The Johnston Center
Presents The
Coz
Mcnooz

Winter 2012
Dearest Johnstonians. I’m on a true alumni high today. The last two weeks of January were abuzz with alumni activity. We started in Holt with the launch of the 45th Johnston reunion. About 35 Johnstonians, from the 70s to the current class, gathered to brainstorm ideas for the event, which takes place in February of 2014. The meeting was truly inspiring, in part because of the two fabulous reunion co-chairs we have. Morgan Chicarelli and Matt Gray, both from the class of 2006, have a wealth of experience in leadership, community, and events planning. Morgan is currently the Events Coordinator at the Natural College of Medicine in Portland, and Matt most recently served as the Civic Engagement Program Manager at Johnson and Wales College in Denver. Beyond this, they simply bring a steady supply of energy and commitment to our community. Reunion work is underway!

Indeed, the buzz about reunion made its way all the way to the Capitol building in Washington D.C., where a University of Redlands and Johnston alumni event recently took place. Thanks to Johnston alumnus Jake Rogers (and other folks from CAS), Johnstonians from all generations gathered together to eat, drink, and be merry. What an amazing group this Washington/Virginia contingent is! I was able to meet alumni I’ve heard of but never met and learn about the career paths of alums I haven’t seen for some time (library science! Public art! NASA!). Perhaps the biggest surprise was meeting a wonderful alumnus from 1972 who hasn’t returned to Johnston since that time. It hardly took any persuading to convince him to come back for the 45th reunion. I can’t wait until he rediscovers Johnston! Speaking of the seventies, the fabulous Rabbi Patricia Karlin Neumann was also on hand in D.C. to deliver a paper on “uncommon colleges” at the Association of American Colleges & Universities’ annual conference. Current student Eli Kramer joined Patricia at the podium. Together, they spoke about Johnston’s particular role as an “uncommon college.” What a delight it was to watch two generations of Johnston students come together to publicly share the treasure that we call Johnston.
Brainstorming For The Renewal

Jake Rogers
(2010 “Business & Politics, Film & Activism”)
and current student Eli Kramer
Back at home, all is well too. The students are well into their spring semester and the mercurial Redlands weather keeps us guess whether it will be winter or summer on any given day. First year students have lost their transition-to-college nerves and what was last semester a foreign place they now call home. The juniors have returned from their studies abroad and, as is often the case, they seem more mature and introspective. And, of course, the seniors are running to and fro getting their material ready for graduation checks and Graduation Reviews. As you probably remember, the latter always makes spring high season for grand emotion and grand celebration. Below you will find reflections on events that have happened and announcements about events to look forward to. You will also find some reflections from Johnston alumni who are eager to share their lives with the alumni community. Alumni all over the country are finding ways to connect—to each other and to the College and Center. As you read this issue of the Coz, I hope you find or create an opportunity to do so as well.
Reflections on Teaching the First Year Seminar
By Professor Bryce Ryan

The 2011-2012 academic year commenced with the Johnston community opening their stubby Buffalo arms to welcome the largest incoming class in quite some time. As is now the tradition in Johnston, these freshmen were given the privilege of taking their First Year Seminar as one group. This iteration of the seminar was entitled “Next Stop: the Twilight Zone” and was co-taught by Bryce Ryan from biology, and Tim Seiber from the Johnston Center. Forty-four Johnston students can be quite a handful. The audacity to own their education as well as the almost universal desire to be unique makes herding Buffalo nearly as difficult as herding cats. Ably assisting in the Buffalo wrangling this year were three peer advisors, Carly Brownsberger, Elliot Cavnaugh and Nick Lowe. By all accounts, the exceptional peer advisors and the remarkable make-up of the freshman class made this first year seminar a delight to teach. In addition to our in-class sessions, which ranged from discussions on intersex to Sconce’s Haunted Media, the group also screened selected episodes of The Twilight Zone (the original Rod Serling version of course) and took a field trip to The Museum of Jurassic Technology. The most memorable experience for the majority of the class was an overnight camping trip to Joshua Tree National Park (picture below) where the group was led in stargazing (Coz McViews?) by Tyler Nordgren and were able to experience a very literal twilight zone in a beautiful natural setting. The trip was such a success that Kelly Hankin has promised to lead next year’s freshman class on their own camping trip [Director’s insert: “this is CLEARLY a lie”]. The traditional culminating event of the Johnston First Year Seminar is Chilifest, and this year was no different. Sandwiched around ravenous ingestion of copious amount of chili were presentations ranging from The Rocky Horror Picture Show and California’s Proposition 8 to student composed music, video and interpretive dance (exploring the dimension not only of sight and sound but of mind?), making this Chilifest a fitting end to a memorable semester.
Johnston Summer Seminar!

The first Johnston summer seminar is happening! As part of our larger effort to enrich our alumni community, Bill McDonald will be offering a week-long seminar for JC alums (and interested spouses/partners) on June 23-30, 2012, at the renowned Asilomar conference center in Pacific Grove on the Monterey peninsula. We urge you to visit their website; we think you’ll be impressed: a beautiful setting, full room and board, plus many amenities.

The subject will be “Ovid’s Metamorphoses,” the Roman poet’s inventive epic on change, transformation, shape-shifting, and mythology’s significance. Arguably, only the Bible, Homer, and Plato—and maybe just the Bible—have had greater literary impact on Western culture than this poem. So we’ll read great poetry together, and take up, in Ovid’s playful idiom, serious questions about the psyche (then and now), theology and polytheism, philosophies of change, gender roles and instability, hybridity, exile, allegories of the artist and art-making, and narrative’s power to reshape and to reform readers into its image. In addition, we may well tackle several modern recastings of Ovid’s stories: Kafka; Rilke; others to be determined—if those who enroll are interested, Johnston-style, in following Ovid into our era. Johnston3rd year student Rachel Reynolds (class of 2013), a fine Latinist, will join us and provide language expertise—and (she promises) a challenging Ovidian board game; we’re lucky to have her.

We’ll meet in two hour sessions twice a day, plus an evening or two, to discuss/analyze/celebrate the poem and its cultural consequences. There’ll be plenty of time left over for holiday activities: the beach, hiking, side trips, dinners together, early morning runs or musing over coffee, and at least two wine tastings drawn from Bill’s wine cellar.

To enable seminar dynamics, we’re limiting enrollment to 18, including spouses who want to participate (no, they needn’t be alums). Of course some partners may prefer the beach while their spouse sojourns with Narcissus, Venus and Orpheus: that’s cool. Children are welcome, though Asilomar charges $89 per child per day, and supervision will be the responsibility of the parents. If there are one or two motivated high school family members who want to join the seminar, well and good!
Logistics and costs for full room and board:

- Single accommodations (pp.) $1,424
- Double accommodations (pp.) $1,053
- Triple accommodations (pp.) $742
- Child (pp.) $623

Our anonymous alumna donor, the Fly-By-Night Foundation, in addition to picking up many costs of the program, is offering $3700 in assistance to those who need financial help. Obviously this limits the amount of money that can be given to each individual. So we’re asking that each of you honestly assess your need (no income tax forms or other financials required, just your honesty), and a campus group will award the grants. Grants and enrollment will be on a first come, first-served basis, so don’t delay. Email Bill McDonald for information on how to apply for a grant.

We’re requiring a $400 deposit by March 15, and a full payment by April 10.

Register online by going to:  http://bulldogconnect.redlands.edu/johnstonseminar
Please contact Dena Gilbert in the Office of Alumni Relations with questions regarding payment or to make roommate connections:  dena_gilbert@redlands.edu  or call 909-748-8011
Buffalo Books!

“Buffalo Books,” our alumni book discussion groups under the leadership of Sandy Shattuck (JC ‘77) and Bill McDonald, is now on the Johnston Facebook page. Our current book, a collection of stories entitled “Haiti Noir” and edited by Edwidge Danticat, has nearly thirty participants and we’re moving into the second half of the book in early February. Since these are short stories, you can still get a copy from any fast-delivery source and join in. We haven’t chosen our next book yet—perhaps an issue of “Granta” or another short fiction collection?—and suggestions are welcome.

We’ve also just launched an informal group of ten or so alums, centered in Oakland but with participants across the country, reading “War and Peace”.

In conjunction with an on-campus class that Bill’s teaching. The Oakland participants are meeting face to face, but there’s also an on-line component. They’re reading at a leisurely pace to accommodate working folks, so it’s still easy to join and catch up.

This isn’t on Facebook, so contact the group’s organizer
Emily Wick (JC ’00) @ <emilysusanwick@gmail.com> or
Bill <bill_mcdonald@redlands.edu> if you’re interested.

Wanted: A New Stove

Any alumni in the appliance industry?
Johnston students would love a new stove for the basement of Bekins! Our current stove works, but with the foodie culture in Johnston getting stronger, the stove can’t keep up with their culinary imagination. If you want to donate a stove, contributing to the Director’s Discretionary Grant is a great way to do so.
When I first came to Johnston in 1970, I had never before been to California. I had never eaten an artichoke or an avocado (this was before the days when regional produce was readily available). I had never seen a Joshua tree, and it was several weeks before I realized that Redlands was surrounded by mountains because the smog at the time was so prevalent. I am from the Chicago area, and this was a different world.

For our “orientation” that first night at Johnston we met in the Commons to meet our fellow students. We broke into small groups, chatted and were introduced to a series of . . .well, there was some high-faluting psychological mumbo jumbo about sensory connections . . . but the reality was “touchy-feely” games in the dark with total strangers. After other strange sensory exercises, my group sat in a circle and started “pass the body” where someone stood in the center amidst our straightened legs, was told to relax, and then “fall” while we would support them as we passed them from person to person. “Learning trust” and how “light a person is when relaxed” were the buzzwords. Terrified and confused, I failed to support the falling body and she crashed into my head leaving a two-inch bump. I crept back to the dorms.

A transient, longhaired young man appeared on the green a few days later and offered to read auras. Mine was tinged with black, and he admonished me that I was too tight and needed to “let go” . . . I felt like a sensory connections disgrace. My naïve blundering was helping to pile on karmic misunderstanding.

The environment added to the mumbo jumbo. Later that fall in the wee hours, there was a rumbling and shaking. Artifacts were crashing to the ground, and savvy students shouted that we should “stand in your doorways.” Perplexed, I never thought of an earthquake—my only exposure to them being the surreal scenes from Frank L. Baum’s series of Oz books. And the obverse continued: One day it rained, with lightning, and people were afraid to walk outside. Chicago has amazing frequent lightning storms that tear the skies with crashing thunder, and I had never imagined that native Californians had grown up without that experience. To my amusement, with great but misplaced creativity, a legion of people managed to conquer their fears by wearing tennis shoes, believing the lightning would pass through them. I, of course along with other Midwesterners, simply walked outside; for once I was “in the know”.

Of Artichokes and Avocadoes:
Johnston in 1970 Sandra Bacon
(“Fine Arts” 1974)
Last week, drinking coffee at a Starbucks with two of my friends, and talking of making talismans and intention dolls to attract positive energy for the New Year, I realized how I have indeed incorporated the mind/body connection into my life. I am far too shy to tear off my shirt and pound a mattress with a tennis racket to see where, according to some psychology or the other, my energy was blocked (as we often saw in the dorms, dripping bodies with bright red faces and lines of demarcation where the blood wasn’t flowing, and way too squeamish to put pins in my nipples in public (or private) to empathize with the pain of being female (part of early feminist performance art). I did however leave the coffee clutch last week when I was faced with some major sadness, and go to my studio to play raw rhythmic music, drum by candlelight and throw paint/make expressive marks on a large canvas primed with a blood red color of the root chakra.

This was no formal ritual, but my own way of processing angst, to redirect psychic energy so as not to internalize pain, to free myself creatively. California’s 70’s culture has indeed left its mark on the way I process emotion.

My memory is hazy, but I have a sense of how I came to an experimental school from a more traditional background: New Trier High School, one of those “power” places that gear their students to replicate the North Shore suburban status of intellect, money and compression. To begin with, I always felt like an outsider to the mainstream. My parents were divorced, RARE in that decade, and I had spent my early years in Racine, Wisconsin, a more blue-collar town, than the suburb of Winnetka we moved to in 5th grade. We were neither wealthy nor socially well placed. My family all had flaming red hair, so we always stood out, and while I was a good student, true-false tests and other rigid more mechanical evaluators always perplexed me. I always saw nuances and shades of grey rather than a single answer. I was agonizingly shy, and hated having to learn or speak in large groups. But the late 1960s was a time of such intense social change that it permeated our education. First, I went to New Trier West – the newer school with some younger and more liberal teachers. The media featured the protests about the war in Vietnam, and the questioning of societal mores—women and gay rights, social justice, the justice of a patriarchal society—and issues such as idealism vs. consumerism (The years of “flower power”).

As high school students we were confronted with clashes between the status quo and newer ideas, and we started to voice our opinions: reading Thoreau, the girls in my English class staged a protest against not being allowed to wear pants to school in frigid Chicagoland (for our efforts, we all got sent home that day). We were punished academically for going to an anti-war march (except in some classes where we could write a paper about our experiences), and the SDS came to speak at our school. We had a few cool classes where we could choose how to learn (taking a test vs. writing a paper vs. creating a project, learning math at our own speed, determining our own grade in chemistry by electing to take comprehensions tests as many times as we wished until we got the desired grade). . . and I got to take a gazillion art classes.

Coming to Redlands in 1970 was a continuation of those themes. During my first year, there were strict rules imposed by the University: curfews, for example, and single sex dorms. Believe it or not there were rules such as girls had to sit on a pillow if sitting on a boy’s lap. Johnston was an experiment, and we were looked on as aliens by the more tightly buttoned university students, not to mention University officials and the conservative town of Redlands. So we roared our uniqueness: We outfitted classmate Albert Mesa as our “homecoming queen” and
he zoomed into the football stadium on a motorcycle. The University sororities had candlelight ceremonies to celebrate their engagements, we had séances on the rooftops calling up the spirits of dead poets and philosophers. We were the scruffy, motley crew of barefoot, longhaired, bell bottomed “hippies”.

I do not remember ever speaking at a community meeting, ever, but I was there when the highly vocal, Carlisle Dowd campaigned for making Ten Zing, a student from Tibet, our “king”. He may even have been elected in a wave of passionate “consensus”, but whatever, it never took effect.

Over time the University rules softened: I remember the introduction of co-ed dorms, which in retrospect seems a much more familial, gentler atmosphere. Because we shared classes and soccer and a love of beer with the university students, we developed tenuous friendships. . .

The dorms were a hubbub of creativity. There was a fascination with building lofts of all kinds, some haphazard, some mysterious “red light districts” and many done with beautiful precision. This fascination with carpentry culminated in the making of a two story geodesic dome, and many conversations about Buckminster Fuller and saving the world. Vehicles of choice were VW vans with peace signs, and the ever-present VW bugs and motorcycles, with earnest mechanics.

In 1970, as students in Redlands, we didn’t, of course, have much communication with the outside world—no cell phones or Ipads—we only occasionally watched the “Twilight Zone” on television or caught an update on what was happening in Vietnam. Jimi, Janis and Jim Morrison died that year and the Beatles were disbanded. We listened to the folk troubadours on stereos—Joni Mitchell, Jackson Browne and Cat Stevens—as well as the Stones, Pink Floyd, and the Grateful Dead. Our entertainers were the adventures of classmates such as Casey Jones and Bion Howard telling tall tales of their camping travels (what happens in the wild with poison ivy, and/or a circle of skunks), or Stan Richardson (Weasel) and his guitar, Dirje Childs gyrating beautifully as a belly dancer and painfully watching her as someone with ice cubes and a needle pierced her nose. Somewhere in the haze, I started recognizing the flashes of future artistic success: Michael Blair playing drums, Joanne Mapson and her moving coming-of-age poetry, Jane Creighton and her taut, precise writing, Tim Garrand and his screenplays and super 8 films about relationships, or Ann Bingham-Freeman and her beautifully drafted drawings of irises . . .

Perhaps the craft put into the fashioning of bongs, from learning about the bamboo in Redlands to the pseudo- science of determining if the bong water stored in an orgone box of steel wool and cotton enhanced the cosmic experience of “Grateful Dead” pot, was ill placed, but certainly the emphasis on learning from our life experiences was powerful. My “Introduction to the Natural Sciences” class went camping in the primordial desert near Lancaster (home to the mysterious local legends of Captain Beefheart and Frank Zappa), and a “Venemous Sea Fish” class met on a mountain where a monkey named Houdini threw banana peels at us girls. Perhaps this learning in situ of the dynamics of environment saved the life of Bion Howard: camping in the desert near Joshua tree he awoke to find a rattlesnake sleeping on his chest. Rather than panic he waited with bated breath until the sun’s warmth lured the creature to warmer ground.
The pushing of boundaries blurred the distinction between dorm life and academics: parties and classes on the rooftops with ashes from the forest fires falling like rain in a yellow sky became all “yellow” dinners for a class on the surrealists. Art “happenings”/performance art, John Ball’s plays took place in the local cemetery and train station and at random sites such as on a stairwell stage in the dorm.

Our faculty embraced the role of being “co”-learners: sitting beside our professors who admitted that these were new adventures for them as well, and that while they had more training and experience, our fresh eyes and questions while learning together were important to them too. It was refreshing. It is important to me, all these years later, that I went to a school where I feel like I made an impact, and the faculty and my peers still know me by name.

“Why I don’t Wear a Watch . . . and other lessons from Johnston”

I don’t wear a watch and never have since I traveled to San Miguel de Allende during the interim semester in 1974. Carolyn King, a fellow Johnstonian also from Winnetka, and I ate only oranges for six days, read Doris Lessing, and identified with her “enhanced” feelings as the author and the two of us became lighter. Carolyn and I spoke only Spanish (having never studied Spanish, I tried to gage inflections and sound out like sounding words) and we tried to tell time by studying the nuances of light. I still try to wake up without an alarm, and “intuit” time before I look at a clock. (San Miguel de Allende was another world: we traveled to a party in a small town where we danced around a bonfire and ate goat, joined the daily afternoon stroll around the square. On a seemingly endless, grating bus ride back to California, weak with the “touristas”, I remember while I felt welcomed I also felt “other”: whenever I would try to relax, I would feel a tug at my scalp- women were taking samples of my red hair for good luck.)

That theme of enhanced feelings seemed prevalent at the time- I remember Barney Childs, a brilliant professor of poetry and music, but a curmudgeon, advising us in line at dinner at the commons to imagine as we ate the chicken that the meat was from the last of an endangered species of Whooping Crane, and to appreciate that no one else on earth will ever have the experience again—a wise, if warped, view on appreciating our lives in the present, and that scarcity adds to value.

Back then we studied advertisements to see the hidden figures in ice cubes that subliminally affected our choices in consumerism, and were reluctant to give our social security numbers for fear that someone undesirable would threaten our privacy. I can still see uses for invisible ink on cabbage leaves that are hand delivered then eaten as the only way to deliver private messages. No wonder I am afraid to “allow” Facebook to find the song most prevalent on my birthday in exchange for personal information and granting personal access.

I remember an alumni get-together in New York City in the 1980s that included Isabel Contento, one of Johnston’s first professors, who had taken a job teaching in a graduate program at Columbia University. In her first class, her students introduced themselves in a round robin fashion, and she quickly understood that almost everyone in the class had more knowledge than she did. Rather than panic she drew upon her Johnston experiences as a facilitator, and ended up having them teaching the class to each other. Wise thinking.

This past summer I went to the “Poverty Tour” of Tavis Smiley and Cornell West at a church on the South Side of Chicago. My hosts were Lee Goodman and his wife, Nancy. Lee is a fellow Johnstonian from my era that I reconnected with at the mini alumni reunion in February.
We were among a handful of white folk, there was much media and it was a hot summer night. Much of the political talk, while impassioned and direct, also made a valid point. However, at some junction I realized that I would no longer stand up and applaud when I started listening to the content by a particular speaker—whom I later identified as Louis Farrakhan. Questioning authority and determining the bias of the speaker, being in a foreign culture and trying to understand myself as I was present there, I remembered that Lee’s favorite Johnston class was an interim semester spent as a “pretend’ prisoner in a maximum security prison.

This was one of the most powerful experiences of my last year.

I have drawn upon my Johnston experiences as they continue to resonate in my life. From Bruce Halstead’s class on “Venemous Sea Creatures” I was inspired to be in an art show of “Deep Sea creatures” in Brooklyn’s Red Hook this past summer with Carla Goldberg, an alum from a later era. Synchronicity. Moving to NYC after graduate school in painting, unsure how to support myself as an artist, I blended the study of science with the practice of being an artist. I spent my first years in NYC as a tour guide driving a monorail train in “Wild Asia” at the Bronx Zoo because I went to a party of Johnstonians and Hugh worked in the snake department.

In my West Village neighborhood, I would frequently run into other students from Johnston: Jim Kurzmac and his tribe of friends, Kathy Adorney (wise woman), or Michael Blair playing pool at Magoo’s... Working a million jobs simultaneously, I remember Jane Creighton coming into a Japanese noodle restaurant where I was waitressing. It was my 30th birthday, and Jane laughed and commented how freeing it was to reach this milestone: no longer did we have to worry about being too polite or too careful with our conversations.

There are other synchronicities. In 2007, I was commissioned to paint a series of large public artworks with environmental themes, “Cool Globes”, and one of my sponsors was USGBC, founded in part by the same, Bion Howard, who escaped the rattlesnake. The same Ann Bingham –Freeman of the beautifully drawn irises, (Andrea Harris from Chicago) and I collaborated on another one of the globes during the last reunion in Redlands (where it snowed in LA, was freezing in Yucaipa, and Andrea and I were thrilled to leave the tundra of Southern California in February for the warmer tomes of Chicago, where we actually have insulation and heat). My friend, Patti Cohen (Polinger) from Johnston came to the dedication of our globe (where, in California surreal fashion, Arnold Schwartzenegger in wild, rattlesnake skin - lime green boots cut the ribbon).

Lessons from figure drawing. . . a painter’s fundamentals

When drawing from a live model, the underpinning of a good piece of art is gesture. The model does a series of short poses from 5 seconds to two minutes, and the idea is in that limited time span to learn to really draw what you see, just the essence or the “gesture”. When you do that, you are dropping your preconceptions and habits of seeing, and you are coming close to an intuitive sense of perception. The gesture brings “life” to the drawing. The more personal the work of art is, the more universal. (art classes with John Brownfield)
Wrapping up

Remember, I was never good at true/false tests, or for summation. Johnston is still a process-it still friendships, and the Buffalo Book Club, and I have enjoyed the California reunions, as well as the mini-reunions in Chicago last year, one we held at my studio with the African drums and blood red canvas.

It has been easier for me to write these thoughts in a stream of conscious, “random” pattern-throw them out to Bill McDonald, who still is, in the words of one of his best friends “the most kind and most fair man that I know”, and who has helped me find a way to structure random thoughts.

Writing this feels like gesture drawings-stick to the core memories: amplify the most visual: then cut, pare and edit. The artichoke I never had seen before coming to Redlands is now an object for drawing, a plant that represents a geometric form in nature. I see a lot of snakes and sea creatures as images that crop up throughout this story, the fusion of mind/body consciousness in processing daily life, and an endless reinvention of myself as in the freshman class I took with Ed Williams on transformation: as life tempers us, people and places change, remain the memories of long ago and yet something else, sometimes good and sometimes emerging as “Darth Vader’-familial but dangerous.

Johnston feels like who I still am, just that I keep shedding my skin, and as in the classes that I took with Kevin O’Neill, Johnston is not simply a fixed idea, but a category of experiences, and mind sets.
Reflections on the Summer 2011 Alumni Trip to Greece.
By Heather Ways, JC alum, (1975 “Symbol Systems”)

Greece was hot! And it was wonderful. Johnston and University of Redlands alums, faculty, staff and friends traveled to Athens, the Peloponnese and Crete for fourteen days in June and July 2011.

Bill McDonald and Ed Wingenbach, our professors, prepared us well with volumes to read in advance. They lectured us on the bus and led our daily seminars whose topics ranged from “Should the Elgin Marbles be returned?” to Homer’s Odyssey. Our wonderful local guide, Maria Synodinou, was well versed in the history and archeology of the sites we visited. The best part of the trip for me was the afternoon seminars, a reliving of the Johnston experience. It was fun to sit with alums and friends and discuss what we were seeing, reading and learning. I marveled at the continuing curiosity and intellectual agility of these graduates who spanned almost four decades. Explaining the Johnston experience to the uninitiated is difficult. Sitting in seminar refreshed my enthusiasm for Johnston, and I hope my ability to articulate what makes it so unique.

Other favorite experiences in Greece: the Acropolis Museum, the various sites with their layers of history and taking a day off at the beach.

The Acropolis Museum was built with three goals, it had to be transparent, it needed a place for the Elgin marbles and had to not compete with the Parthenon. The Museum sits on the south side below the Acropolis. Its top floor is aligned with the Parthenon and of similar dimensions. This floor holds the Parthenon’s original metopes, friezes and pediments in their correct positions, with the Elgin marble facsimiles in a slightly different color. In 1687 the Venetians bombarded the Parthenon and in the resulting explosion 20% of the sculpture was lost. Parts of the Parthenon freize were recreated from sketches done in 1674 by Jacques Carrey, a French painter and draughtsman accompanying a diplomatic expedition. His sketches are the only record of what those sections look like. It is amazing that he never knew how important those drawing would be. The museum is transparent. One can see out to the Acropolis and Athens. At night it is lit so one can see the statues inside. The floors are built of heavy Plexiglas so one can look down through layers of history, all the way to the archeological site which lies under the museum and entry plaza. We walked the palimpsest that Bill encouraged us to reflect on at the beginning of the trip.

Before my Greek education I thought Greeks and white columned temples were the whole experience. Not so. The Mycenaean and the Minoans, on Crete, preceded the Greeks, who were followed by the Romans, the Byzantines, the Turks and the Venetians. On the Peloponnese we visited Epidaurus, a healing site with temple, stadium, and theatre for spiritual, physical and emotional health. Epidaurus is the site of the famous amphitheatre where Sarah Sapperstein’s song could be heard in the last row, as advertised.
Sarah Sapperstein comments: “The theatre at Epidauros served as spiritual/soulful healing opportunity within the context of community. It is very similar to the function of religion/Temples, only more focused on social connectivity (remembering that theatre and drama was all sacred and related/dedicated to the gods as well). To participate an audience in catharsis (emotional experience and release with the audience in a tragedy) or farcical and satyrical humor with others, you would heal.

So while we think of healing in the metaphysical sense with religion only, there was a distinctively communal aspect of healing too, and theatre played that role. Plus, it makes perfect sense that now we say laughter is the best medicine (comedies) and letting your emotions out (catharsis) helps people move past traumatic or difficult issues, including the physical ones. “

At Knossos I marveled at the size of the grain storage urns, and at the Archeological Museum, the craftsmanship of a 7 foot thrown vase. The same museum had a collection of ancient medical equipment, including what was immediately identifiable as a vaginal speculum.

Naplion, a seaside town held for years by the Venetians, was where Jerry, my husband, and I took a day off from the vacation and went to the beach. We walked the half mile up and over a rocky promontory. There, big splurge, we spent 20 Euros on chairs and umbrella and then another 10 on cappuccino delivered right to our lounge chairs. In my youth, (which only ended a few years ago) I would have eschewed the chair, the umbrella and probably the cappuccino in favor of the pebbly beach and my water bottle. The water was lovely. We walked back along the seaside promenade and finished the evening with drinks at one of the seaside cafes, sunk deep into cushioned chairs.

In short, a trip with Johnston alums is fun and chock full of learning. Here is to my fellow travelers and especially Ed, Bill and Maria whose passion and learning brought the layers of the palimpsest into focus.

Fellow Johnston travelers included:
Bambi Brown Schmidt (’75)
Patricia Karlin-Neumann (’76)
Kevin Whalen and Hetal Dala (’93)
Patrick Harrigan and Carrie Rainey (’94)
Sarah Sapperstein (’05)
Spotlight on Chris Pepino (class of 2000)

Chris Pepino recently completed the documentary Inside the Perfect Circle: The Odyssey of Joel Thome, about Grammy award winner and Pulitzer Prize nominated composer and conductor Joel Thome. The film is currently screening across the country, and winning film festival awards along the way, including “best short documentary at the 30th Annual New Jersey Film Festival 2011 and audience award at DocMiami International Film Festival 2011. Chris was generous enough to bring his skills in filmmaking to Johnston this semester in a series of editing workshops. Below is a synopsis of the film.

For more information see
http://www.insidetheperfectcircle.com/

An intriguing music documentary about world-traveled composer and conductor Joel Thome, “Inside The Perfect Circle” provides a close personal look at Thome's career and philosophy. He collaborated extensively with Frank Zappa arranging the eccentric rock icon's elaborate music for symphony orchestra and rock band. He was awarded a Grammy for his work with Zappa and guitarist Steve Vai, and was also nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. He composed the music to Pablo Picasso’s only play, and completed many other projects furthering modern music. After suffering a debilitating stroke in 1998, Joel lost the use of his left arm and was forced to undergo years of recovery. Using music as a resource for healing, he was able to resume composing and returned to the stage to perform his graphically notated mandala scores. The performance was featured at the Rubin Museum of Art in New York City in September 2009.

Soundtracked by the brilliantly eccentric Scorchio Quartet, the film is filled with modern music captured live, emanating a meditative and serene sonic backdrop. Meanwhile, the mandala paintings of abstract artist Harry C. Doolittle swell in the background, assembling and deconstructing on a big screen in sync to the live concert. The documentary includes rehearsal footage, interviews with musicians, colleagues, and performers, archival video, and performance footage. The journey of Joel Thome is an unusual story of dedication, love, and unquestionable genius; the story of a composer who constantly strived to break the mold and explore uncharted territories in music and in life.
I’d like to share with the Johnston community some of my experiences and learnings with a Northern California land collective I’ve been involved in over the past 30 years. But first, I need to write a little autobiography to give this paper some context.

After graduating from Johnston College in 1975, I married fellow Johnstonite Kay Niemeyer and moved to Northern California. That’s what led to my name change. When I was at Johnston, I was Greg Herlick. When Kay and I married, we decided to both change our names rather than following the traditional route of the woman changing her name to the man’s. Lieberknecht is my mother’s maiden name and we both liked it so that’s what we chose. I’ve been Greg Lieberknecht ever since. We had two wonderful kids but the infamous irreconcilable differences caused us to split up after seven years.

I’ve just retired from a rewarding 30 year career as a programmer/system designer with Kaiser Health Plan. In the meantime, I met (at Kaiser) and married a wonderful woman, Patty Mintz. We’ve built a grand life together in the Oakland hills.

What I want most to write about is one special aspect of my life that I’ve been involved with for the last 30 years. That is a land collective in Ukiah, California named Heartland. This has been one long, challenging, rewarding experience with community. Johnston, of course, is all about community. I even took a class while I was there called “community lab” that explored various aspects of people relating. Heartland has been the masters class in this area. I want to share some of Heartland’s history and what we’ve learned along the way.

It all started when Kay and I were looking for country property in Northern California. At the same time, two Berkeley Radical Therapists, Hogie Wyckoff and Claude Steiner, were developing an elaborate land deal in the hills outside Ukiah. The plan would split a huge cattle ranch that had come on the market into several sections. Claude had a healing center group in the front of the property. There was a commune called Round Mountain. There were some parcels in the back of the property that were sold off. And Hogie started a feminist collective in the middle section. Hogie named her collective Heartland because of its location in the center of the property and because the project was so dear to her heart.
As of now, Heartland, Inc. is an ‘S’ corporation with title to 800 acres in the Ukiah hills behind Parducci Winery. There are a maximum of 10 owner/shareholders. Each shareholder has the right to a 10 acre site leased from the corporation. Each has considerable freedom on their leased site, subject to rules spelled out in our land use plan. The remaining 700 acres are held in common with severe restriction on their use. Kay and I bought one of the first shares in the new collective. The land is beautiful and daunting. It’s rolling hills of oak grassland with an occasional stand of Douglas fir and madrone. It’s just far enough inland that the coastal influence ends a few miles west of our border. So it can get blazing hot during the summer months.

It has been a wild ride over the ensuing years. Kay and I survived our divorce and we even decided to buy a second share in Heartland. Kay’s house is now the nearest to mine, she’s 1/3 of a mile down the road from me. She and I share a water system together. Being so close proved great for joint custody of our kids. They could walk between their two houses on the land. Being part of a land collective really, really makes you appreciate the work that goes into regulations and building codes. Because of our collective structure, we had to (and wanted to) revisit all of society’s rules to see how we wanted to structure ourselves. It’s been a huge amount of work. We are still sorting these questions out.

As you can imagine, there have been a large number of issues over the past 30 years. I want to focus here on three of the biggest. These questions have taken up many hours of meetings over the years.

1. How much say does an individual shareholder get in what his/her neighbors do vs. how much say the neighbors have in what the individual does?
2. What are the rules we want to impose on ourselves?
3. How do we make our rules/decisions fit into the larger rules of society at large?

To issue number 1, the plan we finally came up with has been this – each shareholder gets a 10 acre leased site where they can build a house, plant a garden, keep their horses, have their kiln (my particular vice) etc. There is light oversight in what you can do on your 10 acres. The remaining 700 acres are held in common and are used mainly as a large park for hiking, riding, etc. There is very light human impact on the common land.

We didn’t start out with this plan. Many early meetings were filled with spirited debates about what each shareholder wanted to do on the land. Each littlest element of each person’s plans and dreams was argued over. There was little agreement on anything. It was a mess. It was only when two prospective shareholders set out their requirements to buy in that we changed how we operated. They asked us to become more of a collective and less like a commune. Fortunately, we saw the wisdom of their request and agreed. We realized that we couldn’t go on trying to micro-manage each person’s plans for the land.

At the same time, we came to realize that there were legitimate rules that we wanted to apply to ourselves. These dealt mainly with the impacts each of us had on the ecology of our land and impacts that went beyond our ten acres and affected our neighbors, such as noise, fire prevention, animals, etc.

We’ve changed the rules in recent years as we’ve developed a clearer and more detailed land use plan for the entire land. We now ask each shareholder to describe in detail their plans
for their 10 acres and how they conform to the general plan. This is broken down into various areas such as energy generation, building plans, noise abatement, water source and use, animals, fire prevention and protection. Other shareholders can then provide feedback and alternatives. We still aren’t being too restrictive on each other. But we’re now being clearer and more open with each other.

Heartland began as a feminist land collective. That was the earliest driving philosophy and it’s one of the features that attracted Kay and me to the group. At the time there were many feminist collectives in Mendocino County, almost all restricted to women only. What was special about Heartland was that it was heterosexual. As time has gone by, that part of the overarching Heartland philosophy has been greatly reduced. In its place I would say that the most important philosophy now is for us to be good stewards of the land.

Then there’s the third point I brought up earlier, how has Heartland been able to relate to the rest of the world and its rules? We’ve talked to many attorneys over the years. Most have thrown up their hands and said we can’t do what we’re trying to do. Fortunately we are now working with a local attorney who knows much about both corporate and real estate law. She’s been able to help us refine our bylaws and lease agreements to better fit into the legal options that exist in California.

The closest analog to what we have may be the co-ops in New York City, with their rules and regulations and requirement that you be approved by the existing owners before you’re allowed to buy a condo in the building. We, too, require a vote to accept a new shareholder into the group. It’s one of the most important controls we have on our group. Several of us have had experience with groups operating by consensus. It can really hold up action by the group when one member digs in their heels and won’t go along with an otherwise popular decision. So we agreed early on that for major decisions, a 75% majority (basically 8 out of 10) is required for approval. In practical terms, we talk each decision through and try to listen to all concerns. But if we still have disagreements, the 75% rule lets us move forward in some critical situations.

That brings up one difficulty we’ve sometimes encountered in dealing with the outside world. Over the years, we’ve had various interactions with our neighbors. In the normal world, owners of property have vast freedom in deciding what to do with their land. And a single owner of a property can arrive at a decision relatively quickly when a neighbor proposes a joint venture for their mutual benefit or when a disagreement must be resolved between neighbors. Most people are not used to dealing with a neighbor which is a collective. We’ve had several situations where our neighbors simply gave up in frustration when trying to work with us. A neighbor will make a suggestion – say it’s about our joint road. But Heartland may then take over a year to hash out all our thoughts and feelings on the matter. Sometimes, unfortunately, these discussions range broadly over Heartland history and other far-flung topics. Our group just doesn’t reach decisions in a time frame most folks are used to. We’ve lost out on some joint possibilities because of this. But very slowly, some of our neighbors have come to a working relationship with us on topics of mutual interest.
Buffalo Graze: Los Angeles

The Buffalo Graze program is going strong! In the summer of 2011, we had an impromptu Graze in Los Angeles at the home of Monet Malek and Sophia Kandell. Los Angeles is a great Johnston outpost, so be on the lookout for an invitation for an official Graze here soon. Of course, hopefully we can Graze again in Portland this summer, and we’re looking to Graze in Oakland, Ca sometime soon as well.

Los Angeles B-Grazers, summer 2011.

Kathryn Green Alumni Lecture Series

I’ve had a great time planning our annual alumni lecture series. This past fall, we hosted two lovely, creative, and incredibly generous alumni: Emily Wick and Renee Moreno. In the cleverly titled talk “My Johnston Complex,” Emily (2000 “Documentary Art and Creative Nonfiction Writing”) spoke on her experiences as an artist, gallery owner, and documentary filmmaker. To a captivated audience, Emily spoke about her life as the owner of Smokey’s Tangle, a gallery and gathering space in Oakland, she showed images from her “The Fifty United States and their Mottos” series and her one hour oil paintings, and she delved into her experience creating the documentary, A Day in the Life of Alex.

For more on her amazing work, see http://emilywick.com/

While Emily demonstrated how to continue art making outside of Johnston, Renee Moreno (2005 “Expressing Self and Society”) explained how to be a creative and adventurous businesswoman. In a talk titled “From Buffalo to Business: A Highly Caffeinated Adventure, she shared with students how she went from Johnston to being the owner of the well-established
Pannikin coffee shop in La Jolla. She also addressed the importance of fair trade coffee and provided a coffee “cupping” for students in daytime Java. I now know that an oily sheen on coffee beans isn’t a good thing!!! Over roasting!!

For more information on Pannikin, see http://pannikincoffeandtea.com/. Renee is also in a band called The Shantyannes, which performs their piratey delights all over San Diego. See http://www.theshantyannes.com/

Kelly Hankin and Renee Moreno

This alone would be enough alumni greatness, but you are all to amazing to stop here! This spring we will host Lucy Greene, who graduated in the seventies, and Jessie Kahnweiler, who graduated in the 2000s. Updates on these alumni visits will appear in the summer issue of the Coz McNooz.

In the fall, the Art Department hosted a two-person show at Peppers Gallery called “Bookish.” One of the artists was LisaBeth Robinson, class of 1991 (“Printmaking and Poetry”). LisaBeth is an expert bookbinder, papermaker, paper engineer, librarian and book artist. She’s worked as a professional bookbinder and printer at Woodside Press, Brooklyn NY, served as industry coordinator at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in Sheboygan Wisconsin, and had teaching & visiting artist stints at Pitt Community College, Minnesota Center for the Book Arts, Penland School of Craft, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design and Beloit College. She currently works as an instructor at East Carolina University in Greenville. Her work has been widely exhibited across the United States and is found in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Wustum Museum, and the Joan Flaxman Library at SAIC among others. It was wonderful to see LisaBeth’s gorgeous work and to have her attend a Tuesday community meeting. Her work can be seen at http://lisabethpress.com.
Johnstonians Kick Butt!

Once upon a time, some Johnston students brought the Impact Personal Safety program to the community. It has been a while since we’ve been able to support this class here, so it was a great treat to be able to have it in the curriculum this past fall. Of all the events I attended last semester, the “graduation” of this class was perhaps the most profound. I wasn’t sure what to expect, but I know I didn’t expect such a raw, emotional, and dare I say kick-ass experience. In just a few months, these young women learned how to take down an assailant with nothing but their bare hands, strong legs, and calm demeanor. It was invigorating, empowering, and sobering all at once. My hats go off to these young women, and also to Johnston alum Michael Penafiel, one of the teachers of the course. For more on Impact, see http://www.impactpersonalsafety.com/

Alumni Michael Penafiel and Ben Cook at the Impact Personal Safety graduation.
In Memory of Bion Howard
1950-2011

Johnston College and the Johnston Center are mourning the loss of a great man and fierce Johnston loyalist. Bion Howard, who studied “Environmental Sciences” at Johnston College, died of a heart attack on November 20, 2011. The outpouring of love for him on his Facebook page is an important reminder of how important community is in times of grief.

Bion, we are forever grateful for your love and dedication to JC.