Greetings from Portland! I drove up to this wonderful city to participate in the second Portland Buffalo Graze. Although the rain derailed our picnic plans, it was a lovely event nonetheless. Alumni from the city joined alumni from Seattle and Vancouver to eat delicious food, share great stories, hilariously debate the value of “consensus” in their current lives, build an agenda for the next reunion/renewal, and catch each other up on what we’re all up to. At the end of the day, I was pleased to see that everyone was forging his or her own path. Evidence that Johnston is a good launching path indeed.

My thanks go out to Morgan Chicarelli (2005) for her excellent hosting and social networking skills, which enabled the Graze to be such a success.

Speaking of Morgan Chicarelli, you’ll all be hearing a lot from her as she, along with Matt Gray, have agreed to be the co-chairs of the next reunion. I am beyond thrilled with this team. Both have a deep passion for Johnston and strong respect for its history and sustenance. They also bring the necessary skills needed to organize such a massive event. Morgan is the Events Coordinator at Natural College of Medicine, and Matt recently worked at Johnson & Wales in Denver as the Civic Engagement Program Manager of the school’s Community Leadership Institute. Of course, as both of them graduated in the 2000s, there was some initial concern that we weren’t representing a broader spectrum of Johnston. But the Johnston Alumni Board and I spoke about this at length, and we decided that what’s most important is to have a team that has the energy and passion to put together an excellent reunion, as well as the maturity to listen to feedback. Indeed, there will be feedback galore, from the reunion planning committee (local alums, please join!) to the fantastic Alumni Board we currently have. The fall issue of the Coz will feature a story about the Alumni Board, but for now, please know that this is an excellent group
with representation across the decades who are excited about making the reunion as amazing as the last. A tall order to fill!

In fact, it seems to be the year of Alumni for Johnston. I’m thrilled to report that we have not one, not two, but three “legacy” students attending Johnston in the fall! Trey Dunbar (1977), Layne Drebin Murphy (1977), and Lorraine Hedtke (1978), the latter a member of the Alumni Board, are all sending their children or relatives off to study at Johnston. We LOVE this! You all know how transformative your Johnston education was, and you can do no better by your kids than sending them our way. We will take good care of them. An interview with Lorraine and her daughter Addie is featured below.

The forty-three students of the entering first year class are not the only ones who will be experiencing a transition in the fall. We have our own significant transitions to process. First and foremost, I’m saddened to have to report that beloved Johnston Administrative Assistant Margie Austin passed away on June 12, 11. Margie served Johnston for approximately thirty years and, as the responses to her death on Facebook indicate, was a formative part of many Johnston students’ education. Yash and Bill have many kind words to share about Margie, which you will find at the end of this issue. Other transitions include Kathy Ogren becoming the interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Johnston Alumnus Tim Seiber now serving as a Visiting Assistant Professor, Bob Howard (class of ’81) finishing his term as the Chair of the Alumni Board, and the last remaining Johnston founder Kevin O’Neill retiring. And yet, despite transitions, being the well-oiled machine it is, Johnston is as stable as ever. Having Kathy in the Dean’s office, well, that’s not a bad thing for Johnston! And who better to replace her during her term as interim Dean than a Johnston alum who, over his last year teaching as an adjunct, has garnered the affection and respect of students? We’ve also got a great new Chair of the Alumni Board in Thomas McClung. As for Kevin, he will follow in the footsteps of Bill McDonald, who continues to regularly teach as an Emeritus faculty at the Center. Indeed, Kevin is already slated to teach in the fall. I guess I always thought I’d be drinking out of a coconut on some beach in my retirement, but with Kevin and Bill as models, who knows? All of this is to say that, despite transitions, Johnston remains solid, good, and strikingly similar to the Johnston you all knew.

Well, one thing is different. We have a shiny new website (www.redlands.edu/johnston). For a variety of reasons, our previous website was not working in the way we needed it to. Without anyone to maintain it, our independent website deteriorated into a combination of disorganized Johnston information and pharmaceutical spam (seriously, if you wanted information on Viagra, our website was a go-to place!). As the University finally moved into the twenty-first century with a solid web platform, it was the perfect time to redo our own website and place it on the University’s server. This means we can spend more time on creating good content and less time with the headaches of negotiating and figuring out how to manage a website (not my particular forte!). What it doesn’t mean is that we’ve been co-opted by “the man.” Rest assured, having our website on the University’s server does not mean we’ve been compromised in any way. Content is entirely ours to shape. And between our website and our very active Facebook page, we have many ways to share and push out the content we want. So, check it out and let me know what you think. There’s still more to do, so I welcome all feedback. Just remember that we are a threadbare operation when it comes to the web—sort of a one-woman operation—so be gentle with your suggestions!
Finally, I want to thank you for your wonderful donations to Johnston. As I shared in my first Johnston “appeal letter,” my goal as someone who is new to fundraising, is to raise the percentage of donors by letting you all know that we value the generosity, not the amount. I’ve been overwhelmed by receiving checks from those of you who are still in grad school or early in your careers. I know what a hardship it is for you to donate at this point, and I want you to know how much I deeply appreciate it. I also deeply appreciate receiving gifts and personal notes from alumni who came before me. Your words of kindness to me, and your new and ongoing donations to the Center, are humbling and warm my heart. Please know that I regularly let students know how important Alumni are in terms of the opportunities they receive from Johnston. I hope to see you sooner than later, perhaps at the 5th Annual Vintage Johnston Wine event on October 1, 2011. Please consider getting a group of your Johnston friends together and buying a table. It’s a great way to spend time with each other in-between our official Reunion get-togethers. For more information, see http://www.redlands.edu/academics/johnston-center-for-integrative-studies/9004.aspx

With affection,

Kelly Hankin

The Johnston Babies Have Arrived!

(current photo by Julie Townsend)

From Julie Townsend:

I’d like to introduce the two newest--and tiniest—buffalo to the herd. Miranda and Milo were born on March 4th, 2011. Thank you to all the alums and current students who have sent their good wishes to M & M. In addition to learning to smile, grasp objects, and scooch up next to each other in the crib, Milo and Miranda attended a couple of grad reviews, a celebration of Kevin’s retirement, and the Johnston Graduation. In true Johnston fashion, they’ve made clear their eclectic taste in music—favorites include Lyle Lovett and Diane Reeves as well as the de rigueur Muppets Greatest Hits. I think that the community will agree the
Miranda is—shall we say—exuberant! And Milo is winning hearts with his toothless smiles. Uh-oh, I have to sign off... tummy time is coming to a cranky end, and my assistance is required! We look forward to seeing you all soon.

Like Mother, Like Daughter: An interview with Lorraine Hedtke (1978) and Addie Davidove (2016)

In my first term as Director, I had the great pleasure to work with Lorraine Hedtke on the Alumni Board Committee. Lorraine studied Women’s Studies and Sociology at Johnston College and went on to receive a Ph.D. from the University of Tillburg in Holland in Bereavement Practices. She currently runs the graduate program in Education Counseling and Guidance at Cal State San Bernardino and consults around the world on issues of death, grief, and dying. As Lorraine and I got to know each other, I was pleased to learn that her daughter was applying to the Center. Over the last year, I had the great privilege of reading Addie’s application and getting to know the vibrant young woman that she is. Addie is a talented musician—percussionist and piano player—who, over her four years at Redlands East Valley High School performed in the concert band, symphony, marching band, and served as the drumline captain for two of those years. At Redlands, Addie hopes to explore issues around religion, gender studies, social justice, and sustainability. Shortly before commencement, I had the great pleasure of sitting down with Lorraine and Addie for an interview. Of course, in true Johnstonian fashion, they managed to upend my simple interview! In *Freaky Friday* style, Lorraine decided she would answer questions crafted for Addie and Addie decided she would answer questions crafted for Lorraine. At some point, voices simply began to merge, as mother and daughter’s views and values are wonderfully in sync. Now, in the spirit of full interview disclosure, I can’t remember who answered what! What you have below is the results of this wacky and delightful interview.

**Kelly:** When did you realize that Johnston would be a good fit for Addie?

**Lorraine:** As soon as I graduated from Johnston. Johnston prepared me for life, and I wanted my kid to experience this.
Kelly: Did you need to do any persuading?

“Lorraine”: Not at all. I spoke to her about different colleges, but I had been taking her to alumni events over the years and this encouraged her to look into Johnston. There was no hard sell, because it was always in the back of her mind.

Kelly: What element of Johnston do you think Addie will most enjoy?

“Lorraine”: Addie is consistently bored in traditional education, which is really sucking the life out of her. So just being in Johnston’s learning environment will make her brain light up. She will thrive in it, and I am excited to see where it will take her. The contrast to where she is now will be so dramatic.

Kelly: What kind of Johnston student do you think Addie will be?

“Lorraine”: I think she will be level headed and open to trying new things. She totally will be involved in community, and she will have a hard time not being a leader. Her grandmother used to take her out of school for protests, so politics and leadership are in her blood.

Kelly: What elements of Johnston do you think might be a challenge for Addie?

“Lorraine”: I’m worried about her overindulging in everything to the point that she gets sick. She will want to be heavily involved because its new and exciting, but she can wear herself out. My advice for her is to monitor her body and find ways to be grounded.

Kelly: What does it mean to you to have your daughter go to Johnston?

“Lorraine”: I’m excited because I know that the world will unfold for her. I’m so thrilled that she will receive a great education. Plus, I’ll get to have all her Johnston friends over to the house!

Kelly: Do you have any advice for Addie?

“Lorraine”: Of course! When it comes to choosing classes, follow what speaks to you. Her academic life has been so structured, so in your first year take as many different classes as you can. Branch out—take creative classes, but also take postmodern physics.
Kelly: Did you always want to come to Johnston?

“Addie”: Yes, Johnston has always been there for me. My mom took me to events so it was a familiar place for me.

Kelly: What elements of Johnston that your mom has told you about are you most nervous about?

“Addie”: I’m not really nervous about anything. I visited a community meeting the day the students were dealing with an internal issue of vandalism. I loved the meeting! I loved the eccentricities and the sense of belonging. What amazed me is that the community pulled together to say what was a problem was and how to address it. I appreciate that the community is dedicated to self-governance, and I can’t wait to be a part of this.

Kelly: What excites you about Johnston?

“Addie”: I’m excited to think about how to incorporate my music into my college life.

**Thank You, Bob Howard**

A buffalo grows old with grace & dignity...

Not, this one baby. Party until you drop!

(photo design by Bob Howard)

I want to give out a hearty thanks to Bob Howard (1981) who just completed his term as the Chair of the Johnston Alumni Board. Apart from his great enthusiasm and his passion for Johnston, what I loved about working with Bob is that I got to witness the true Johnston process—a life long
journey of serving others, building community, and integrating passion with profession. At Johnston, Bob studied international business, audio recording, song writing, and song arrangement, and he took the skills he built here to build Pyramid Recording Studios—still extant—in New York City. Bob has written and recorded over 100 songs, many of which he performs with his band Chinese Fire Drill to raise money for charity. Bob also brings this passion for giving to his approach to business, and he credits Johnston and his study abroad in Asia for teaching him the value of community that enabled him to build a career centered on relationships. In my first year as Director, I couldn’t have asked for a better Alumni Board Chair. I wish Bob all the best, and look forward to seeing him at the 45th reunion/renewal.

And now, a few words from Bob to you.

**Fellow Buffalos:**

I’m a Johnston College graduate from 1981. I just completed 3 years on the Alumni Board and the Johnston Committee. I want to share some of my recent experience and thoughts. My tenure on the board commenced as the economy crashed, the University President departed, and we lost the Johnson Director. But things turned around very quickly. We welcomed back President James Appleton to the University. Bill McDonald agreed to take over as an interim Johnston Director and Kelly Hankin was brought on to fill the director position. It was a pleasure to work with all of them and be a part of the advisory group.

During my first few Johnston committee meetings we developed an objective to influence the board of trustees to invest more $’s in Johnston especially the Bekins Hall renovation. We thought that the best way to get their attention would be to show the trustees that Johnston is a 40+ year community of strong and invested alumni. The trustees know how important Alumni are to the future of the school in terms of recommending potential students and contributions so our thought was to step up the efforts to engage with our Johnston Alumni Community.

The Johnston community is very definable and has a lot in common with each other. Things haven’t changed much in the past 40 years. We’re still the same quirky, creative, intellectual, socially conscious, entrepreneurial, do gooders that we have always been. The difference between now and way back when is that our school has stood the test of time. The Johnston Center is respected in the field of education. As Alumni we are engaged in lots of important contributions to society. We should share our knowledge and connections with students and Alumni. A stronger tie between all Alumni and the school can only bring good things to Johnston and reflect well on all of us as a community.

Kelly & Bill have done a brilliant job of developing and executing a Buffalo Hunt to root out pockets of Alumni all over the country. Buffalo grazes are taking place at the homes of JC Alumni and our community is starting to grow and become engaged. I know that a lot of folks out there think that the only purpose of the Alumni office is to chase you down and hound you for money. After spending the last 3 years and making 12 trips to the campus I can assure you that their primary objective is to establish the schools connection to the Alumni and between each other. They want to keep the herd together. Sure, any generosity that can be afforded is deeply appreciated but that comes naturally over time. These are hard times for many of us and part of
knowing where you’re going comes from reflecting on where you’ve been. I’m very grateful for the education I received at Johnston and if I can help the school, Students or other Alumni I certainly would do it. I would encourage Students and Alumni to join Bill, Kelly and the participating community members to figure out what you might like to do to be a part of the ongoing Johnston renewal process.

Give a little - take a little; that’s what a community does.
Bob Howard (81)

**Johnston Students Study with the Karmapa:**
**Building Community in India**

Karen Derris (Religion and Johnston)

This May, sixteen students traveled with me to Dharamsala India as a part of the Johnston course “Sustainable Compassion: Conversations with His Holiness the 17th Karmapa.” His Holiness the Karmapa, while only twenty-six years old is the holder of the 900 year-old Karmapa lineage and will be the successor to His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama as the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism. The aim of the course was for the students to discuss with His Holiness the Karmapa what Buddhism can offer the global community. The experiences with His Holiness the Karmapa far exceeded these aims; these conversations became an opportunity for the growth of remarkable friendships and the exchange of great warmth and affection between the students, His Holiness the
Karmapa, and the many monks, nuns, and Tibetans who supported our time in Dharamsala.

The students were nothing short of spectacular during our time in India. They worked very hard, sometimes working for twelve hours a day, and were perfectly respectful to the extraordinary Tibetan settings into which we were invited. Most importantly, the students created an extraordinary learning community together, much informed by Johnston values and the ethos of a living-learning community. We collaboratively prepared for all of our twelve conversations with His Holiness the Karmapa. Together, we puzzled over how to express our perspectives to His Holiness who had only once been to the United States before. We composed every question together and together decided how to prioritize and present them in our sessions. Though we came from a wide variety of academic disciplines, all of us share a general hope to dedicate our careers to working to relieve suffering in the world. The topics we discussed with His Holiness were:

- Sustainable Compassion
- Crafting a Meaningful Livelihood
- Social Justice
- Environmental Protection
- Healthy Relationships
- Integrating Spirituality
- Food Justice
- Consumerism and Greed
- Conflict Resolution
- Gender Equality

During our first meeting His Holiness the Karmapa noted that since he and the students were born around the same year, they had been sharing this planet all along, but had only now had the opportunity to meet one another. A majority of the students are graduating seniors, and as they looked ahead, the Gyalwang Karmapa encouraged them not to think of the lives they would live as simply what they did and experienced based on their own limited body, but rather to envision that their lives could extend far beyond themselves and touch many others in limitless ways.
On our final day in Dharamsala, we celebrated with His Holiness, and had the opportunity to express our gratitude. Students offered the His Holiness the Karmapa several songs, including an original song, “Let the Moon be the Holder of my Love” that Johnston students Brendan Mead and Patrick Sundlof composed based on one of His Holiness' teachings and Johnston student, Nina Fernado offered a jazz rendition of His Holiness' “Ah, World” tune. Maya Polan, also a Johnston senior and Simon Barker read a poem they had composed together in His Holiness' honor. The group also presented His Holiness with a bag featuring a logo designed by Johnston seniors Germaine Vogel and Jon Fuller to commemorate their time with him.
Students, Professor Derris, and lhundup damcho pose for a picture with His Holiness the Karmapa.

Our time with His Holiness the Karmapa was nothing short of life changing. On our departure many of the students expressed their feelings of incredible gratitude for what we had experienced. Our thanks are extended to alumni who continue to support Johnston classes like this through wonderful donations, Kelly Hankin, Director of the Johnston Center for her support of the course that off-set the travel costs for six of our students, and to Dean Barbara Morris for additional funding support.

For more stories, photos and reflections on our experiences please visit our course blog: karmapaconversations.blogspot.com These series of conversations will be published as a book Sustainable Compassion (Shambala, expected in Fall 2012) edited by the course facilitator, Venerable Lhundup Damcho and Karen Derris.

Your one-stop Commencement Shop

Commencement season was particularly special this year, as we got to witness Yasuyuki Owada receive an Honorary Degree from the University of Redlands—congratulations Yash!—and celebrate the work of Kevin O’Neill. Not only was Kevin the chosen commencement speaker, but we also held a grand Graduation Review in early May. Johnston founders and alumni came from
Reflections on Receiving an Honorary Degree, May 2011
Yasuyuki Owada

Receiving an honorary degree (Doctor of Humane Letters) from the University of Redlands was an event that had never entered my mind in my forty-plus years of association with the University. Initially, I was reluctant to accept the honor, simply because there were so many other professors, current or retired, who deserved it. I still believe so.

The occasion has given me the opportunity to rethink about my role at the University, particularly Johnston College/Center and its relationship to the University as a whole, review what I did do, and what I continue to expect of the University. Among all the things I was able to do for
the University, there is one thing that stands out in my memory as a rather unique service to the University, past, present and future. That is the formulation of the University’s Mission Statement.

In 1983 President Moore asked me to chair his University of Redlands Commission on Long-Range Planning. It was a difficult time for any faculty member to be involved in such planning, for the University was under huge financial constraints and not a day passed without our wondering how many, and who would lose a job at the end of each academic year. Who wanted to talk about the future of the University? But, my colleagues on the Commission buckled down, meeting weekly for two years, and ultimately, formulated what was to become an enduring Statement of Mission for the University. The beginning Vision part of the Statement, in particular is noteworthy; to wit,

“The University of Redlands is … committed to providing a personalized education that frees students to make enlightened choices.”

My own personal agenda was how to integrate Johnston education with the more traditional Redlands education. I didn’t draft the sentence, but this was a result of team work among Howard Hurlbut, Carol Franklin and Nancy Carrick. I was the cheerleader. The Commission consisting of some 20 plus members approved it by consensus, by my insistence, and forwarded it to President Moore and eventually to the Board.

The second event that makes this honorary degree meaningful to me is the context of the University’s decision to award it to me. It is my understanding that the idea of the degree comes out of the University’s Faculty Assembly. Here I wish to acknowledge the leadership of our Director Kelly Hankin. This context makes it very clear to me that the awarding is not merely the act of the Board and President to acknowledging my work, but rather the University’s primary commitment to teaching/learning, whether through the traditional curriculum and instruction or Johnston. The award is one that is given to the entire teaching faculty including assistants. I was very blessed to accept it on their as well as my behalf.

CAREER PRECIS
KEVIN O’NEILL
JOHNSTON COLLEGE
JOHNSTON CENTER FOR INDIVIDUALIZED STUDIES
JOHNSTON CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE STUDIES
Written by Bill McDonald
MAY 7, 2011

As Kevin’s advisor and a veteran writer of these final faculty précis, I know that strict adherence to the form quickly turns awkward and campy when you’re attempting to capture a life-long career rather than a four-year undergraduate career. So please take this as a précis in a wider sense; just a few highlights from and reflections on a teaching career that’s truly inexhaustible in its range and effects.

Kevin David O’Neill entered Johnston College of the University of Redlands after completing a baccalaureate degree at Georgetown (1963) and a Ph.D. at Yale (1967). In college he was a philosophy
major and an actor, playing both Othello and Iago on the stage. In graduate school he wrote his doctoral thesis on Søren Kierkegaard. But his most valued education began when he enrolled in Johnston College in 1969, an education that has taken forty-two years to complete. So now, today, he graduates from the Johnston Center for Integrative Studies in May of 2011 with a professor’s résumé title borrowed from one of his life-long colleagues, Barney Childs: “There’s Only One Job to Have on a College Campus, and I Have It.” This précis has three parts, which, taken together give just a few highlights from, and ruminations on, a teaching career that has been, and will continue to be, truly inexhaustible in its range and effects.

Vignettes; Quotations; Reflections.

Vignette #1.

Scene: a classroom. The subject is Plato’s Symposium, that great early dialogue of urban eros and philosophizing. Chalk in hand, the speaker begins, in a moderate voice that gradually grows quieter as he continues, his youthful audience leaning forward in increment after increment, trying to catch every word. He tells us that Plato set out to be a playwright, and, when he failed at that, set out again, taking the idea of dialogue from those civic dramas that anchored his society, to invent a new genre of writing for exploring visionary ideas. The blackboard behind the speaker begins to fill with overlapping diagrams, arrows, lines of connection and duplication, and finally cross-hatchings, as the layers of the dialogue are unpacked with precision and growing intensity. Most philosophers abstract the arguments about love from the dialogue and expect their charges to know them; this speaker immerses his audience in the literary intricacies of the dialogue—its many time levels, its nested narrators and multiple speakers—to arrive at the ideas in a way that embeds them not only in a tight-woven textual web, but also in Athenian culture, and makes both seem utterly present to his audience. Ninety minutes later, as we arrive at the revelation, the denouement, of Socrates as man of the city, supreme lover and visionary, the blackboard is unreadable but the concrete, complex evocation of human love set out some 2400 years ago stands crystalline before these enthralled, and very lucky, young people.

Vignette #2. It’s a rainy, moonless night in Istanbul in the late 1970s. A group of Johnston College students are in the city, part of their semester-long immersion in the cultures of Greece and Turkey. Often they travel independently, but tonight a dozen of them have gathered and, on a lark, decide to “invade” the grounds of the Tokapi palace even though it’s officially closed. Filled with a playful sense of adventure, they move into the grounds and the darkness—until a shout and then another halts them, and they’re suddenly facing very young, very jumpy Turkish soldiers pointing M-16s at them and shouting “Terrorists!” There is no common language beyond that word, and producing passports in the darkness gains nothing. If you know people who think that professors only live a soft life in the Ivory Tower, you might want to tell them this story—and be sure to ask Kevin how it finished.

Vignette #3. Here’s just one short paragraph from Kevin’s graduation contract narrative, a document which not everyone has read: “I am thankful to Johnston for many things, but first among them is my gratitude for creating the academic culture that reshaped my understanding of being a professor. I came out of Georgetown and Yale with a gift for argument and debate and “winning” that would have launched me into a more conventional, more arrogant, more solipsistic sort of academic career, one that young male faculty are especially tempted by. I was good at it, very good. But Johnston created—and I helped to create—a different academic culture that demanded my whole person, not just my analytic powers, and made me a far better teacher, and human being, than I might have been otherwise. Traditional faculty serve their discipline first, not their school, and do whatever it takes to excel in that discipline’s regional
and national forums; my reputation at Johnston was anchored here, not elsewhere, and that was absolutely
decisive for how my life as a teacher unfolded.”

II. Quotations from just a few of Kevin’s colleagues and students.

Kevin has been an inspiration to generations of Redlands faculty and students—way too many to cite
here—so I’ll just quote a few of Kevin’s colleagues from the early days of Johnston, people who were in
many ways mentors for Kevin as well as peers. Then I have an even more selective few paragraphs that I
solicited from the literally thousands of students that Kevin has challenged and inspired over the past four
decades.

First, his early colleague/mentors:

1. From Dan Gilbertson, Johnston College Faculty Fellow in Sociology:
The more that I have been away from college teaching, the more I am convinced that college, simply put, is
about teaching students how to use words and symbols. More than simply teaching subject matter, it
is about providing students with the tools of thinking, researching
and communicating. For me, Kevin is a prime example of this
orientation. He not only provided students with basic
intellectual tools but energized and excited them about how they
can be used. Two examples come to mind: For a Logic class, Kevin
gave each student an Agatha Christie novel with the final chapter
missing and expected them to solve the mystery using the tools they
had learned. And I still fondly remember his public lecture on
"Reading an Academic Book"—which helped to introduce students to
serious books in all fields. Kevin O'Neill is the kind of teacher who sets the standards for the others. The
next generation of students at Johnston/Redlands will be missing a major source of learning.

2. From John Watt, Faculty Fellow in Asian Studies and International Relations (in a perfect Oxbridge
accent, with just a trace of Scottish burr): “I’ve always thought of Kevin as a one-of-a-kind person, whom
one could never replicate. Irish to the core, but with all that Yale intellectual polish which just cut through
fog and mist. Johnston was unbelievably lucky to get him, and we have to thank Press McCoy for that. I
learned from him never to walk anywhere — in fact never to go anywhere — without a book in hand. And
considering his romantic life, I also learned a thing or two about perseverance. As some of your other
respondents have pointed out, he is a brilliant teacher. As a young faculty member he dared to do a few
things which shocked, yes shocked, the hierarchy. There is still that bad boy aspect to Kevin, which one
cannot help relishing. Oh, what days we had together, what shibboleths we undermined. But, when all is
said and done, he remains a teacher, and his students will remember him when other names and faces slip
away.”

3. Paul Corneil, Faculty Fellow in Chemistry and Environmental Studies: “I attended a few of Kevin's
classes -- notably Structuralism -- but my most memorable experience was our first-year Friday night
couples T-group, climaxing with the nighttime romp through the Redlands cemetery at the end of that
year. After that, I knew I was in a world-class creative community, and grateful for it.”

4. Doug Bowman, Faculty Fellow in Religion: “What does one say about a colleague who became a teacher
of one’s soul, save ‘thank you my dear friend.’ Kevin, Sally Hickock (then a secretary, later Johnston’s first
registrar) and I were thrust together on day one at Johnston as a three-way T-group or ‘groupette.’ From
that day forward Kevin’s power of mind and heart and his humor captivated me. Since I was growing very old I was often found humming "mindlessly" prior to a class. Kevin took to walking past my office door (which was open) on his way to the mailboxes humming mindlessly. Who can forget such things! Kevin I salute you!” When Doug was chaplain...

5. From Yasuyuki Owada, Faculty Fellow in Sociology and Anthropology: (Footnote: Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi was a Swiss elementary school teacher and theoretician who believed that you taught children, not topics): “I learned from Kevin what caring for the soul of a student meant and required. To me, he was a Pestalozzian teacher, who attended the needs of individuals, often in a most inconspicuous manner, whether in class or in private life. He taught me the what and how of paying respect to students as individual persons. He taught them, not subjects. He showed courage in doing that. Fortunate were the students who engaged themselves in their own learning under his tutelage.”

6. George Rupp, Faculty Fellow in Religion: “In my first semester at Johnston College, I taught a course entitled "Space and Time." My fellow faculty were Isobel, Allen Killpatrick, and Kevin. I learned an enormous amount—not least from my biologist and physicist colleagues. But I also benefitted a lot from the insights of my fellow humanist/philosopher. That Kevin has continued to nourish Johnston and U. of R. students for the 40 years since then is a wonderful testimony to the long-term impact that devoted faculty have. I salute him warmly and with enthusiasm!”

From Isobel Contento, Faculty Fellow in Biology: In thinking back to the early days, what I most appreciated about Kevin was the fact that he was always actively engaged with life - whether with people or ideas. He was never passive and took people and ideas seriously, treating them with respect, despite the slightly mocking exterior. A good person.

From Ed Williams, Faculty Fellow in English and Vice-Chancellor of the College: “From the beginning of Johnston encounters and negotiations, Kevin was conspicuously a style-setter. When everyone was shouting at everyone else—one young man even used to stand on a piano to get attention—Kevin would speak conversationally, or, more likely, whisper—and we’d listen. Sometimes we’d even hush.

When our first semester’s set of written evaluations proved to be too personal, even grotesque, Kevin was crucial to creating lasting models for narrative evaluations that could never have been achieved by standard issue administrators. And when our reading skills proved woeful, Kevin’s solution became a Johnston classic: his much-quoted, eventually famous lecture on reading a book. What Kevin did was teach young readers how to wrestle verbally with a paragraph: how to emerge from a book’s introduction and first chapter really sure of what the author had said, and meant.

And last I think of the personal friendship between Kevin and Bill, ripening over the years, that had a magic of its own and produced “to die for” pedagogical results. Here were scholars willing and able to learn from each other, and have great fun in the process. Their commitment and loyalty to Johnston was contagious…. Both of them understood the secret formula for securing the life-long devotion and independence of their students: give them the best help you can, then let them go, push them out of the nest. That’s how eagles teach their young to soar.”

From Melanie Herzog (1978):

In the fall of 1977, Kevin embarked with twelve students on the first of Johnston’s remarkable and memorable “Europe trips.” For more than four months, Kevin served as seminar facilitator, intellectual instigator, guide, and mentor while shepherding students across Europe, through Greece, along the coast of
Turkey, and through Italy. Under Kevin’s guidance, readings of ancient Greek plays and other texts in “The Greeks” came alive as the group visited the settings of these; his creative and engaging facilitation of this seminar memorably included a spontaneous afternoon trip during the class reading of Plato’s Republic; when the group, meeting at an outdoor café in Athens, read the opening line “I went down to the Piraeus yesterday” and Kevin responded, “Well then, let’s go down to Piraeus,” just a short distance away…. And off we went. Credit is due to Kevin as well for his forbearance in visiting a myriad of museums, galleries, churches, ancient temples, archeological sites, and monuments with his intrepid art students who sought to immerse themselves in every possible cultural locale [even though he didn’t much care for the artworks themselves] …. Kevin deserves highest honors, however, for traveling, living, and learning as the sole faculty member with these students, facilitating a broad and deep learning experience for which all of us are profoundly grateful.

From Casey Sutcliffe (1990)

In reflecting on Kevin’s impact on me and my Johnston education, I went back and read the first of two spiral notebooks I filled as my “commonplace book” for the first-year seminar “Construction and Deconstruction of the Self” that I took with him 25 years ago this fall. With a bumper crop of fifteen incoming Johnstonians, the seminar marked a sort of rebirth of the Johnston Center after an early 1980s nadir in enrollment. But it was not only for this reason that the seminar has taken on a mythical status in Johnston lore.

My commonplace book was so long because Kevin cast his net and his spell over me—and all of us as a group—luring us with prodding observations and questions to truly examine every aspect of who we thought we were. As we read Plato, Rousseau, and Daniel Defoe, he baited us with commonplace book assignments that challenged our most fundamental assumptions: Write an essay about your hand as if it were your genitals, and vice versa; explain what era you would fit into best; create a utopia for yourself; critique a classmate’s utopia; go for a walk with the person you like least in the class; retell the story of a contemporary Redlands murder from the murderer’s point of view—just to name a few. We were all hooked instantly as a group, pulled headlong into the Johnston educational experience, joined in the common cause of defending ourselves against this seeming madman. Within two weeks of going away to college, I remember staying up with several classmates, discussing the merits of Plato’s logic in the Bekins hallway until two a.m., and I marveled in my commonplace book about how rapidly I was changing and becoming real, and wrote: “None of us are real yet, except for Kevin.” Like a grain of sand in an oyster, Kevin pestered us and provoked me to write, write, write in an effort to explore, defend, and discover who I really was.

Though I now see Kevin only rarely at the Johnston reunions and an occasional conference, I know that he was a formative influence in my life, forging a different sense of self in me with his probing questions. And as I wish Kevin much joy and happiness as he retires, I’d just like to say to him, as Germans say to those dear to them, “Kevin, du bist eine Perle.”

As a capstone, this from Uof R President Jim Appleton: "I am in awe of Kevin. The life of the scholar-teacher seems to ooze from his brain and his very being. Few possess the discipline or detachment from organizational life that is demanded. Talk to any 10 students at the University about who has made the greatest impact on their life in college and Kevin’s name will always be on that list."

III. Reflections. Full Disclosure: The basic idea in what follows is one I’ve shared before in reflecting on Kevin’s career (counting various faculty recommendations and public gatherings, I totaled up eleven times that I’ve been asked to say or write something about Kevin’s work, so I suppose some repetition is unavoidable and, I hope, forgivable).
Kevin and I have known each other for those same forty-two years. We met in August of 1969 at the first faculty retreat of the brand-new Johnston College. I first heard his name when Press McCoy was interviewing me in Chicago for the Johnston job, and he was touting the faculty already hired. “I called [world-class philosopher] Paul Weiss at Yale,” Press said, “and asked him who was the best graduate student he’d had in the past five years. He named Kevin. ‘Where’s he now?’ I asked, and learned that he was teaching at Texas El Paso. So I called him and asked if he was interested in moving.” El Paso was a job, to be sure, but it was still El Paso and Kevin was ready to move when Press’s call—really Press’s summons—came.

We have taught together, by my count, fourteen times, from a course on “Comedy” in 1971 to four versions of a chaotic improvisation happening entitled “Spontaneity Theater” to, a little more soberly, two seminars on “The James Family” (William, Henry and Alice, not Jesse and Frank) and, probably most important, seven iterations of the 8 unit double course “The Ancient Greeks: Everything from Homer to Aristotle.” We’re toying with the idea of mounting that Greek circus one last time in the near future—and who knows after that. We’ve also written a book together, on the first ten years of Johnston’s history. We’ve gone to conferences together, and given a paper on ethics and pedagogy together. We’ve impersonated each other, inflicted our really stupid accents on anyone w/n earshot (he’s much better than I am), and liberated ourselves from professorial stuffiness by, in effect, doing “Spontaneity Theater” for four decades in Johnston’s corridors. We quit smoking together for a whole year, and then bought a pack of Galois to celebrate: so much for the intelligence of the intelligentsia. In the early days we went to a few too many Johnston graduation and faculty New Year’s Eve parties together—but I don’t think I’ll go there—and we’ve given several dramatic readings of the third act of Othello, performances that may be the worst in that play’s history. And we’ve had, who knows, maybe a thousand conversations about our latest intellectual enthusiasms. Typically we both start talking at once about our latest discovery, and titles and pages fly back and forth like maniacal postcards. And we’re still good friends who, no matter how long it’s been since our last time together, always pick up in mid-sentence and carry on.

I think Kevin’s many virtues as a professor are well known. His polymath interest in virtually everything is extraordinary. There’s no one on our faculty, to my knowledge, that’s so well read in so many fields. He reads—and teaches—at least three other languages, he’s willing to sponsor seminars or tutorials on virtually any subject (not just “Kant and Hegel” or “American Philosophy” or “Existentialism,” but also “Vampires,” the “History of Warfare,” “Witchcraft,” the Byzantines, and in a more apocalyptic mode, “The Dead”—his long-standing research project on América, death, and the 19th century). And, of course, he has led some legendary, literally life-changing travel courses: a January walking tour of Western Ireland—fondly known as The Sleet Trip—and especially the two semester-long ventures to Greece and Turkey in the late 1970s that Melanie Herzog celebrated.

One of Kevin’s uncanny gifts is the ability to live, academically, in the present. This involves some obvious things: staying current in several fields, thinking about new rather than old ideas. And it means some incidental, yet funny mannerisms: e.g. forgetting that six months ago he passionately explained the same “new” idea to you, or deciding that some project, any project, must now be rethought from the beginning. (This made the writing of our Johnston history very comical on a few occasions, since Kevin was always reinventing the past while I, the archival, stodgy team member, was clinging to the past—already-narrated). And w/o dwelling on it, I’ll cite the major downside of Kevin’s immersion in The Now: his desk has half a dozen book-length manuscripts in it. Several excellent chapters and articles aside, most of those words have never seen the light of day because Kevin lost interest in them as soon as they were done to his satisfaction. Put better, he’s proud of his published essays on death in 19th America or on Coetzee’s “Disgrace,” but as for the onerous task of getting a book published: too much living in the past for him.
The damage we did to Othello aside, "Performance" is the category I want to elaborate a little. When Kevin discusses a new book with you, one of the several he's currently reading, he is able to "perform" complex ideas — very complex ideas — without pauses or rehearsal, and in a stimulating, infectious way. The book becomes a drama unfolding before you. When he gives papers for colleagues, either on campus (the Jameson Center, the Faculty Forum series, philosophy department colloquia) or at conferences, he does not read them ("very boring"); he performs them. He relishes the risk, even in front of strangers at a big conference, of performing his ideas solo, without notes, and handling their complexities in ways that can bring a paper-sodden, jaded academic audience to life. "Acting out" is in every sense one of his great talents. It means that for his students he is always present, and the classroom is an immediate, a "now" place of drama, of excitement. Whatever is on his students' minds is what is on Kevin's mind; there is no subject he won't consider, no subject too high (or too low!) for fresh insights. You think introductory philosophy courses too abstract and impractical? Kevin will spend a day on how to get a California fishing license, or how to wax a surfboard or repair a microwave. “Where’s the philosophy in that?” you ask, and then smile as you realize you’ve starting doing philosophy. Can Kevin really repair a microwave? Depends on how good the microwave’s ideas are. “Does a microwave have ideas?” you ask in a cocky tone, and then smile…

To focus this further, he is a performer in this specific sense; he doesn't simply "perform for" his students' entertainment, or more subtly in a calculated, pedagogic way — all teachers do that—he literally performs his own mind. He's willing to take all the risks that implies: to be foolish or wrong, to challenge and upset and even alienate, but always with his students' wider horizons in mind. He performs his mind in such a way that every class has at least half a dozen surprising turns, turns neither he nor his charges imagined when they entered. He revels in the secret truth that most professors try to conceal, both from their students and themselves; classrooms are in fact chaotic, irrational places. Think of the day-dreaming, the wool-gathering, the inconsequences and indifferences, the fumblings and mistakes, that go on every minute in every class: Kevin loves that territory. “It got crazy in there today,” he’ll often say, smiling.

The effect of all this on a seminar is, to rephrase, rampant unpredictability; students — and Kevin himself — don’t know where they’ll be when the eighty minutes is over. As Casey Sutcliffe noted, he often likes to start with slightly left-field questions that throws people off: "Would you live in the chapel for a week to honor a belief?" "How many lies do you tell a day?" "Why didn't God want us to speak just one language?": there's always a new off-the-wall query. Parenthetically, he does this for colleagues as well: "Now Kelly," he might say to Professor Hankin, leaning forward confidentially with the slightest of grins, "would you be willing to….." followed by something Professor Hankin would almost certainly be unwilling to do. Sometimes these quirks are entertaining gimmicks, e.g. having papers turned in at dusk or midnight on the chapel steps. But the overall effect is excitement. It's like living a thriller whose plot is authentically mystifying. At the same time the class operates at a very sophisticated level, and students regularly, subliminally, pull themselves up to Kevin’s mark. They practice, and lose, themselves in philosophical discourse. The course's conversations are, then, unsettling, entertaining and high-tech all at once; Kevin is wonderful at getting students to do things they think are beyond them. He'll get after them for lazy or shoddy answers, berate them — sometimes in a serious enough way to make clear that, finally, he has no interest in currying their favor. But he's a mesmerizing force for many because he performs the mind in ways they’ve never dreamed of when they enter his classes. A few, of course, don't like him: too bizarre/threatening, not enough of "what we're supposed to know and be tested on" sort of teaching. But that's a mirror they look into with a self-protective gaze.

In sum, what Kevin most loves is philosophizing: this means more than his opinions, it means his full performance as a thinker-reader. That's what he does best, I think: perform the life of the mind, making the word flesh in his enchanting discourse.
Kevin’s Grad Review speech: “My Johnston”

As I graduate I cannot help but live in my beginnings. I am an existential person; I live in the moment. I do not spend a lot of time thinking on the past or imagining the future. So when this event happens, I am carried back in a very existential way and have to relive that past as a kind of present that seeps into my everyday consciousness and muddles the boundaries between what was and what is.

This is not so easy because the past becomes present and all the hopes, the longings, the dreams that moved me in 1969 move me again and with much of the same urgency. Then I was a young man, 27, with a growing mustache and lengthening hair and vague intimations of a world I wished would be. I was not politically sophisticated, but I was politically moved. In my first grown-up job, teaching philosophy at the University of Texas El Paso, I got involved with a lot of different causes and ended up on the TV news leading demonstrations. I hung out with black student athletes from New York and took part in marches around the assassination of Martin Luther King and others about living conditions for poor Hispanics in El Paso.

I had never read Marx or Engels or Lukacs or Gramsci -- I didn’t even know who most of the guys I just named were -- but like many people of my generation I was caught up in the civil rights movement (in 1954, I had no idea that there was such a thing as segregation!), had huge reservations about the war in Viet-nam, and found, when I began teaching, that there was so much more one could do to connect with students, to make education touch their lives. I learned that they had stories to tell, that they wanted
to learn, that ideas mattered, and I felt mighty rebellious within the confines of a large state university, however much I loved the students. But I was also hopelessly naive, and everything in my background led me to identify with entrenched interests. I was the product of elite institutions, knew a lot more about how to parse a sentence in classical Greek than I did about class warfare or people’s revolutions. I loved history and knew a lot about this stuff but had no theory.

Anyway, I was immediately successful and charismatic and popular and it all went to my head and I loved every second of it.

Plus, I loved living on the border and going to Juarez most weekends to party at the mariachi bars and eat at amazing restaurants. We did all our grocery shopping there, partly because you could buy cold beer from vending machines in the supermarket, and drink as you shopped. I would have stayed, could have stayed, despite the fact that I was becoming far too interesting to the University Board of Regents in Austin, and was learning that politically controversial people get a lot of people behind them -- way behind them! Faculty colleagues assured me that they agreed with my activist positions but I seemed to be the only one on television or mentioned in the press. But as I reconstruct me in 1968 I see a guy with dreams, of something, and of a deeply rebellious nature. I wanted something, and I wanted to do things differently, but had no clear avenue aside from getting into trouble with the Regents and being a popular professor.

In the late fall of 1968, I actually signed a contract to take a job in the philosophy department at my undergrad alma mater, Georgetown. My former teachers wanted me on their faculty. Pretty cool. But something made me reject this path to East Coast respectability. The day after I mailed the signed contract I also sent a telegram (which one did in those days before the internet) rescinding my acceptance, offering no explanation. I never understood why I did this until these past few weeks when I was forced by my impending grad review to re-examine these crucial episodes from my past. I said ‘No’ because I was looking for something else, which I could not then name, and because I was rebelling against the system, and Georgetown represented everything I had come to feel uneasy about. In retrospect, what looked like weird career suicide makes almost perfect sense. I remind myself that I was 26 years old when I sent that telegram, blissfully idealistic; at the same time there really was a legitimate longing stirring inside me, which I had the good sense to honor.

Then the next day -- literally -- Johnston called and the ride was on and has never stopped because here is where I found my home. I remain a utopian communalist, and a rebel -the two instincts that frame Johnston for me and that have never really gone away. I suffer that very American longing for connection, that yearning sorrow that drives us down the two lane blacktop looking for - something, for that city on the hill that the Pilgrims wanted, for that more perfect union, for the satori that Kerouac’s wandering pilgrims and Henry Miller sought in Big Sur, for Thomas Wolfe’s home to which he cannot go again, for Emily Dickinson’s peace beyond death, for the white whale and the home that we hope Bobbie McGee found, for whatever dream moved Gatsby, and all the other American characters etched by nameless longing, who will seek and seek, though they go ten thousand miles.

And like so many Americans, and others, I wanted both love and community. In 1968, I believed I could find both, or hoped I could. And I did -- find both, that is, love and community, though I must admit that for me the community part came a lot easier than the love par, although I finally found that, too.
Here is what I am graduating about:

Derrida’s “Ends of Man” talk, and the fact that Johnston is impossible: you cannot create an edenic community, you cannot find love, you cannot fight the Man, because all these things are impossible in this world.

But you try.

But what is doubly or triply weird is that you cannot possibly build community or fight the Man in an institutional setting that keeps good records and grants degrees and gets accredited. Institutions kill community, kill rebellion, turn us all into bureaucrats, make us small-souled and frightened and sellouts. And yet, you cannot try for community dependably anywhere else or rebel effectively anywhere else and the genius of Johnston is that it keeps trying to do, and does, what it cannot possibly do.

It keeps betraying itself and reaffirming itself and failing and rebuilding, constantly, every day, all the time; it is never done, never right, never settled into a form. Never satisfied, or pleased or content -- but so happy!

We are good because we are contradictory and screwed up and endlessly self-deconstructing and unavailable to register predicted outcomes for assessors. In a world increasingly devoted to bottom line calculations we keep getting it all wrong and somehow that works in our favor because we keep graduating people whose skills and accomplishments are either really hard or impossible to assess - and thank God for that - as they burst on the world and do just fine and carry through search for love and community and their rebellion out into a world that they cannot ultimately change but that they will keep trying to, anyway.

This is the crazy, impossible environment in which I live and have lived and hope to continue to live until I am too demented and broken down to make it out here to fail in the special ways I have perfected over 42 years of doing what cannot be done.

Kevin’s’ Commencement speech

May 28, 2007

Whenever Jacques Derrida gave a public talk he did something both unsettling and endearing: he provided a context for that talk, a description of the occasion that was unfolding as, and was being constituted by, what he said. What was endearing about this rhetorical strategy was how thoroughly it unmade - deconstructed - his talk-giving authority. We expect speakers to be presented, so that they do not then have to present themselves. Their bona fides are assumed to arrive with them and not to need explication or defense.
It is as if the guy who came to service your air conditioning system showed up clutching his Yelp reviews in his hand. The act undoes his authority, and makes him seem vulnerable, and maybe even unsure of himself. AS ANY PHILOSOPHER SHOULD BE.

What was unsettling about Derrida’s appropriation of the introduction prerogatives was that the way Derrida introduced each of his talks was to sketch out precisely why the talk he was about to give and was actually at that moment already giving, was a talk that either could not or should not be being given at all. The talk into which he was already shamelessly launched was either impossible or immoral and we, his audience, by witnessing, and thereby implicitly approving of the talk, were already co-conspirators in this illicit/impossible event. The occasion became ridiculous and subversive at the same time, wobbling unsteadily on a boundary between absurdity and offense.

Derrida made the tame event of giving a talk both dangerous and funny and by letting us in on the joke/offense he broke through the fourth wall and made us part of the action.

As a self-described performer of philosophy, or philosophy performance artist, I always appreciated the aesthetic skill and savvy Derrida brought to such occasions and today I want to steal his moves. When it comes to stealing good material performers have no shame.

I stand before you as a graduation speaker - but I have not yet graduated. I am here to tell you what you can expect from life after Johnston, from life after one leaves the putative ‘ivory tower’ (why ivory, by the way?). But I cannot do that because I have never left that academic world or Johnston. The last non-academic job I had was working as a cabana boy at a beach club in East Haven Connecticut, running food orders and setting up beach chairs and umbrellas. My last work day was Labor Day, 1966.

So, what do I know? What can I tell you? All we can do is huddle together at the base of the tower wall and peek over to see what might be on the other side. The only difference between you and me is that I have been living on this side of the border a lot longer. If this were a talk about how to be a professor, I might be of some help. But all I have now is longevity.

So, having established that I know very little that you do not already know, what can I possibly say?

There are six things that I know. You might know some or all of them but it doesn’t hurt to remind each other of what we know just before we climb over the wall and leave the garden/tower.3

1. I know this: things done without passion are probably not worth doing. And the most passionate thing to do, always, is to breathe that next breath. It starts there, at the most fundamental level of animal being. If you master that, the other passions come a lot easier.

   What does this mean? I think that it does not matter much what you do after you decide to keep breathing - or, not as much as that initial decision. But remembering to take each breath as if you meant it, to register each heartbeat as if it mattered completely - these are important things that you and I can both forget sometimes, because often the stuff that comes after the breathing and the heart beating does not seem so compelling, and often it is not.
But if you remind yourself, from time to time, that every breath and every heartbeat are optional, that they need not ever happen, and that some day they will not, those breaths and beats seem so precious, even if we are not sure what the beating and the breathing are ultimately for. One level of secret, which you might know, is that on some level they are not for anything at all. They just are.

2. Second, Revel in the unearned feast of the senses that comes to you, unasked for and unpaid for, every minute of every day you are alive. I have come to terms with the fact that I will some day die. I even have a fair idea of how. I was half awake and quite aware in January of 2003 when I saw them insert stents into my right coronary artery to prevent total blockage. This does not unnerve me because I grew up in a culture - Irish Catholic - in which death is an occasion for festivals and we live every day with a morbid fascination with the dead God, Jesus, whom we will surely join. What bothers me is the idea that all those sights and smells and hearings and feels that mean so unspeakably much to me, every day, will be gone. It is both reassuring and aggravating that you will get to enjoy the feast for decades and decades longer than me. I hate you for that and love you, too, because you will keep having what is best in life - the dumb, unprocessed and inexhaustibly rich fact that you are alive at all, at all. I cannot imagine a greater, more mysterious gift than this, and I do not want it to stop.

3. THIRD TRUTH: Once you find yourself here and breathing, and the subject of the unearned feast, find something you are good at, take pleasure in it, do it a lot and get better and better at it until you are really, really good. Expect others to do the same; spend time with people who enjoy spending inordinate amounts of time doing something until they get it right and experience the sweet pleasure of that rightness. Enjoy the fight to become excellent. And do it for no reason other than that you are lucky enough to have the freedom to try. Being alive is the first thing. Sensing is the second. Acting on and in one's life, the third.

4. Once you have learned to breathe passionately, and opened yourself to the gift of sentience, you can face the thing: you will have to take a certain amount of crap. I cannot say it any other, more polite, way. To be human is not only to breathe and sense and act -- it is to suffer, to undergo, to put up with, whether you want to or not. To live is to endure, to hang on. To live through.

I refuse to use the word 'survive' in this context because we do so much more by suffering. Surviving has the connotation of barely making it. That is not what I mean, or not all of it. To suffer means to be ravaged, to rage and howl and weep until your stomach hurts. It means to be overwhelmed and undone by hopeless desire. It means to try and try and try and never quite make it as far as you want. Sometimes it means perduing through what should be unendurable physical and psychic pain.

And, unexpectedly, such suffering can sometimes cleanse us, hollow us out, make us tougher or more compassionate or wiser. Often suffering does exactly none of these things. What does not kill me often makes me weaker, by the way.

But suffering can also make art, write novels, edit great films, reveal and honor the unbearable. And sometimes it cannot and remains mute and terrible and, often, just pointless.
Does this mean I should stop being passionate? Not at all - what else can one be in the face of such insult?

5. What it does mean is that company is very, very important along the way. As difficult and narcissistic and insensitive as I can be, and as downright and unreconstructedly strange my family life was, I have always understood that I have to stretch myself beyond myself, to incorporate other people and other living beings into my life. Sometimes I wish I did not have to. Life is easier alone.

But it is also - duh - ALONE - and no matter how aggravating and baffling and demanding other people and dogs and cats and parrots and marmosets are - and they really are - in this world of suffering and sentience we need them. I wrote ‘incorporate’ in the previous paragraph. I mean it - we have to take them into our body, into our bodily life, into our sentience and into our suffering. WE must be com-passionate - sharing the suffering - and con-scientious -- sharing the awareness - of other people and animals, or the effort of willing that next breath, or the absurd beauty of sensation, could fail us, and we could go mad, or die.

Because you suffer and cannot help it, and need some companions in the struggle; because you act in the world in public, and will have an audience; because you enjoy the feast of the senses and feel others around you feasting at the same table - for all these reasons, understand that E.M. Forster was right, in Howard's End when he said, “Only connect”. I need people. I need dogs. I need cats. And wombats, and flounders and egrets - I need to be surrounded by life, by those enjoying and enduring the journey with me, some very very close, for whom I would die, others seen at a greater distance, yet whom I love nonetheless because they are alive.

6. To appreciate all of these four things - the unearned feast of the senses, the thrill of action, inevitable suffering and the need to love, I need one further thing - the silence in which to name these other four things and to allow them to speak to me in their proper voices, which I cannot hear when I am also talking.

And in that silence, which is the only thing sacred, I also hear something else that I need to hear: the voices, the caws, the hootings, the singing, of all the living things that hunger for justice, who have to make the journey alone or despised or unloved, who cannot properly enjoy the feast, or act gracefully, or even suffer with dignity. In the silence I hear them and know that I owe them, everything - and do not know how to pay them what they deserve.

These are the six things I know. This is not all I know, but enough.

which can be partially summed up in Sigmund Freud’s three word phrase: what counts are Lieb und Arbeit - Love and Work, attachment and passion. But I correct Freud by adding one thing - silence, which, taken together with love and work, mitigate and transform our shared suffering and celebrate our shared sentience.

The Johnson Center and I have felt, suffered, sensed, acted, lived together for forty-odd years. I leave still breathing, still sensing, still trying to be excellent, and still struggling to be silent. You and I will suffer when we leave this place but we will also work and love and feel, and hear what the silence brings.

That’s what I have to say.
Denise Davis  
Lavender Graduation Keynote Speech 2011

As someone who took part in the very first Lavender Graduation on this campus, I am truly honored to be here today to celebrate you and your accomplishments. What I really appreciate about this gathering is its innate purpose of celebrating people who are unafraid to be themselves in the world...a world, that sadly as you know, is not always kind to those of us who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer if you will.

I graduated from the Johnston Center in 2006 with an emphasis in “Social Psychology of Gender and Multiculturalism for Social Change.” Long Johnston title. Shocking, I know. The reason mine is so long, however, is directly linked with my experiences here on campus. The last three words of my degree “for social change” were deliberately added in my senior year because of the concrete social progress that I was able to witness in my four years here as a student.

Allow me to now share with you a few experiences and tokens of reflection.

I never came to the University of Redlands thinking that I would be an LGBT activist. On the contrary, I was actually straight upon entering college and I came here not so much for the academics or extracurricular activities, but rather to play on the basketball team. Those two things are both true...and both quickly changed in my first year.

At the end of Winter Break that year, I attended the TRAIN Retreat. After these intense and transformative days in the mountains, I came back to campus energized to get involved in something bigger than myself. My friend and I were in conversations about what the campus was lacking, while simultaneously questioning our sexual orientation as many people do in their first year in college, which prompted us to come up with Safe Space Allies.

While there were key people in this endeavor, Leela MadhavaRau being one of the biggest supporters, we were living in a time when there was no Pride Center, and virtually no dialogue on campus regarding LGBT issues. When we decided to make Safe Space Allies an official club on campus, the University Senate debated for quite some time before coming out of the room to tell us that it was approved by a narrow margin. This moment was the start of what would ultimately be the greatest lesson of social change that I’ve ever experienced. From here, we targeted Residence Life as our first group to do the Safe Space trainings for, as we knew we needed buy-in from this crucial group of student leaders. Once the rainbow “R” logos started going up on people’s doors, conversations began.

You have to remember that these were the days before Facebook, so people’s identities were more likely to be figured out in the hallways of East, Williams, Grossmont, and so on, rather than by what they and their friends could have been posting on the virtual walls of Facebook.

For that reason, the cardstock rainbow “R” placard was an incredibly powerful tool in gauging social change. As everyone from first-year students, to Johnston, to the Greek and non-Greek
organizations, to people in literally every residence hall on campus got on board, the visual representation of the supportive climate for LGBT students on this campus became encouragingly evident.

As for being two students who somewhat fearfully started this organization, we were now breathing easier, knowing that the net of awareness and acceptance was steadily growing on campus. Before we knew it, Safe Space Allies was the largest student group at the University of Redlands. A few years later, the Pride Center opened on campus, Pride Alliance became a flourishing club who went on to produce Drag Ball—a steadily growing force to shake up the all school party scene. Additionally, more queer courses were appearing in the academic curriculum, and finally in 2010, you and your fellow students elected the first-openly gay ASUR President. We have come a very long way, indeed.

How far have we come, you say? Perhaps from Stonewall to Sarah Palin? (Sorry, that’s a terrible joke!) I do want to make mention of the course that I’ve now had the privilege of teaching twice in the Women’s and Gender Studies Department. It’s called “From Stonewall to Sarah Palin: Sexism, Sexuality, Media, and Activism.”

I enjoy teaching this course for so many reasons, mainly because it’s been tremendously encouraging to have a classroom full of eager students from all walks of life who want to talk about how they can change the world to make it a safe space for everyone to have the same rights and freedoms to move through life on an equal playing field, comfortable in their own skin.

And yet, for as much progress as we have made, we still do not live in a world where it is safe to be openly gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. From the “Kill The Gays Bill” in Uganda, to the “Don’t Say Gay” Bill in Tennessee, the recent murders and rapes of prominent lesbian activists in South Africa, to the string of teen LGBT-related suicides in the US earlier this year, we live in an exterior world where far too often, it is dangerous to be who we really are.

Because of this danger, LGBT activism is sometimes a complicated, slippery slope. Earlier this school year, we had the privilege of having Academy Award Winning writer and LGBT activist, Dustin Lance Black speak on campus. While I admire much of what he had to say, I left feeling a bit uneasy about his Harvey Milk-like message encouraging people to almost immediately “come out” to everyone in their lives. While I won’t argue that there is strength in numbers and that visibility is key in our struggle for equal rights and for basic human understanding, I do believe that one of the most important elements of successful activism is knowing precisely when to speak.

Reflecting on her 25 years of having a national day-time television show, Oprah Winfrey said, “One of the biggest things I’ve learned over the years is that people want to be heard. Every human being no matter what age, no matter how old we get, is looking for the same thing. What everybody wants is to know, “Do you see me? Did you hear me? And did what I say mean anything to you? That is what everybody is looking for.”

I believe that when you engage in those moments where you are being seen and heard and where what you are saying is truly being considered and absorbed, that is when genuine change takes place. Those moments can’t necessarily be ordered or prescribed. They must come when you’re
ready to speak your truth…and for some people this could take years or perhaps even decades. That’s ok.

Because sexual orientation isn’t salient at birth as race and in most cases, gender is, the process of coming to terms with an identity that goes against the grain of societal norms is one that takes quite a long time to psychologically unravel.

I vividly remember in my first few years of college having experiences in which I could nearly see the layers of repression peeling back in my mind, almost like peeling an onion. I firmly believe that being who you truly are involves having the courage to see what’s already there. What inspires me about each and every one of you is the audacious courage that you’ve exhibited to grapple with who you are and find out what’s really beneath, allowing for great transformation to take place.

One of the most transformative periods of my life was my semester abroad in London during my junior year of college. I was in a city where I knew no one, in an academic program where everyone around me seemed to identify as straight. Finally I just decided to take the tube from my residence hall in Chelsea into Soho and explore the queer bars and clubs on my own. What I found as I walked into these places alone was that there were people from literally all continents of the globe represented and we all had one thing in common: a coming out story. If not a public one, it was about coming out to ourselves. We all were part of a deeply marginalized global community, and that shared understanding of prejudice speaks louder and clearer than any of the 300 languages heard on the streets of London. For me, the club became not just a space for dancing and having a good time, but more so it became a place of liberation, acceptance, and sharing a common experience.

As you enter into a world where there isn’t always going to be a Pride Center or a Safe Space within literal or metaphorical walking distance, I encourage you to keep living your truth and trusting your gut. You’ve already managed to do what statistically speaking another 50-60 students in your class have not, and that is have the courage to stand up here today to publicly take pride in the magnificent human beings that you are. For this reason, I know you are the change agents of both the present and the future. Your representation here today creates an awareness, a visibility, and a legacy that will last for generations to come on this campus.

In closing, I’ll leave you with one of my favorite quotes from Mitch Albom. In his book, Tuesdays With Morrie, he said, “The culture we have does not make people feel good about themselves. And you have to be strong enough to say, if the culture doesn’t work, don’t buy it.” I wish you all a lifetime of feeling good about yourselves, as you deserve absolutely, positively nothing less.

Congratulations to each and every one of you!

Introducing… The Class of 2011
Owen William Galipeau  
Emphasis: The Life and Meaning of Heroism; Discovering Creativity and Knowledge Through Literature, Writing, Critical Studies, and Mythology  

Brian James Tarr  
Emphasis: Romance Languages and Natural Sciences  

Patrick Medeiros  
Emphasis: Botanical Chemistry  

Kathryn Hale McIntosh  
Emphasis: Religion and Its Visual Representations Through Art  

Brittany Raquel Greenbaum  
Emphasis: Social Change through Art and Psychology with an Emphasis on Sexual Assault Prevention  

Itamar Amrany  
Emphasis: The Philosophy and Connections of Business in Art  

Phillip Rajcany  
Emphasis: Environmental Modeling  

Amelia C. Harrah
Emphasis: Understanding and Communicating Through Stories and Language

Dolores Aurora Dickson
Emphasis: The Arts and Their Relations

Elan Marie Carson
Emphasis: Creative Writing, French, and Visual Design

Elizabeth J. Blakeley
Emphasis: Conservation Science with a Minor Emphasis in Wilderness Emergency Response

Nathaniel D. Greenberg
Emphasis: Artificial Intelligence

Patrick Grigsby Sundlof
Emphasis: Sound Ecology, Luthiery, and B.A. Music

Elena Christina Cannon
Emphasis: Social Behavior Across Cultures

(“Buffaloooooooooo” Photo by James Greene, 2013)

Katherine Graham Ferrell
Emphasis: Psychotherapy, Mindfulness, and Creative Expression

Annie Claire Pennell
Emphasis: Photography, Writing, and the Human Experience

John Michael Duggan
Emphasis: The Business of Literature

Lauren Pauline Hohle
Emphasis: Framing and Narrative: Creative Writing, Film, and Social Justice

Porscha Marie Soto-Dilger
Emphasis: Challenging Inequalities in Governmental and Social Institutions with a Concentration in Educational Reform

Mary Margaret Goodwin
Emphasis: Studio Art Concentration in Graphic Design; Religious Studies

Matthew Greene
Emphasis: Integrative Studies in Creative Writing, Philosophy and Literature

Rafael S. Fernandes
Emphasis: Urban Agriculture

Darci Daneshvari
Emphasis: International Marketing and Anthropology of Consumer Cultures

Nina Marie Fernando
Emphasis: Social Change through Music and Religious Studies

Maya Lowy Polan
Emphasis: Literary Arts

Lauren Argonza
Emphasis: Creative Process and Aesthetics of Music Performance and Studio Art

Emma Van Seters
Emphasis: A Change of Heart: Creative Writing and Peace Studies

Gaelan Harmon-Walker
Emphasis: Interdisciplinary Art Therapy

Christina Long
Emphasis: Interrupting and Supporting Global Forces: Interactions and Impacts in Social, Political, Economic, and Environmental Relations
Elizabeth Marshall Griffith  
Emphasis: Healing through Creative Expression, Art Therapy, and Social Change

Ralph Gustav Steinhardt  
Emphasis: Philosophy, Religion, and Culture with a Minor Emphasis in Music Studies

Robert Lee Stelmach  
Emphasis: Applying Ecological Economics to Treatment Wetlands

Maria-Germaine Vogel  
Emphasis: Whole Body Healing: Mind, Body, and Spirit

Jonathan Edward Fuller  
Emphasis: The Art of Being Human

Richard Daily  
Emphasis: Inspiring Happiness

Janey Rose Thompson  
Emphasis: History and Design for Theatre
Laurie German  
Emphasis: Becoming Through Film

Lynn Berkeley-Krantz  
Emphasis: Creative and Performing Arts

Samuel Bausum Boutelle  
Emphasis: Government and Public Policy

Jane Alice Kauffman  
Emphasis: Beyond Discourse: Communicative Disorders and Empathy

Mary Elizabeth Krendel  
Emphasis: Neuroscience and Global Health

Brian Michael Pines  
Emphasis: Continental Philosophy and Psychoanalysis

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**Margie Austin, In Memoriam.**

Beloved Johnston Administrative Assistant Margie Austin passed away on June 12, 2011. She was laid to rest under a big oak tree on June 29th at Redlands Hillside Memorial Cemetery. Doug Bowman delivered the service. Below are a few thoughts about Margie from Bill McDonald and Yash Owada.

From Bill:

Margie spent nearly thirty years at the Center, working under four Directors and seeing to its daily operation. But her main contribution, and legacy, lies well beyond answering phones and moving paper: she was a counselor, surrogate grand/mother, and uncritical supporter of generations of students. Her desk in Bekins typically had a cadre of undergraduates around it, and many sought private conversation with her, and thanked her profusely at graduation for her kindness and insight. We faculty used to tell Margie that she was the key to student retention at Johnston, and she always demurred, but we were right. Margie earned her salary many times over by the students she helped to keep in school and, much more important, by the young lives she helped to order and enrich.

From Yash:

Here is what I remember most about Margie Austin. In the late '80's or very early '90s, Judy and I happened to give her a ride to go to some function (must have been Kevin's wedding), and stopped by UC Irvine to check up on one of our daughters who was doing her graduate study there in science education. When we reached her on-campus apartment, I found a stray cat trying to get
into her apartment. I generally don't care for cats, even though we did have a very large one at home. At any rate, I picked up this intruder, and threw him away. Margie got mad at me for being so cruel. SHE WAS MAD! The only time I saw her getting terribly upset. It took a long time for me to realize that it was her life's commitment never to refuse/reject another Being, human or non-human. Good or bad. Margie remembered that incident in the late '90's. A tiny anecdotal event, but earthshaking for her. Receive, accept what came to her life. That's how she received students of ANY color, disposition, dreams and sad stories. … I must be grieving.

Coming up in the next issue of the Coz, Bill McDonald will reflections on traveling to Greece with Johnston and Redlands alumni.