

Wesleyan's veteran treasurer departs • Field hockey is the team to watch • A Better Way To Die • What women really think about abortion



MUSIC **Elvis Rings**

T t's a late New England autumn noon along the Connecticut River, **L** and from the steeple of an old brownstone building on a grassy hillside the bells begin to chime out the lilting, distinctive notes of ... an Elvis Preslev song!?

"'Can't Help Falling in Love,'" says Holly Schroll of Massapequa, N.Y., the student who plays the bells. "I actually prefer playing classics on the bells, but I love Elvis, too. And that particular song sounds really nice on the chimes."

A junior majoring in molecular biology and biochemistry, Schroll has been coming to the bell tower to play the chimes nearly every noon Monday through Friday since she was a freshman. Her performances do not always include Elvis. In fact, she and Peter Harvey, a sophomore government major from Piedmont, Calif., the other Wesleyan student who regularly plays the bells, draw from a variety of sources and styles. Walking along the green, you are as likely to hear a selection of Beethoven and Brahms, hymns or "Scotland the Brave," as "You are My Sunshine" or "The Imperial March" from Star Wars.

"We've also been playing the theme from Jurassic Park lately," Harvey says. Schroll nods and smiles.

"Yes, for some reason, John Williams works really well on the bells."

Of course, getting a piece to work on the chimes is part of the fun of playing,

Thanks to Holly Schroll '02 and Peter Harvey '03, the bells of South College are resounding with the theme to Jurassic Park and Elvis tunes.

both physically and mentally. The 16 large brass alloy bells sitting atop the tower of South College are operated by pressing large wooden hand pegs, beech mounted on hickory, that are connected to the steel cables which run up to the bells in the tower. Playing a piece takes quick hands and a certain amount of strength.

"It's not just working the levers, though," Schroll explains. "Each bell has its own personality so you can't hit them all the same. Some you have to go softer, and some you really have to push down hard."

It also takes a good ear. Schroll and Harvey work out arrangements based on songs they've heard.

"A lot of times I hear a song and find myself thinking, 'How would that sound on the chimes?" Harvey says. "So, I'll write out an arrangement and come up and try it out."

Students and faculty have been ringing the chimes at Wesleyan since 1918, and a large pile of arrangements left behind by generations of other Wesleyan bell ringers sits on a small desk in the corner of the tiny bell ringer's alcove. But both students prefer to do their own transposing, though it is a challenge with the chimes' limited range.

"We have only 16 notes, and only five accidental notes, what would be the black keys on the piano," says Peter Frenzel, a professor of German studies at Wesleyan who also plays the bells and



Playing the bells of South College takes a good ear, a bit of strength, and the patience to see what works—Elvis sounds surprisingly good, and so does John Williams.

took on Schroll as tices, but I hear the difference every time." his apprentice a few The lack of a G-sharp is a product of

how the bells were acquired. The tower's original 11 bells were a gift of the class of 1863. Cast in London in 1916 during World War I, Wesleyan needed permission from the War Bureau to import the bells. In 1966, President Butterfield donated the five additional bells that play the accidental notes.

"We will have an inspection of the bells this winter," says Frenzel. "The mechanisms that keep the bells playing are suffering from wear and tear and



Professor of German Studies Peter Frenzel is the master bell player.

years ago. "As a re-

sult, some songs

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As an example,

"Wesleyan's alma

mater has to be

fudged because

there's no G-sharp,"

Schroll says. "I don't

know if anyone no-

are a challenge."

may need repair. I don't know what the exact plans are beyond that, though there may be an alum or two who are interested in donating some new bells."

"I guarantee we are going to get a Gsharp bell, somehow," asserts President Douglas J. Bennet. "Not just to play the alma mater, but to further expand the range of music that can be played on the bells."

Even if a song can be arranged to fit the range offered by the bells, there's no guarantee it will fit the instrument.

"I remember seeing the movie Saturday Night Fever one weekend and coming up here thinking I'm going to play 'Staving Alive,'" Schroll says. "I spent all the time working it out and then finally got to play it and it just sounded awful. I never played it again."

Perhaps one of the most interesting things about the bells is that everyone on campus and throughout much of the Middletown Main Street area can hear them, but very few people know whoor what—plays them.

"A lot of people think it's mechanized, that they're played by a computer or some kind of machine," Harvey says. "I've heard people talk about it in classes or at social gatherings. It's kind of funny to hear some of the theories."

Both Harvey and Schroll have told people they play the chimes, but neither goes out of their way to do so. They also take requests from their friends and anyone else who (continued on 6)



People like the sound of the chimes, and you feel like you're carrying on a tradition, that you're giving something back to the campus."

VETERAN V.P. AND TREASURER Taylor Joins Colonial Williamsburg

Robert Taylor, Wesleyan's longtime vice president and treasurer. left the university in late January to become the senior vice president for finance and administration at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in Williams-burg, Va.

In his new position he reports to Colin Campbell, President Emeritus of Wesleyan, who serves as chairman and chief executive officer of the foundation.

"Bob's service to Weslevan has been long, and his contributions have affected all of us in profound ways," said President Bennet. "He has served the university for 29 years, the last 15 as vice president and treasurer. He has held responsibility for all financial operations of the institution, including budgeting, accounting, longrange financial planning, as well as asset, liability and risk management. He also has overseen the operation, maintenance and construction of all university facilities, as well as human resources and public safety.

"I know I speak for the entire Wesleyan community," he added, "when I say we will sorely miss his insights and his leadership."

Taylor said, "I benefited enormously from my almost three decades of involvement with Wesleyan. It is an extraordinary community that attracts and retains talented individuals who are committed to high-quality undergraduate education.

"Wesleyan is implementing its longrange strategy across all fronts," he added. "The commitment of the campus community, and of the larger community of alumni and friends, to the institution's strategic objectives will ensure its continuing success."

President Bennet also announced that James van B. Dresser '63 will take a leave of absence from the Board of Trustees to serve as interim vice president and treasurer while a national search is conducted to replace Taylor. Dresser fulfilled a similar role for Weslevan in 1998–99 as interim vice president for university relations. He will work on a half-time basis overseeing financial operations, with Vice President Peter Patton assuming some of Taylor's duties during the interim.

ADORNS U.S. COURTHOUSE **Reed Creates Moynihan Portrait**

When Congress passed a bill to rename the federal courthouse at Folev Square in Lower Manhattan the Daniel Patrick Movnihan United States Courthouse. the senator asked Wesleyan Professor of English and American Studies Joe Reed to create a bronze bas-relief portrait of him. Reed had done an earlier bronze medal of Moynihan for the Citizens' Council of New York. He used

> an enlargement of the drawing for AND that as a guide for the new bronze, which measures 13 inches in diameter, for the Moynihan Court-

house. Cast in bronze, Reed's portrait can be seen at 500 Pearl Street in New York, on a plaque to the left at the entrance.

"I met Pat in 1965." Reed recalls. "At that point he was making a bid for president of the City Council. Wesleyan Author in Residence Paul Horgan went down to New York and told him that if the election didn't go his way, Pat had a year-long appointment at Wesleyan's Center for Advanced Study. Pat lost, so he packed the family in the car and moved to Middletown. He was here for the year before he went to Harvard, India, and the U.N. We got to know them well that year...I went grave-

stone rubbing with Liz and the kids." Reed and his wife, novelist Kit Reed. attended the opening ceremonies on Monday, Dec. 4, at the 26-story building, along with several hundred guests including Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani and then Senator-elect from New York Hillary Rodham Clinton.

NEW BOOK ON BUDDHIST LIFE **Time Magazine:** Willis, "A Spiritual Innovator"

Professor of Religion Jan Willis's forthcoming memoir. Dreaming Me: An African American Woman's Spiritual *Journey*, is creating a buzz even before it hits the bookstores this spring. In its Dec. 11 issue, Time magazine named her a "spiritual innovator" in a one-page feature and photo.

Time quoted Willis as saying, "I became able to deal with the deep wounds of race because of Buddhist practice."

Willis had suffered many painful experiences, the article noted, by growing up in Alabama during the turbulent '50s and '60s when the Klan was active and a cross was burned on her family's lawn. After graduating from Cornell University, she considered joining the Black Panthers, but instead set her life on a spiritual path by becoming the only woman among 60 monks at a Buddhist monasterv in Tibet.

"Buddhism is a come-and-see model," she told Time. "You don't have to accept dogma. You have to spend time on the cushion." In the monastery she learned the chants and devotional rituals of Buddhism and the essential meditative process.

She is currently developing meditations for Buddhist centers that focus on race. Speaking about the legacy of slavery, she said, "People tell you for centuries that you're just a cattle, just a beast of burden. The consequences of that re-

(continued from page 5) knows they play.

"I remember being jet-lagged, having just returned from a long trip, and meeting Peter Harvey on his way up to play the bells," Bennet says. "He asked me if I had any requests, and I said something to the effect of, 'How about a lullaby?' A few minutes later I heard Brahms' lullaby coming from the bell tower."

Schroll usually plays at lunch, Harvey in the late afternoon, both for about 20 to 30 minutes at a time. Frenzel plays on such occasions as weddings, memorials and funerals, or whenever the urge strikes him.

"I have so much respect for Peter Frenzel's musical abilities, and his protégés are really doing incredible things with the bells," Bennet says. "The music is so diverse they are probably

alone," Harvey says. "This is an incredible, powerful instrument. I can watch the campus from the window up here and play for them. People like the sound of the chimes, and you feel like you're carrying on a tradition, that you're giving something back to the campus. There's something very special about it."

Schroll agrees, "My entire freshman year I kept it a secret that I played the bells. I had a class right after I finished ringing the bells; one day I went into the classroom and another student came in humming 'My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean.' It was one of the pieces I had just played. It was one of the greatest feelings, sitting there, listening to him hum the song I had just been playing on the chimes." —by David Pesci

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WESONLINE

Wesleyan Cited As Doctoral Dynamo

The Nov. 14 Christian Science Monitor ran a list of the top 10 private, fouryear undergraduate colleges producing the most graduates who later earned Ph.D. degrees during 1920-1990, with Wesleyan ranking third; Reed and Oberlin as first

and second. Others, in order, were Swarthmore, Smith, Barnard, Carleton, Wellesley, Pomona, and Amherst. The source cited was Cool Colleges (Ten Speed Press, 2000).

STUDY OF SICKLE CELL FIBERS GAINS MUKERII A MAIOR GRANT

Assistant Professor of MB&B Ishita Mukerji has received a five-year, \$500,000 grant from the Donaghue Investigator Program for Health-Related Research. Mukerji is studying the structural formation of sickle cell hemoglobin fibers —work that may be relevant to other illnesses such as Alzheimer's and "Mad Cow" disease.

WESLEYAN PHYSICIST AMONG SCIENTISTS HONORED BY PRESIDENT CLINTON

President Clinton named Associate Professor of Physics Reinhold Blumel one of 20 National Science Foundation-supported researchers to receive the 2000 Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers. Blumel, who was given the award recently by the President's science adviser, was cited for his research in quantum and classical chaos, and "for innovative teaching and involvement of undergraduates in research."

SEVEN STUDENTS ATTEND U.N. CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL WARMING

Seven Wesleyan students attended the Sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as The Hague 2000: U.S. Student Climate Summit, both held in The Hague, Netherlands, Nov. 18-25. The goal



of the U.N. conference was to determine the fate of the Kyoto Protocol, which outlines quotas and mechanisms for international control of greenhouse gas emissions. The cost for each of the seven students was covered by a gift from Robert

Schumann '44. The delegation was the largest from any school in the United States.

NEW YORK TIMES REVIEWS WINSTON'S TRANSLATION OF GUNTER **GRASS NOVEL**

Professor of German Studies Krishna Winston's new translation of Too Far Afield. by Günter Grass, was reviewed in the Nov. 5 New York Times Book Review, which characterized it as "rich and complex." The reviewer noted that some German critics were outraged over Grass' critical view of German reunification.

O'CONNELL RECEIVES OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR AWARD

Associate Professor of E&ES Suzanne O'Connell has won this year's Outstanding Educator Award from the Association for Women Geoscientists. The association credits her with "having touched many lives with her enthusiasm and personal mentoring," and said she "has served as an outstanding role model for women in science throughout her already distinguished career." Especially noted were her efforts in teaching Intro to Oceanography with video nights, a class Web site, and field trips. She is on leave this year at Trinity College.

MEERTS LOOKS TO FUTURE OF WIRELESS INTERNET ACCESS

Colleges that want to be on the forefront will be moving to wireless Internet access on campus, Director of Information Technologies John Meerts said in the Nov. 12 "Education Life" section of The New York Times. The article took note of Wesleyan's "Applecart," a mobile (continued on 8)

main with us and need potent, powerful

The winter 2000 issue of Tricycle: The

Buddhist Review carries an excerpted

chapter of her new book.

CHEMIST IS REMEMBERED

celebrating his 80th birthday.

full-time until 1988.

John Sease Dies at

John W. Sease, the E.B. Nye Professor of

Chemistry emeritus, died Nov. 12 at his

home in Portland, Conn., just days after

Former Wesleyan President Victor

Butterfield appointed him to the chem-

istry faculty in 1946, where he remained

At a memorial gathering on campus

Professor of Chemistry Wallace Pringle

noted that even after his retirement,

Professor Sease voluntarily taught his

new courses on Chemistry, Energy and

Environment, and Chemistry, the

Consumer and *(continued on page 8)*

John Sease, respected Professor emeritus.

medicine."

Age 80

WESONLINE

(continued from page 7) system for creating wireless access in classrooms.

IENSEN NAMED FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN PHYSICAL SOCIETY

Professor of Physics Rick Jensen has been named a Fellow of the American Physical



Society—a high honor accorded to a limited number of physicists who have made outstanding contributions. Recognized for multidisciplinary research in

chaos theory, Jensen is the second person currently on the physics faculty to win this honor; Tom Morgan was elected a few years ago. Jensen will be on sabbatical at Harvard next semester.

THE PERILS OF BEING TOO THIN

New York Times health writer Jane Brody devoted a recent "Personal Health" column to a NOVA show on eating disorders that featured Professor of Psychology Ruth Striegel-Moore. Brody quoted her as saying, "We've become so used to seeing extremely thin women [models and actresses], we've come to think this is what is beautiful." Fashion models weigh 25 percent less than the average American woman and are five or more inches taller.

BASINGER JOINS PROJECT TO EDUCATE MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS ABOUT FILM HISTORY

Professor of Film Studies Jeanine Basinger is participating in an effort to help middle-school students nationwide become more film literate. The "Story of Movies" project, sponsored by The Artists **Rights Foundation and The Film** Foundation, is intended to provide students with the social and artistic framework for understanding filmmaking. Basinger was invited to join the advisory committee and is designing a curriculum.

rently in Hungary as a Fellow of the Collegium Budapest Institute for Advanced Study, has received several honors for his new co-production, Khalfan and Zanzibar; featured screening at the Göttingen International Ethnographic Film Festival; an Award of Merit at the Intercom Competitions of the Chicago Film Festival; and "Best International Documentary Short" at the Brooklyn Film Festival.

SHAPIRO RECEIVES MLA PRIZE FOR TRANSLATION

Professor of Romance Languages Norman Shapiro has received the Scaglione Prize for an Outstanding Translation of a Literary Work, awarded by the Modern Language Association. The prize, which recognizes Shapiro's One Hundred and One Poems by Paul Verlaine (University of Chicago Press), was awarded Dec. 28 at the MLA's annual convention in Washington, D.C.

NEON DELI TAKES CENTER STAGE IN TIMES ARTICLE

The lead feature of a recent Connecticut Section in The New York Times honed in on the popular eatery the Neon Deli, which employs 25 Wesleyan students, as an illustration of the opportunities students have for off-campus employment. Many campuses, the article noted, are experiencing shortages of student workers, as Associate University Librarian Rachel Cheng affirmed from the library's experience over the past two years.

STUDY SHOWS LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES EXCEL IN STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

The National Survey of Student Engagement, evaluating the extent to which students participate in classroom and campus activities, concluded that liberal arts colleges, as a group, score highest on every metric used to probe these key activities. The study, conducted by Indiana University's Center for Postsecondary **Research and Planning (funded by Pew** Charitable Trusts) surveyed 63,000 students at 276 U.S. colleges and universities,

www.pewtrusts.com.

Over a two-day period members will do 60 turns on the "Vomit Comet", a Boeing KC-135A aircraft which flies in parabolic arcs to simulate weightlessness.

(continued from page 7) Environment for another decade. "John loved the environment and felt that an understanding of the appropriate science for non-science majors was an excellent way to make progress. He was a First-Year Initiative course pioneer," said Pringle.

Professor Sease was born in 1920 in New Brunswick, N.J. He graduated from Princeton University and obtained a doctorate from the California Institute of Technology, where he served on the National Defense Research Committee.

Princeton required chemistry majors to write a "Junior Report," and Pringle said that Sease's was "a major 100-page paper containing physical chemistry formulae and equations of thermodynamics and statistical mechanics for atoms and \mathbf{Z} molecules-neat and meticulous. The more complicated the problem, the better John liked it."

At Wesleyan he chaired the faculty committee that constructed Hall-Atwater Laboratory. An expert in electrochemistry, he supervised the thesis of the very first student to receive a doctoral degree in chemistry from the university. For decades he served as the safety expert in chemistry. In 1999 he and his wife, Mary M.A.L.S. '87, established a Wesleyan Prize for Environmental Research. He had a lifelong interest in railroads and steam locomotives, and was an active model railroader. He and his wife traveled extensively and particularly enjoyed sailing.

"Iohn was a wonderful teacher of squash and tennis for me," said Pringle. "as much the game as his gentle style and grace. All close calls went to the opponent. John Risley [professor of art emeritus] who partnered with John on the tennis court, once referred to John as one of the 'last of old-style gentlemen'."

Mary (Lieurance) Sease, died six weeks after him. A talented weaver, potter and artist, she was a founding member of the Wesleyan Potters. They are survived by three daughters, one son, and five grandchildren.

RESEARCH FOR NASA Blast Off!

Five students will blast off into simulated space in March when Wesleyan's Zero Gravity Research Team performs a series of tests in a completely gravity-free environment using a mockup of the fire extinguishers NASA has stocked in the International Space Station. The team—composed of Jeff Berko '03. Catharine Wu '03. Laura Raducha-Grace '03. Lex Kravitz '01. and team leader Ian Garrick-Bethell '02-is taking part in the NASA-sponsored Reduced Gravity Student Flight Opportunities Program.

Over a two-day period members of the team will do 60 turns on the "Vomit Comet," a Boeing KC-135A aircraft which flies in parabolic arcs to simulate the experience of weightlessness, and will experiment with different scenarios using the simulated extinguisher. They will try to discover if the equipment will work correctly with all body types in a variety of positions in zero gravity.

Following the flights out of Houston, Texas, they will work with adviser Fred Ellis, professor of physics, to create a video that they will offer to NASA and the Johnson Space Center. They also intend to determine if aiming errors caused by a lack of gravity would prevent astronauts from extinguishing fires and to suggest, if needed, amendments to the user warning label on the extinguisher.

The Wesleyan group is the first team to be selected from Connecticut. Ninetvfive other teams, most from technical or research universities, also will participate in the program this year. Follow the team's efforts in cyberspace at www.wesleyan.edu/physics/zerog/.

SPORTS / FIELD HOCKEY

or the second year in a row, Wesleyan field hockey won the Eastern College Athletic Conference, New England Division III tournament. Carlin Aloe '01, named tournament MVP, scored the winning goal with 5:08 remaining in the second overtime to lift Wesleyan to a 2–1 victory over Clark. Weslevan also tied its team record for wins in a season with a 13–5 mark. Last year's squad closed out the campaign with a 13–4 record. Prior to 1999, Wesleyan had not won an ECAC tournament game (0-2), let alone the tournament title. Last year, however, the Cardinals swept through three home games en route to the title, defeating two teams that had beaten them during the regular season.

"I tell them, 'You have to be a leader right from the start. We can help you build skills, and you have the God-given talents of speed and agility, but every moment is different in the game... you make the choices in the play.'" —Patti Klecha-Porter

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Field Hockey Wins ECAC Again *Klecha-Porter's team was young but spirited. She focused*

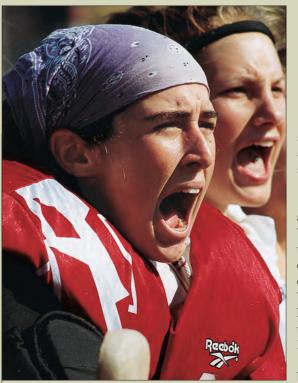
them into champions.—by Cynthia E. Rockwell

With the two leading scorers and five other starting seniors having grad uated (a loss of several players who had won regional honors), this year's team relied on a sophomore-andfrosh-heavy roster. The young team had its eye on last year's record as well as the newly established New England Small College Athletic Conference tournament, which would crown a conference champion and award an automatic berth in the NCAA Division III tournament.

Coach Patti Klecha-Porter recalls the beginning of the season: "Athletics Director John Biddiscombe said to the team, 'This is a very challenging year;

last year's team won the ECAC, so there's a lot of pressure on you to do as well.' I don't think he knew what was going through their minds when they heard that. Pressure? They were loving it.

"What do you have for us today?' was their daily question," added Klecha-Porter. "They looked at me with such expectation; they wanted the challenge. It made me a better coach; it sent me looking through my books and tapes for a new drill, a new idea, information on another team. Drew Black (the strength and conditioning coach) came in and gave them procedures for strength training. They saw another colleague of mine investing his time in them and that made them push harder as well." By mid-season, holding a modest 3–3 record, the team hit its stride with a seven-game winning streak and finished the regular season at 10–4. After the regular season, a 2–1 loss to Tufts eliminated the Cardinals from the NESCAC tournament and a shot at the the NCAAs. Wesleyan entered the ECAC tournament seeded fourth of eight teams. When Aloe put home the game-winner on a difficult reverse sweep



Bernadette Dovkos '04 and Mara Gross '04 supply enthusiasm from the sidelines.

against Clark, Weslevan had an unprecedented championship. No other team in Weslevan history had claimed backto-back regional Division III titles Along with both spirit and

skills, Klecha-Porter stressed a third component in the winning combination: decision-making. "I told them, 'You have to be a leader right from the start. You have to make decisions on the field. We can help you build skills, and you have the God-given talents of speed and agility, but every moment is different in the game. You are in the position to use your intelligence: you are the ones who make the choices in the play."

They responded to her admonition with a superb season, but further challenges await. Three NESCAC teams gained entry to the NCAAs in 2000: Bowdoin by winning the NESCAC tournament; Amherst and Williams as at-large selections. Wesleyan field hockey will be looking to make that jump to the "Big Dance" in 2001.

SPORTS / VOLLEYBALL **Volleyball Claims ECAC Title**

A best-ever 27–11 record and an Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) Division III North championship were two of the achievements of the women's volleyball team during the 2000 season. It was the team's second straight trip to the post-season playoffs and the fourth 20-win campaign in 17 varsity seasons.

Alexis Keeler '02 and Eliza Allen '03 each had a 30-kill match performance with Allen's coming during the ECAC title match against M.I.T., a 3–1 Wesleyan victory. Allen was a second-team NESCAC all-star while Keeler, who set team records for kills (520) and aces (101) in a season, was a first-team choice. Allen set a team mark for hitting percentage (37.3) and was ranked 16th nationally in Division III.

Head coach Gale Lackey said that "this was a team that peaked during the last two weeks of the season. They played their best volleyball at the NESCAC Championship and the following week winning the ECAC Championship. Although the team broke numerous team records and certain individuals received all-star recognition, this was a team that truly achieved 'team mind.' All 14 members came together and created an environment where the sum was much greater than the parts." W



Everything Old is New Again

requently overheard: "Where has the time gone?" The once gawky frosh of a generation ago who remember showing their folks around campus on a bright fall Homecoming weekend—"as if it were yesterday"—are now the parents. This weekend, they content themselves with being toured around campus—College Row, WestCo, '92 Theater—as though they were the strangers to the "ivied walls and storied halls."

Gathering on the steps of Crowell Concert Hall this morning of Homecoming/Family Weekend 2000, the "Legacy Group"—alumni and their matriculated children—pause to smile proudly at the camera and enjoy the time-warp with classmates and contemporaries who share this experience. Wesleyan, no longer theirs alone, belongs to their progeny.

The Wesleyan Legacy families who gathered on Homecoming Weekend are:

Front row (l. to r.): Yulman, Kait '04, Jim '69, and Nick '02; Tatum, Travis Jonanthan '04 and Beverly Daniel '75; Lehner, George '71 and Kristin '04; Mirsky, Sara J. '04 and Ken '72; Lilly, James '04 and Ted '66.

Second row: Lame, Jennifer '04 and Tony '67; Belinkie, Steve '74 and Dan '04; Whiting, Dave Jr. '04, Dave '75, and Sarah '98; Bruner, Andrew '04, Bill '71, and Amanda '02 (current students Amanda and Andrew are grandchildren of Clark E. Bruner '36 and greatgrandchildren of William E. Bruner, Wesleyan Class of 1885).

Third row: Greaney, Tim '70 and T.J. '04; Richlin, Dean '74 and Sara '04 (missing from photo: Pamela Richlin '75); Gillam, Robin '71 (missing from photo: Danny '03); Gottfried, Barry '70 and David '04; Lake, Bob '75 and Rob '04.



The Thrill of the Chase

The action thriller film, A Better Way To Die, billed as "the biggest manhunt since The Fugitive," ran on HBO as a World Premier Title during October and was released on video and DVD by Columbia Tri-Star pictures on February 6.

ot only did Scott Wiper '92 write and direct this film, but he also stars in it. as Boomer, the young ex-cop and subject of the manhunt

It has a stellar cast: Andre Braugher, Joe Pantoliano, Lou Diamond Phillips, and Natasha Henstridge, along with Ben Parrillo '92, and Professor of Film Studies Jeanine Basinger and her husband John M.A.T. '66, M.A. '79. Larry Sher '92 is the cinematographer; Brad Fuller '87 is the producer.

As the movie begins, Boomer (Scott Wiper) is on a drug bust that goes bad. Jaded, he quits the force and decides to return to the small town called Cedar Falls, marry Kelly (Natasha Henstridge), and lead a peaceful life. Along the way, however, a case of mistaken identity places him at the center of a manhunt. Cleveland (Andre Braughuer), a Mafia hit-man, is tracking down a missing government agent. The FBI's man (Lou Diamond Phillips) is trying to reach Boomer before the mob does.

Q People often see a work receive recognition and assume it's been an overnight success story. Was that true for A Better Way to Die?

Scott Wiper: No! After graduation I wrote Captain Jack-in Professor Basinger's spare bedroom—and did it as a low-budget film. Then, I moved to L.A. and wrote A Better Way to Die in the fall of '95. By the summer of '96 we had

> Cleveland (Andre Braugher) finally tracks down his prey (Scott Wiper) for a shootout.

started shopping it around. When we still hadn't gotten it financed by that winter, we'd run out of options and we needed a marketing tool. I said, "Let's go to Ohio and shoot the first 10 minutes of the script." We did that, I took it back to L.A. and edited it, but it wasn't until January '99 that Newmarket made the deal to finance the whole movie. It took

that long. We finally completed it later that year and it aired on HBO in the fall of 2000.

Q *A Better Way to Die* is filled with violent images, enough to earn it an R rating. What were your thoughts on creating a film with this as a pervasive element?

Scott Wiper: Actually, it earned an NC-17 rating twice. We had to keep shaving certain scenes, editing it down, before the Motion Picture Association gave us the R rating, which is what you need for most distributors. The film is definitely made for adults. I told Andre Braugher, "It's a violent script but I want to make it as beautiful as possible."

Ieanine taught a course on the

Western, in which characters test their humanity against a violent landscape. That's what A Better Way to Die is about. People can go to the film for entertainment and gunfights, but it's also a morality tale, as are many Westerns.

• What were the influences—characters, films, themes-that created A Better Way to Die?

Scott Wiper: I like Jimmy Stewart, Humphrey Bogart characters. They weren't Superman. They were trying to survive in a world that was much larger than they were. If the audience learns in the first five minutes that the main character can't be beat. where do you go from there?

The films that have really moved me



and staved with me have pathos, the quality or element that arouses pity, sympathy, or sorrow. I have that definition on my refrigerator; I wrote it out and gave it to the actors. Mix that with humor and it lends a bizarre element. That's what I was trying for, here: sarcastically cynical, acknowledging that the world can be a rough place, but if you can find one friend, you're probably doing better than most.

Q How about Clint Eastwood: were you thinking of his work as well? Scott Wiper: Obviously Clint Eastwood is an influence. Harry Callahan was a totally unprecedented character: he wasn't a superhero; he was a simple man trying to grasp a complex system. In the end, he fails to understand the system, so he resorts to violence—a very human reaction. Dirty Harry was filled with pathos. Q Scott Wiper is writer, director and

actor. How does that work?

Scott Wiper: It forces me to be more organized; it's all about preparation. Larry Sher and I went through the whole script and did the shot list. We called it "The Bible": it was about three inches thick. I did the same with wardrobe, with special effects. That way, if we had a question, we could fall back on our original notes.

It's kind of like playing a sport—I played football in high school and at Wesleyan. I was a much better student when I was playing. Parents who make their kids drop out of a sport because of their grades have it backwards. With the sport, you live a disciplined lifestyle. Having to act and direct forced me to be a more disciplined artist.

Brad Fuller: No one wanted to let Scott star in A Better Way to Die. Financiers would hear that he wrote it

and wanted to act and direct, too, and they'd say. "No, thanks." Here's Scott: he lives in a tiny apartment with no furniture-and people were offering him money not to star in it, but he turned it down. He kept his vision.

Q Despite your youth, your relative anonymity, you found an all-star cast. How did you make this happen?

Scott Wiper: Mark Ross at CAA (Creative Artists Agency) got the script to Andre Braugher, and I went to Baltimore, where they film Homicide, to meet with him. We had lunch for about five hours. I showed him storyboards, photos of the locations, everything.

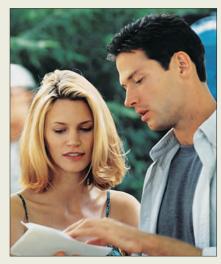
He looked at all we'd prepared, we talked, and he asked questions. Then he said to me. "After next March I have a window of opportunity. Count me on board. You look sane, well-organized..." and he hesitated, as though he was looking for another way to compliment me. "And I don't do too many drugs?" I offered. He laughed at my joke and said, "That's what an actor needs from a young director." When he signed on, it was a peak moment. He made it easier for us to get others to commit, as well.

Q The Basingers played the parts of the rector and the rector's wife. How did that casting take place?

Scott Wiper: It was an opportunity for me to have Jeanine, my mentor, my film-mother, in my film and get her out to Ohio. There are certain people you know are great in front of a camera. She's so earnest, so authentic. It was a fun day when we did the shooting with Ieanine and John.

• What were some other memorable moments when making this movie?

Scott Wiper: When we were filming the opening ten minutes in



Natasha Henstridge and Scott Wiper '92

January '97: It was 5 degrees, and we were spending only just enough money to get it right, so we'd have this as a marketing tool. At the end of the day I knew this was it! That's what kept this project alive: when we said, "We're going to go out and do it—even though we don't have the financing." When you start that energy, it keeps on going.

Brad Fuller: My second day on the set: we were all fired up, Scott's doing his own stunts, and he jumped straight into a ditch from a moving car.

After the shot, Scott walks over to co-producer Graham Taylor and me and says quietly, "Guys, take me to the hospital." It turned out he had a totally separated shoulder—but we had to keep it a secret. The bond company, if they heard he was injured, would have been all over us, so he completed the entire film with a separated shoulder. He looked at this as an athlete would: it was a challenge.

Ben Parrillo: While Scott and Brad were working out details in L.A., I was out in Ohio for seven months. in charge of getting all the locations—

on zero budget. Finding a barn that was picturesque and perfect, which we could burn for free-that was a challenge. I drove all over Ohio, into Kentucky. We'd see a barn, find the owners, and say, "We'd like to burn your barn down—for free."

Larry Sher: That barn burning: film-making is about controlbut a fire is fast and out of control. We planned for it beforehand like it was a military operation, but when it came time to light the match, we put cameras everywhere and just let it go. In the background out of camera range the firetrucks were waiting to take care of it.

Also, I had a lot of fun working inside the motel room with Scott and Natasha. It was small, intimate filmmaking, right there, over his shoulder. Most of the movie is hand-held. You get into a certain sense of balance after a while, so the camera doesn't shake.

Brad Fuller: The peak experience for me was being at the premiére with my wife and family. Twentieth Century Fox had to turn away 400 people; the road was blocked off, so many people wanted to come.

At the theater, when Jeanine and her husband John came on the screen, about half the audience-the Wesleyan contingent-shrieked and cheered. The rest of the audience had no clue what was going on. Someone asked me afterwards, "I really liked that couple who played the rector and his wife, but I've never seen them."

I said, "That was my film professor." "Oh, what's his name?" the person asked me.

"Her name is Jeanine Basinger," I said. 💔

"After the shot, Scott walks over to co-producer Graham Taylor and me and says quietly, 'Guys, take me to the hospital.' It turned out he had a totally separated shoulder—but we had to keep it a secret." —Brad Fuller