



## MHC Friendships

The years at Mount Holyoke are a huge part of my life, and yet I have not maintained a substantial friendship with anyone from then. In 2005 I decided to make the effort to say hello before only goodbye is left.

I sent out Christmas cards to the two women for whom I had valid addresses. One responded right away, and it was like no time had passed. She is successfully balancing children and career, and is my conduit for a group of former teammates. I am ecstatic to be in touch with them again.

The second woman responded much later. She apologized for the delay, but had spent the last year recovering from cervical cancer treatments. She positively impacted my time at MHC immensely, I am so thankful I had the chance to tell her that.

Then the oddest thing happened. After posting the news about my daughter's medical condition, one MHC classmate contacted me with a sincere and uplifting e-mail. I searched in vain for my *Llamarada* to make sure I was putting

the right name and face together because I can't remember ever having a conversation with her in college. At this point, she and I have had such in-depth correspondence, revealing freakish parallels in our lives, that my description of her has morphed from, "some girl I barely knew" to "my friend."

This is where we are in our lives. In between all the promotions and awards, real life is happening. College was a long time ago. We are twice as far in our lives as we were, but that time, and in particular the experience of Mount Holyoke, is a bond strong enough to reach across the years; a laurel chain twining us to one another no matter where we are in our life journey.

**Shawn Reilly Mills '85**  
*Steamboat Springs, CO*

## New Reunion Format Draws Sighs

The planned change in the format for reunions makes me terribly sad.

I attended most of my reunions since my graduation in 1971. The programming was

sometimes interesting, but never the reason for my attendance. I came in order to connect with members of my class and, even more important, to be a part of something huge and wonderful that spans the generations.

My next reunion will be my fortieth. I don't want to wait until my seventieth to be invited back for commencement [and] be among graduates who are younger than forty-five. It's a loss for the younger alumnae too, to miss out on seeing the dynamism of their fifty, sixty, seventy, and eighty-year-old counterparts.

If there were no programming at all, the incentive for me to attend reunions would still be powerful. But if my next six reunions do not include any young women, the most powerful incentive for me to attend will disappear. Is it possible we're giving up too much?

**Joan Schwartz**  
**Weber '71**  
*Ann Arbor, MI*

I was astonished at the decision of the Ad Hoc Reunion Committee that decided everyone after

the twenty-fifth (except loyalty classes) is to be banished to Reunion II to mingle with the similarly aging and aged (winter 2007 *Quarterly*).

I cannot begin to say how wrongheaded this is. The greatest experience I had at my fortieth was standing in the rain for the laurel chain and watching the kids' faces as they put together the concept that one could be cool well beyond the age of thirty.

I absolutely reject the notion that women between forty-six and ninety-one must be banished from the company of younger women. What happened to the wonderful generation-hopping joy of meeting younger, talented, funny people? What new politically correct ruling says that women after the age of forty-six are confined to a ghetto of discussions about menopause, sex after sixty, golf scores, and indigestion?

Guess what? We older people who still have an interest in the world like to be with younger people. I am bored to tears by the geriatric agenda I see looming before me. What

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is the college to us older ones if not the students, the vivacity of young minds, the latest fashions and, always, the laurel chain?

**Lisa Lansing '64**  
West Cornwall, CT

Who said that younger and older alums don't share the same interests? ... My daughter Lindsay Nystrom '06 is pictured twice in the winter 2007 *Quarterly*. Her “senior family” made contact with the group of fortieth reunion classmates also pictured. The two groups met for tea, and Lindsay was thrilled when she and her friends were presented with the '66 parade costumes. She came home full of how much it meant to the graduates to see the older alums and what interesting and vital women they were. Too bad this sort of gathering can never happen again.

**Ida Quackenbush**  
Nystrom '69  
Holden, MA

*Response from W. Rochelle Calhoun '83, executive director of the Alumnae Association:*

I appreciate the alumnae who took the time to

write with questions and concerns about the Alumnae Association's new reunion format, which we will launch as a pilot program in 2008. Alumnae feedback is important to us, and we will be paying close attention to it as we move ahead with the new programming.

The new reunion format is a direct response to extensive alumnae feedback. A dedicated committee of alumnae, staff, and board members (the Reunion Ad Hoc Committee), conducted a year and a half of research and surveyed more than 3,000 alumnae. The new reunion format represents the preferences and recommendations of the vast majority of alumnae. As always, we will do all we can to make your reunion a success and a pleasure. We continue to be interested in your thoughts and suggestions.

For more about changes to reunion, and about how the decisions were made, please visit *alumnae.mtholyoke.edu//reunions/index.php*.

### **Frumpy? No Way!**

I am dismayed by the letter describing Roswell

Gray Ham as “frumpy” (winter). It is most certainly untrue. Even if it were, one would not have noticed, thanks to his acclaimed achievement as an educator: intellectually rigorous, always amiable, wryly humorous, sophisticated yet caring, and world-wise during the challenging war years when I was a student.

Among many offbeat memories: the time he spotted my sister and me with friends on a Nantucket street, stopped his car, and invited us to his home “for tea or cocktails—you choose;” and most especially his recitation of Walt Whitman's poem “I Hear America Singing,” accompanied by the Glee and Dance Clubs, and delivered with all the eloquence of the Yale literature professor he once was.

A truly unique, exciting evening for Mount Holyoke, especially in those dark times. And a uniquely fitting president, in so many ways, to lead us through them.

This was “frumpy”? To be endured by Ms. Brown?

**Mary “Betty” Morris '43**  
Jackson Heights, NY

### **We welcome letters**

reflecting the varying viewpoints of the Mount Holyoke community.

Letters should be no more than 300 words, and we reserve the right to edit them for accuracy, clarity, and to meet space needs.

Letters must be signed.

Letters addressing topics discussed in the previous *Quarterly* are given priority.

On any given topic, we will print letters that address it, and then in the next issue, letters that respond to the first letters. After that, we will move on to new topics.

Send your thoughts, with your full name and class, to Mieke H. Bomann, 50 College St., South Hadley, MA 01075-1486. Send e-mails to [mbomann@mtholyoke.edu](mailto:mbomann@mtholyoke.edu).