, gathering momentum for it through grassroots action and good old-fashioned phone calls. This is also the year she turns 18, so she is one of the lucky young people whose first election is national. She's been glued to the news of the candidates, delving into politics, canvassing for her candidate, and hoping to inspire more people to get out and vote.

"I heard this year that only 55 percent of people in our country vote. That's 45 percent of people whose voices are not being heard. A big goal of my canvassing and talking to people is getting out the bottom or the 45 percent, who are likely minorities."

"I think that part of our democracy is not very functional. It leaves a lot of voices unheard."

We asked if, despite that, she considered herself a hopeful young member of our democracy.

"Yes. I definitely am. But I am for a radical change."























ELI '21

advantage of this opportunity. and classmates, who might also take together information for his peers Vermont. This inspired him to put This is true in 17 states, including however, he can still cast a vote in it. He won't be 18 in time for the primary; made an interesting discovery this year.

said King-Bond. ", oto of mode them to vote," inform them that they could vote, "But really, I wanted to not only

issues that are going to affect us for the rest of our lives." are just two examples of very current mate change and student loans, which going to be living with the effects of clihe said. "Because, as a generation, we're duty to help my peers get out and vote," interested in politics, I have a kind of "I think that, as a young person

CALLING ALL Swing State Putney Alumni

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Putney students are hoping to help register and turn out voters in swing states in the fall of 2020. If you would like to support their efforts, through connection or collaboration, by hosting a group, or with your ideas, please contact us.

"An election year is a great educational opportunity," said Ledlie '21, who is helping to spearhead this work. "But it would be great to not only learn, but to get something done and really have an impact off the hill."

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"Light in the Dark" by Marcie '21 received a silver key at the Vermont Scholastic Art and Writing Awards.

LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

In this *Post* we are bringing you the thoughts and voices of Putney people who are engaged in the messy work of democracy in a wide range of ways. Much of this work happens behind the scenes, whether in Capitol Hill meeting rooms (*A More Perfect Union*, p. 18), teasing apart data and building better systems for citizens (*OPEN*, p. 8), effecting change at the state level (*The Secret to Saving Democracy*, p. 11), or via the inclusive processes of town meeting and running a school (*Democracy*, *Governance, and Leadership*, p. 14).

We believe the Putney education plants these seeds and teaches these skills, and you'll see stories throughout the issue that highlight how we both educate for and live actively engaged in democracy here on the hill.

There are so many others of you doing wonderful work at the local, state, and national levels. Although our students don't read the *Post* much, assuming it's for the old folks, I think this issue will inspire them and give them hope. In case you were wondering, Bernie won the student Democratic primary handily, but there was enough of a spread among the leaders to show that much thought had gone into the decisions. Many had gone to New Hampshire for chances to see the candidates, since they don't much bother coming to Vermont.

We are launching our own election season as I write—the elections for the student heads of school are tomorrow. Here's there's no money in politics, and there are never personal attacks on the candidates' motives, voting history, or hairdo, but still, the elections matter and are taken seriously. Town meeting is the day after.

All the best to all of you, EMILY JONES Head of School

An update as we go to press—we are in the midst of designing our spring term around the challenges of the coronavirus. Watching how differrent nations respond is a powerful lesson in the need for leadership in turbulent times. Finding the balance between allowing individuals to make their own choices and creating conditions likely to be best for the majority is well nigh impossible. That said, I've been much heartened by the sanity and kindness of the extended Putney community as this unfolds.



Webelieve the Putney education plants these seeds and teaches these skills.





Movie Premiere

Films by a consortium of Putney students and one alumnus premiered at the

Latchis Theatre in Brattleboro on January 31. Shangyou '19, Xiuyuan '20, Shixue '21, and Zirui '22 create movies and documentaries as "ET8 Studio," out of a shared passion for cinematic art and a hope to reshape the Western world's images of China.



KEEPING IT COOL

The KDU was built in the 1940s. And it's been using the same walk-in cooler since then. But the building received a major upgrade this year, with a new and expanded cooler, freezer, and another space dedicated to processing the farm's bounty. All told there is one third more cold storage. "What's fantastic is how this project will increase both energy efficiency and our ability to grow and use more of our own produce." said Randy Smith, CFO, noting that the old compressors ran around the clock. The project was made possible by several generous donations.

OPEN ATHLETICS

"Open" athletics is a formal change in nomenclature for Putney's league this year. But it's one Putney is proud to have practiced and advocated for for years already. Teams are now "girls" or "open," as in open to anyone regardless of gender identity. "We've been doing this already with most of our teams without the language," said Ryan Hockerlotz, athletic director. "But we adopted the language because we want to make it really clear that we are going to provide the best possible athletic opportunities for all of our students."



Check out more of this year's Project Weeks videos on Putney's YouTube channel. Lily '20 is listening to the story of the Putney forest. Using GIS mapping and different tracking techniques, Lily is studying the animal populations and behavior in our 600-acre campus.



Students tapped our trees just

before leaving on March break.

MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS

On January 20, the Putney School community paused our regular schedule and reflected on the values, lessons, and struggles that marked the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Our essential question was to reflect on the ways that we as a community or individually (in the words of our Fundamental Beliefs) "...combat prejudice and injustice wherever it appears; strive for a world outlook, putting oneself in others' places..." We had meaningful conversations and looked for action steps that we can take individually to help build that "beloved community."

EQUITY & INCLUSION UPDATE

The academic year has been very busy for the Office of Equity & Inclusion and the student-led diversity committee. Here are a few of their projects and initiatives:

- Road trips to college campuses for students who would not have access otherwise
- After-dinner discussions on macro- and micro-aggressions
- New student group for those living with chronic illness
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day spent "in community, learning, stretching, doing"
- Civil Disagreement series started
- White anti-racist group created for adults on campus
- Faculty and staff attended trainings and conferences on topics ranging from "Teaching While White" to trans inclusion to race and class



SCHOLASTIC AWARDS

Twenty-two Putney students took home Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, with over 80 works of art recognized. "These works were created in academic and evening arts classes, during Project Weeks, and even by students on their own," says Lynne Weinstein, chair of the art department. "Creativity is woven into the fabric of the Putney experience, and we can see how fruitful that is for our students." We are proud to share their honors with the larger community.

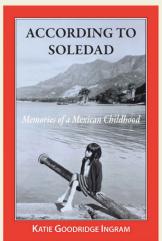
> Painting (above) by Broden '21 Scultpture (below) by Jingting '21



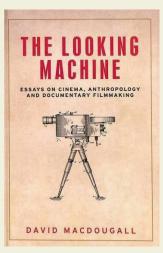
ALUMNI CONNECTIONS

Putney alumni, hosted by Tim Dwight '74 (pictured p. 47), laughed it up on the set of *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* LATT SHG

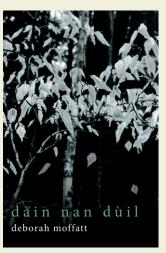
ALUMNI BOOKS



According to Soledad Katie Goodridge Ingram '55 Sombrero Books, 2020 The book is a fictionalized memoir. Its narrator, Soledad, describes a multicultural life in Mexico City and later on in Ajijic on Lake Chapala. The dilemma is coming to terms with being American but feeling Mexican. She says: "My skin is white but my soul is brown." Her father, a wellknown rare book dealer, is often absent in his hunts for treasured books from the time of moveable type. His presence is precious but his absence echoes throughout the story. Growing up as what Soledad calls a gringicana—half gringa and seemingly half Mexican—is a challenge and there are betrayals as well as blessings on both sides of the equation.







The Looking Machine David MacDougall '57 Manchester University Press, 2019

This collection of essays presents the latest thoughts of one of the world's leading ethnographic filmmakers and writers on cinema. It provides essential reading for students in cinema studies, filmmaking, and visual anthropology. The dozen wide-ranging essays give unique insights into the history of documentary, how films evoke space, time, and physical sensations, and the intellectual and emotional links between filmmakers and their subjects. In an era of reality television, historical re-enactments, and designer packaging, MacDougall defends the principles that inspired the earliest practitioners of documentary cinema. He urges us to consider how the form can more accurately reflect the realities of our everyday lives. Building on his own practice

in filmmaking, he argues that this means resisting the pressures for self-censorship and the inherent ethnocentrism of our own society and those we film.

Landing

Sarah Cooper-Ellis '67

Levellers Press, 2019 Survivor of tragedy and bad choices, retired schoolteacher Meredith has almost given up on love when she moves back to the small Vermont town where she grew up to help in her family's maple syrup business. As she explores the potential for a new life. Meredith encounters a series of enticing detours and blind alleys disguised as payoffs. She finds new meaning in the hills and forests of her childhood, and an unlikely relationship offers an enticing potential for the kind of love she's been in search of.

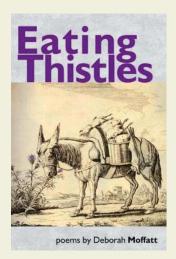
Dàin nan Dùil

Deborah Moffatt '71 CLÀR, Inverness, 2019 Possibly the first book published by a Putney alumnus/a in Scottish Gaelic, Dàin nan *Dùil* is inspired by Vermont and the natural world of Moffatt's homeland-a remote area of dense forest and the occasional small, poor farm on the way to town. She also writes about the world and includes poems in this collection, which are based in South America, the Middle East, and the northwest provinces of Canada, as well as Scotland and Ireland.

Eating Thistles

Deborah Moffatt '71 Smokestack Books, 2019 Like the donkey in the Aesop fable, the U.S. Scottish writer Deborah Moffatt speaks a language "sharp and barbed." She knows it is "better to eat thistles" than "to survive in a nation born of vanity." And that those who close borders

ALUMNI BOOKS (continued...)



soon turn against their own. Drawing on Scottish and Irish Gaelic poetry and other literary and folk traditions, *Eating Thistles* reimagines contemporary and historical events-Syria, St. Kilda, the Sudan, Latin American dictadura, and the mass executions of Soviet Jews, Roma, and prisoners of war by the SS—through Aesopian language, slipping between history, myth, and memory. A powerful and original study of guilt, denial, innocence, and complicity.

Exile Music

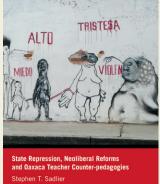
Jennifer Steil '86

Viking Books, 2020 Based on an unexplored slice of World War II history, *Exile Music* is the captivating story of a young Jewish girl whose family flees refined and urbane Vienna for safe harbor in the mountains of Bolivia. As a young girl growing up in Vienna in the 1930s, Orly has an idyllic childhood filled with music. Her father plays the viola in the



philharmonic, her mother is a well-regarded opera singer, her beloved and charismatic older brother holds the neighborhood in his thrall, and most of her eccentric and wonderful extended family live nearby. Only vaguely aware of Hitler's rise or how her Jewish heritage will define her family's identity, Orly spends her days immersed in play with her best friend and upstairs neighbor, Anneliese. Together they dream up vivid and elaborate worlds, where they can escape the growing tensions around them. But in 1938, Orly's peaceful life is shattered when the Germans arrive. Her older brother flees Vienna first, and soon Orly, her father, and her mother procure refugee visas for La Paz, a city high up in the Bolivian Andes. Even as the number of Jewish refugees in the small community grows, her family is haunted by the music that can no longer be their livelihood, and by the family and friends they left behind. While Orly and her

Movements on the Streets and in Schools

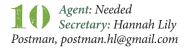


father find their footing in the mountains, Orly's mother grows even more distant, harboring a secret that could put their family at risk again. Years pass, the war ends, and Orly must decide: Is the love and adventure she has found in La Paz what defines home, or is the pull of her past in Europe—and the piece of her heart she left with Anneliese—too strong to ignore?

Movements on the Streets and in Schools: State Repression, Neoliberal Reforms, and Oaxaca Teacher **Counter-Pedagogies** Stephen Sadlier, Former Faculty Peter Lang, 2019 Last fall, Chilean students jumped turnstiles to protest subway fare increases, unleashing a country-wide uprising against privatization and state repression, and demonstrating how across Latin America, education engenders social movements

far beyond teaching and learning. Leading the way across Latin American social movements are teachers from southeastern Mexico, whose street-level protests and alternative education practices in the classrooms remain vibrant and storied. This book, drawn from a multi-year ethnography into spaces of teacher activism, describes how teachers carry out their pedagogies and politics. While in global north sites like the United States teaching may be framed as occupational, in the Mexican southeast, with a century of public intellectual ferment, teachers embody a social and moral commitment. Their work, showcased in this book, reveals instructional and social movement strategies in intersectional vitality, exemplifying what democratically engaged teaching might look like in contexts across the globe.

Have you written a book? Let us know by contacting *alumni@putneyschool.org.*



Agent: Zach Gruver Secretary: Needed

Agent: Needed Secretary: Needed

Agent: Needed Secretary: Needed

Agent: Lindsay Moon Secretary: Needed

Agent: Needed Secretary: Needed Mollie Montague (montaguemollie@gmail. com): Hey Putney friends! I'm sorry I won't be seeing you at the reunion this year, but hopefully more in passing and at future events. Having graduated from Dickinson in May, I am currently serving with AmeriCorps in northern Virginia/ DC area at the non-profit Edu-Futuro. We work with immigrant youth and their families. It can be hard work but it is very rewarding. My service year ends in August and I'm excited to see what is next! Also I got to see these awesome friends this summer. Hit me up if you're heading to DC any time soon.

Agent: Needed Secretary: Needed Emma Prochaska (emkaragan@gmail. com): Hello friends! While writing a creative nonfiction essay about my sheep, Caesar, I had to do a lot of reflection on my time on the hill. I realized that there really isn't a place quite like Putney. I got to explore anywhere my curiosity led me, and wherever my shenanigans let me go. Unfortunately, I only discovered my passions for sustainable living and environmental consciousness after I left because I was surrounded by like-minded people and Putney culture as a whole. I wish you all the best of luck with whatever sparks the fire in you to do something extraordinary. I've said it before and I'll say it again: the world needs Putney people. I miss you all.



Alfred Heller'46

Alfred E. Heller, an editor, writer, environmental advocate, and leading authority on international expositions, passed away on December 20 in San Rafael, CA. He was 90 years old. Alf was a fourth generation Californian. A progressive, forward thinker, he was one of the early environmentalists in California to see beyond the wilderness to a golden state that needed protection from the unchecked, unprecedented economic development of the mid-20th century. He founded a small, influential citizens' group in 1962 called California Tomorrow. Its landmark publication, California Going, Going..., was the first study to address the state's deteriorating environment; and many of the major recommendations made in California Going, Going... and the group's quarterly publication, Cry California, became environmental laws and policies that protected the integrity of the state. Alf was educated at Peninsula School in Menlo Park, Putney, and Stanford University where he entered the creative writing program newly initiated by novelist, historian and environmentalist Wallace Stegner, who became his academic advisor. In the summer of 1947, Alf participated in a Sierra Club wilderness excursion led by conservationist and mountaineer David Brower, subsequently the club's executive director. Alf would later say that Mr. Brower's campfire lectures were inspirational moments in his young life. During the Korean War, Alf volunteered into the U.S. Army. He graduated from Officer Candidate School in Fort Bliss, TX, and served as an artillery lieutenant in Korea during the immediate post-armistice period. In 1955, Alf married Ruth Botsford, also a Stanford graduate. The couple first lived in Vermont where Alf taught English at Putney, then New York, before settling in Grass Valley, CA, an old mining town in the Sierra foothills,

to raise a family. There, Alf started a weekly newspaper, the *Nevada County Nugget*, and became its publisher and editor. He used the newspaper to advocate successfully for important environmental projects in Nevada County, including the transformation of a former hydraulic gold mine into a state park. After an unsuccessful community campaign to stop a freeway from being built through the heart of Nevada City, almost destroying the quaint old assay office where Alf ran his newspaper, he started the statewide conservation organization, California Tomorrow.

Alf was a founding trustee and the first president of the Clarence E. Heller Charitable Foundation, established by his brother to support programs that helped the environment, human



health, education, and the arts. Over a span of years, he was a member of the California and national boards of governors of The Nature Conservancy, and on the boards of the Planning and Conservation League, the Trust for Public Land, San Francisco Planning and Urban Research (SPUR), and the Resource Renewal Institute. Alf was an incisive and original thinker, a gifted writer and editor, and a mentor to many. He had a lifelong love of classical music, Lake Tahoe, and hiking in the great state of California. In addition to Ruth, his wife of 64 years, Alf is survived by four daughters, eight grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

Emily Platt Hilburn'49

Emily Platt Hilburn of Falmouth, ME, ended her life journey on November 1, 2019. Born and raised in Ohio, she majored in modern dance at Mills College in California. There she met Roy Hilburn, whom she married in February 1953. Emily and Roy's odyssey of 66 years took them to Vermont, Ohio, Montana, North Carolina, Florida, and several locations in California and Maine.

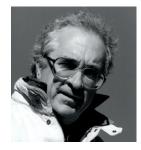


They welcomed three sons and a daughter. For six summer seasons while they lived in California, they operated the Maine Sailing School in Bayside, ME. Emily's interest in education led to positions as a special education

assistant in the public schools of Portland and Cape Elizabeth. In retirement Emily and Roy traveled from Florida to Maine via both the Appalachian Trail and the Intracoastal Waterway. They explored from coast to coast in their RV, built a log home from a do-it-yourself kit, and maintained residences in both Florida and Maine as snowbirds. Emily loved to take long walks, share blueberries from her garden, cruise to solar eclipses, and swim near her family's summer cottage in Northport. Celebrating her 88 years are her husband, Roy; her children Steven, Daniel, Jeffrey, and Linda '77; her siblings Bob '51, Bill '54, David, and Lisa, as well as numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and her many friends at the OceanView retirement community of Falmouth.

Peter Rockwell'54

Peter Barstow Rockwell died peacefully on February 6, 2020 in Danvers, MA, at the age of 83. Peter was born in New Rochelle, NY, to Norman Percevel Rockwell and Mary Barstow Rockwell.



He and his two older brothers grew up in Arlington, VT. In 1953, the family moved to Stockbridge, MA. Peter attended Haverford College. In his first year he was run through by a fencing foil in a match against Princeton. As

an alternative to fencing, Peter decided to try sculpture, studying with J. Wallace Kelly. He graduated with an English

degree and enrolled in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts to study sculpture full time. In 1961 Peter received a small fellowship to study carving in Carrara and he would cross the Atlantic for Italy on a Polish freighter with his wife Cynthia (Cinny) '54 and 18-month-old son, Geoffrey. A year later, Peter and family moved to Rome, where he lived and worked most of his life and where Thomas, John, and Mary were born. In Rome, Peter worked in different types of stone, in bronze, in wood, casting in resin and in clay, usually showing back in the USA to earn a living. He received numerous larger commissions like the Ned Wolf Memorial in Philadelphia and Boston College's Tree of Life. A commission to carve gargoyles for the Washington Cathedral led to a lifetime love of monsters. His monsters now grace the small chapel in Giogalto, Tuscany, where he had an old farmhouse and studio. He loved to carve large arrangements of stone monsters in public, inviting students to help him as he did at Haverford in 1990. Peter loved teaching art and art history. He also gave unique guided tours of sites, notably showing Rosalynn Carter the Roman Forum. He led tours across Europe, took his family on many camping trips to Greece, Turkey, and Scotland, and examined sculpture in Pakistan and India. Peter was an expert in ancient stone carving technique. For vears he inspired conservators to read the tool marks on unfinished statues and he consulted on such notable works as Trajan's column, the Trevi Fountain, and Bernini's Angels. He lectured with the experience of someone who practiced the craft. Some of his knowledge, along with many of the thousands of photographs he took of tool marks, are gathered at the website The Art of Making: Stoneworking in the Roman World. He also published a number of articles and books. Peter was predeceased by his beloved wife, Cinny (Cynthia Ide), in 2013. He will be missed by his two brothers, his four children, and his eight grandchildren. An outof-date web site is available at www. geoffreyrockwell.com/PRportfolio.

Carl Newlin'56

Carl Albert Newlin of New Haven-archivist, artist, poet, illustrator, and teacher of art and art history-died October 10, 2019. Born in 1937 to Janet and Albert Chauncey Newlin, Carl grew up in Scarsdale, NY, beginning his art career at the tender age of twelve. He received a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and and MFA from the School of Art and Architecture at Yale University. The youngest of three sons, Carl was originally named after his father. Customarily, it would be the eldest son who would be named for a father, but when he was old enough, he took the unusual step of changing his name, dropping Chauncey and adding Carl. This example of independent thought and expression was a recurring theme in his life. Baptized episcopalian and brought to church each week during childhood, Carl later came to deeply admire Japanese buddhism in adulthood, but ultimately chose to return to Newlin family roots in Quakerism, embracing principles of tolerance and love. New Haven was Carl's chosen home and he chose it deliberately after many travels and cultural immersions across the world. Carl studied drawing with George Groer at the Art Students League in New York and drawing and graphics with Gabor Peterdi. Carl was eager to soak up all the knowledge, wisdom, and skill he could from other artists and cultures. But his greatest artistic influence came in 1954 when he met Swiss surrealist Kurt Seligman. Carl's self-illustrated book, The Crow and Other Poems, published in 1967, paid careful homage to Seligman and Konishi. Carl's mid-life brought with it new examinations and freethinking, leading to Carl's learning biblical Hebrew and converting to Judaism. On his 50th birthday he celebrated his bar mitzvah. It was the beginning of many years of commitment to the Jewish community in New Haven. Restless for new experiences and challenges, Carl left the safety of a tenured academic position and became archivist of the Jewish Historical Society of Greater New Haven. Within the Newlin family, Carl held the reputation of possessing an exacting encyclopedic knowledge of known relatives and family events. Ever on the hunt for a chuckle or a good belly laugh, Carl rejoiced in

humorously regaling family and friends with stories of family dysfunction and his own folly. He was a sweet, humble man and a gentle soul. Carl was predeceased by his parents and elder brothers, George and John, and is survived by his three nephews, a niece, two first cousins and the children of those generations for whom he had great fondness.

Alfred Rollins'67

Fred Rollins, 70, of Potsdam, NY, passed away December 9, 2019. He was born in Potsdam on June 23, 1949, son of the late John P. and Ottilie Hirt Rollins. Fred is survived by a brother, Chris Rollins, and sister-in-law, Kathy Rollins, both of Upper Marlboro, MD. Fred received his undergraduate degree from St. Lawrence University in Canton, NY, and pursued graduate studies at University of Chicago, Clark University, and was trained in museum studies at Cooperstown. Fred began his professional career in 1975 as an associate cu-



rator of history at the Rochester Museum and Science Center in Rochester, NY. In 1983, he became director of the Wayne County Historical Society in Lyons, NY, and in 1994 became executive director of the Jefferson County

Historical Society in Watertown, NY, from which he retired in 2005. Not content to remain idle, Fred accepted a position as a library aid at the Potsdam Library in 2008. In 2010, he became a museum aid for library and archives at the Potsdam Public Museum. After leaving the latter post for health reasons in 2016, Fred continued to support the museum, including as president of the Friends of the Potsdam Museum. Fred was an avid historian, researcher, and collector, with active interests in stamps, coins, postcards, and photographs. His collections have formed the basis for a number of public presentations of local historical interest.

William Hirshberg'75

Bill Hirshberg, an avid skier, camper, and hiker who worked as a real estate developer and as a lawyer, died in August 2019. He was the cherished husband of Julia Levy, beloved son of Francine and Irwin Hirshberg, and son of Margi Hirshberg. Bill had three sisters and two brothers, as well as many nieces and nephews.

[We received notice of Abijah Reed '53's April 9, 2020 death while this issue was in print.]

Abijah Reed '53

When asked what he imagined the *Putney Post* notice for his death would



say, first he said "He loved mathematics and woodworking." Then "Abijah wanted it to be known that his three years at Putney were

far and away the most important years of his education."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Alumni for whom we don't have an obituary or whose notice of death we received as the issue was in production are listed below.

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Gabe Jackson (*Faculty*, 1946–48)

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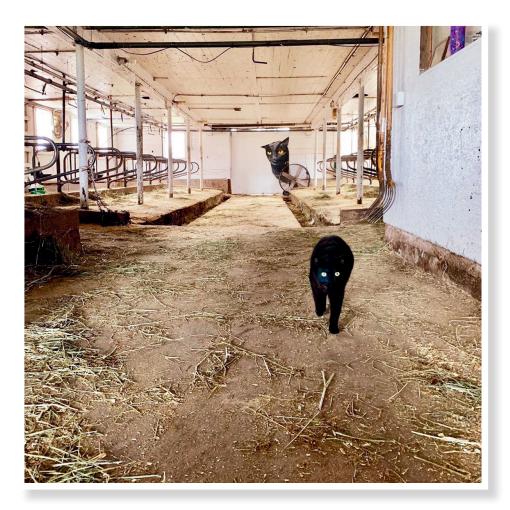
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putneyschool.org/reunion

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