

## Common Read

Each year I eagerly anticipate the college's "common read" choice for the incoming first-year students. I still resonate with T. T. Williams's moving thoughts in *Refuge* and am still discouraged by issues raised in Barbara Ehrenreich's *Nickel and Dimed*. Although I admire Paul Farmer and enjoy T. Kidder's writing, I do wonder why the college broke with the recent pattern, in my memory, of selecting a book by a woman. Isn't the choice of a book for an incoming class of a college that decided to remain all-women an ideal opportunity to select a woman author for a common read?

Mary Baldridge  
Remensnyder '54  
Exeter, NH

## Widowhood

The piece [fall 2006] on being widowed was welcome and long overdue. While focused primarily on the jolt of loss and the grieving period, it did touch upon the growth and development of one's self as a person that can happen in the aftermath. However, the piece seemed to suggest that what comes after is necessarily second best to what came before.

But perhaps those charming butterflies in the illustrations said it better. Butterflies have always symbolized a moving from one state of being to another. This has traditionally been seen as referring to one who has passed, but it also applies to the one who remains. Widowhood is one of those life passages that can bring us what we allow it to. One may not wish to move from caterpillar to butterfly, but the freedom to be more of who one always had the potential to be can be seen as a possibility and a gift.

I have been there. I lost my first husband after a long and loving marriage, and came upon the opportunity to test myself in different circumstances. I have been in a rewarding second marriage for ten years. My point is not that one should look for a new partner, but that one should be open to all possibilities, especially the possibility that a new phase of life can bring unforeseen rewards. May we all have the courage to find our wings!

Diane Finn Sherman-  
Levine '50  
Princeton, NJ

## Female President

What a beautiful and vibrant photo of Joanne Creighton! [fall 2006] And what a change from the frumpy Roswell G. Ham we endured when I was in college! Let's hope Mount Holyoke *always* has a female president!

Janet L. Brown '50  
Chestnut Hill, MA

## College Connections

From Mountain Day and Christmas vespers to Italian studies in Bologna and Irish literature in Dublin, Mount Holyoke has truly built connections for our daughters as expressed by President Creighton [summer 2006]. Since 1998, our family has had the genuine privilege of being associated with this brilliantly dynamic school. Kate's ('03) early-decision acceptance in the waning days of that year's fall began our connection and Kara's ('07) fast-approaching final semester in South Hadley will bring about the bittersweet end to this rousing relationship.

The college's teaching of true literacy, with the goals to write clearly; argue coherently; speak gracefully; read to comprehend; judge the merits of an argument, and



appreciate complexities of thought and shades of feeling, is an indispensable guide for negotiating one's way in the world.

Mount Holyoke has been a bountiful mother who has cherished and challenged our daughters to enrich their lives while at the same time fervently encouraging them to have a constructive influence on those around them. Knowledge is indeed the singular recipe by which we nurture ourselves and our community, and this remarkable institution puts on a delightful feast!

Edward R. Dalton  
Parent, Art Advisory  
Board fellow  
Framingham, MA

## How to Say Holyoke

Re: "Scrambled Pronunciation" in fall Viewpoints: Bravo, bravo, bravo !!! It *is* "whole yoke" !!! I face the same name-challenge with my first name, Stevia. This, too, should be pronounced with two syllables ("Steve-ya"). While most of my friends use the nickname, "Stevie" (which my mother deplored, quietly and not), some newer ones use my given name, most often with three syllables; I cringe. Ever since MHC years, I explain the "Steve-ya" and add, "It's the same principle as the name of

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my alma mater, Mount Hol-yoke.” Ah, well: my eastern relatives “get it,” for both. Hopefully MHC will do a better drilling job, lest a “sacred tree” (holy oak) replaces “a complete egg” (whole yoke) in present and future generations. Horrors!

Stevia Warren Sargent  
Leshner '55  
Littleton, CO

I was amused by the [fall 2006] letter regarding the pronunciation of Mount Holyoke. Just that day, I was reading a transcript of a hearing in which the expert had attended an Ivy League medical school, and “Mount Holly Oak” College. I was initially puzzled as

I live near the town of Mount Holly. Then the tree reference brought to mind Elms College in Chicopee. It took me another moment to realize that the court reporter was referring to my alma mater. As Homer Simpson would say, “Doh!”

Melissa R. Vance '84  
Moorestown, N.J.

### AA Renovations

It is wonderful that the Alumnae Association office has had a renovation. It is the face of the association on campus, and as such should be a welcoming and gracious place. Mention was made [fall 2006] of the glorious stained glass windows.

Traver Artisans were Ann “Thomps” Thompson '58 and her late husband, Ted. The first window created was Pegasus. It was a commission from the class of 1958 to honor our twenty-fifth reunion in 1983. The others were commissions from succeeding twenty-fifth reunion classes. I believe that the arched wood frames were the actual windows that were in place in the former association office in Dwight. [They are.] When the move was made to Mary Woolley, many of us wondered what would become of these treasures. Congratulations on the new look!

Anne Ensworth Whitney '58  
South Dartmouth, MA

**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 and 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 Bomann, *Alumnae Quarterly*, 50 College St., South Hadley, MA 01075-1486. Send e-mails to [mbomann@mtholyoke.edu](mailto:mbomann@mtholyoke.edu).

### Peter Viereck’s Legacy

*Renowned friends and literary colleagues gathered in November at Mount Holyoke to celebrate the life of poet Peter Viereck, who died in May 2006. Here, an alumna recalls a memorable professor. A piece on his legacy will appear in the next Quarterly.*

By the time I knew (of) him  
He was the beloved  
Crazy professor, storming the campus  
In open galoshes, open raincoat, wraparound  
Sunglasses even in the rain—  
So open, and yet so closed  
By the time I knew (of) him  
He was sneaking rolls into his coat pockets  
In the dining halls, blessed  
By the indulgent glances  
Of those young enough to be

His great-grand-daughters  
By the time I knew (of) him  
He was the beloved  
Subject of rumor, the dangerous  
Author—he was George, from  
“Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?”—  
He had had fallings-out, he had  
Eye injuries from The War, he  
Was a brilliant lunatic, he was  
Unapproachable  
By the time I knew (of) him  
I was unnerved—  
I took his class pass/fail—  
I did no work, but simply  
Enjoyed his presence  
He revenged my spinelessness  
He gave me an “A”

Laura Nixon Dawson '87  
Brooklyn, NY