Dear Simon’s Rock family and friends,

In talking with alumni, I am always delighted to hear how well they feel the College prepared them intellectually for the world beyond Alford Road. Alums speak almost reverently of the skills they learned during their years at the Rock: the capacity to analyze complex problems, to synthesize multiple sources, and to express themselves effectively in writing. Helping students master these skills is precisely the work of a liberal arts college, and I am deeply proud that we do it so well.

I am also proud that of the preparation we now offer through the Office of Career Development, highlighted in this issue. Created two years ago in response to alumni’s request for focused career preparation, the office has blossomed rapidly. It now serves as a resource not just for graduating seniors but for all undergraduates—and, increasingly, for alumni as well.

Enhancing the post-college experience has been one focus of our efforts this year; another has been identifying and reaching the next generation of Rockers. We have several new strategies to increase the College’s visibility, including a new website, due to launch this summer. More dramatically, we have launched an exciting new initiative: Bard Academy at Simon’s Rock. A ninth- and tenth-grade program to be taught by Simon’s Rock faculty, the Academy will offer a rigorous and stimulating course of study that prepares students for entry into the early college after two years. (Yes, Academy students, too, will be “high school dropouts/college graduates”!)

The Academy has attracted enormous interest. Prospective students are excited to study with a committed and experienced group of teacher-scholars in a small program that offers all the resources of this campus. They are equally enthusiastic about the opportunity to enter college early and to consolidate their high school studies into two years rather than four. We look forward to welcoming the first cohort of Academy students: smart, accomplished, eclectic, and Rockers in every way. We also look forward to continuing discussions about what the Academy means for Simon’s Rock, especially how we can inspire and guide the national conversation about a six-year path from ninth grade to college graduation.

While much of our energy has been devoted in recent months to the future, we are also firmly focused on the present. As I write, a few weeks before graduation, spring has finally come to the Berkshires, and students are enjoying the fleeting warm weeks before commencement. It’s a happy time, but also a time when we all feel absence most keenly. This year has been particularly difficult as the community has mourned the passing in March of dance professor Wendy Shifrin, a much loved teacher and colleague for over thirty years.

Despite this difficult loss, the year now ending offers many causes for celebration. Earlier this semester, the Princeton Review recognized Simon’s Rock for the quality of its academic program and ranked the College number 7 in the country for “best professors.” The Fulbright program awarded fellowships to two of our graduating BA students, bringing to nine the number of Fulbright awards in the last five years, an outstanding record. And this year saw the first Macarthur “genius” grant awarded to a Rocker, cartoonist and graphic novelist Alison Bechdel ’77. These accolades and achievements—of which I have listed only a few—are a testament to the quality of Simon’s Rock, its students, and the education it offers.

With all best wishes for the summer,

Peter Laipson
“I was worried I’d be late. I was just on the phone with Singapore.” Cem Gultekin breathes a sigh of relief as he realizes he is, in fact, early for his next meeting in the Student Union. The first-year student at Bard College at Simon’s Rock is arranging summer international internships for himself and for at least two of his peers, and there’s a lot to do—figuring out air travel, making sure the applications come in on time, and coordinating with students at other colleges.

Although he has not yet declared a concentration, Gultekin says he is interested in “some kind of international corporate relations” and believes a blend of Simon’s Rock-style seminars with global work experience is what he needs to get there. So just a few months into his first year, the 17-year old created an affiliate chapter of AIESEC, a 66-year-old organization (the acronym is French) that arranges foreign internships for students worldwide.

That kind of initiative is exactly what James Jeffries, the new director of the Office of Career Development, hopes to foster at Simon’s Rock. Jeffries, who is finishing his first year in the job, has generated a lot of buzz on campus by offering new workshops and networking events focused on career planning.

Jeffries’s office, now three years old, grew out of alumni and student requests. “In my earliest days as provost, I heard a lot from alums and current students about the need for more structured and informed career guidance,” said Provost Peter Laipson. “It was their feedback that prompted the creation of the office [originally called Career Services] in 2012. James has really advanced our efforts by connecting students and alums, and helping students identify a wide range of opportunities in the broader community.”
For McGiffert, the blend of work and internships has allowed her to feel like she’s both pursuing her very specific interests and getting exposure to a broader field. “In my job, I’m a sound engineer, and that’s exactly what I want to do,” she says. At the internship, “It’s a whole new world, and feels like a separate thing.”

Lipson is one of a number of alumni who are excited about the enhanced emphasis on career development. When he was a student at the Rock in the late 1970s, he says, professionalism was very far from his mind. “When I was here as a student, I worked for a body shop because I wrecked my car,” he says with a laugh. “It seems very different now, and I think that’s great.”

When Lipson moved to Great Barrington from Atlanta three years ago, he reached out to Simon’s Rock and this year gave a talk at the Office of Career Development, where he met McGiffert. He remembers feeling isolated on the Rock campus as a student and is glad to be a resource for current students who want meaningful work experiences.

“Mia has been wonderful and diligent, and I’m impressed with her work ethic and curiosity. We’re not sending her out for coffee,” says Lipson. “She’s really dug in and done a lot of research for us.”

Alumni like Lipson have a particular understanding of the strengths of Simon’s Rock’s academics and the geographic challenges its students face. “The unfortunate thing is—there just aren’t that many opportunities in the Berkshires,” says Lipson.

But between telecommuting opportunities, small local businesses like Lipson’s, and James Jeffries’s willingness to arrange student transportation to internships, there may be more opportunities than students think—and more than there were a generation ago.

On a rainy morning in early April, senior Marisa Benitez puts the finishing touches on a new e-book. She has a paid twice a week internship at Berkshire Publishing, located in a colorful Victorian house just a mile from the entrance to Upper Campus. Her supervisor, accounts coordinator Rachel Christenson, earned an AA from Simon’s Rock in 2005.

Benitez, a political studies concentrator, says the internship has built on her academic classes in ways that have sometimes surprised her. She sees her skills—not her specific content knowledge—as most valuable. “I think the pedagogy at Simon’s Rock, with really small seminars, has helped me develop ways to communicate with people,” she says. “That’s helped me here, and so has the discipline of getting things done by a deadline.”

Benitez, who will teach in Belgium next year on a Fulbright grant, says she is grateful for the ability to blend her intense academics with real-world professional experience. “There’s no fake work here,” she said, gesturing at the book-lined publishing office. “It’s not just testing your skills—it’s doing things that are necessary.”

“...James has really advanced our efforts by connecting students and alums, and helping students identify a wide range of opportunities in the broader community.”

—Provost Peter Laipson
Partnerships Bring Summer Programs to Campus

Since taking on the role of director of the Daniel Arts Center and campus rentals coordinator, Sandy Cleary has more than tripled the number of summer programs the campus hosts. By focusing on long-term strategic partnerships, Sandy is not just expanding the program, she is building affiliations that complement Simon’s Rock’s mission and organizational objectives.

The Daniel Arts Center partnerships not only offer the community a range of cultural programs, bringing an influx of new visitors to the Berkshires and the Simon’s Rock campus, but they also offer training and internships that provide students an opportunity to enhance their experience and their resumes both behind the scenes and on the stage.

Three newly formed institutes—Berkshire Summer Music, The Breaking In Institute, and Mass Live Arts Performance Training Institute—all specifically chose Simon’s Rock as their preferred site to establish their programs. Berkshire Summer Music is a program for young classical music students offering week-long intensives for both brass and strings. The Breaking In Institute will offer a series of programs to help students (and their parents) prepare for success in the media and entertainment business. Mass Live Arts, returning for their third year and adding their own performance training institute, will present three weeks of experimental large-scale contemporary theater, contemporizing the cultural landscape of the Berkshires and attracting visitors to campus from throughout the Northeast.

Longtime guests in the Daniel Arts Center, Berkshire Pulse and the Aston Magna Festival will also present performances. Berkshire Pulse, a dance and arts education center in Housatonic, MA, will celebrate its tenth anniversary with their year-end performance and gala dance party. We also welcome back the internationally recognized Aston Magna Music Festival, America’s oldest classical festival devoted to presenting concerts played on the original historical instruments.

Sandy’s theater and arts management background has been invaluable in building strategic partnerships and turning the campus into a summer hub of cultural activity.

Berkshire Festival of Women Writers Returns for Fifth Anniversary

This year the Berkshire Festival of Women Writers (BFWW) celebrated its fifth anniversary season in March with more than fifty readings, lectures, workshops, performances, and screenings. Founded by Jennifer Browdy de Hernandez ’78, faculty in Languages and Literature, the festival has been bringing filmmakers, writers, actors, producers, and directors to campus for the past five years—and bringing the Simon’s Rock name out into the community.

The grassroots organization, which grew out the International Women’s Day celebration established by Jennifer in 2002, showcases the voices of women writers of all ages and walks of life. Each year the festival continues to raise awareness for Simon’s Rock by bringing major events and well-known personalities to campus.

This year award-winning director and Guggenheim fellow Pamela Yates returned to the Daniel Arts Center as part of the Berkshire Human Rights Speaker Series. After a screening of her movie Disruption, an exploration into the work of Fundación Capital, Yates spoke with audience about the filmmaking process and the female-centric model of social change.

Actress Karen Allen cohosted The Gutsy Gals Inspire Me Film Awards ceremony with founder, Deborah Hutchinson. Actress, writer, stand-up comic, and filmmaker Cathryn Michon won the Gutsy Gal Grand Prize Film Award for writing and directing Muffin Top: A Love Story. The award is presented to authentic risk-taking women who despite the odds remain undaunted by challenges and setbacks.

Berkshire Festival of Women Writers also partnered with the Hillman-Jackson Gallery to bring two exhibits to campus. First in the gallery, artist Dianne Kornberg and poet and Bard College faculty Celia Bland collaborated to create “The Education of the Virgin,” an exhibition of prints from the Madonna Comix series. Next, Barbara Slate presented her graphic novel My Life in Comics. One of the first women to write and draw for Marvel and DC Comics, the industry trailblazer and Comic Con keynote speaker demonstrated the process of illustrating a comic book or graphic novel.

The Berkshire Festival of Women Writers also provides faculty and students with opportunities to expand their skills. This year’s festival anthology, Writing Fire, was coedited by Jennifer Browdy de Hernandez and Jana Laiz, faculty in Languages and Literature and Sahra Bates
Brubek ’10, Brianna Pope ’12 and Heather Meehan ’10 contributed pieces to the book. The book launch party was held on May 1.

Five years and growing, the Berkshire Festival of Women Writers has evolved into a hub for women writers in the county and beyond.

Sports Roundup: Llamas Got Game!
Llamas bring the same drive and dedication to sports as they do to academics. Almost 17% of the student body participated in competitive teams during the 2014–15 season. And while a small student body coupled with the academic rigor at the Rock make assembling a team a little more challenging, the talented coaches at Simon’s Rock remain undaunted, finding creative ways to recruit llamas for the basketball, swimming, and soccer teams and to keep them motivated.

Dave Collopy, director of the Kilpatrick Athletic Center, is proud of the job they do. “The coaches here take it seriously. They’re committed to developing skills and instilling players with an appreciation of the sport.”

Women’s soccer coach Pablo Orellana says that even when his players are outnumbered, with no subs, and dealt harsh conditions, they still pull through as a unit. “It is so gratifying to see such a young group of individuals have the level of maturity to understand one another and help the team without any hint of frustration.”

Bill Meier, an award-winning swim instructor and nationally known U.S. Masters swimming coach, has been training Llamas for fifteen years. To give the students a sense of going to a championship-type meet, each year he includes an away invitational meet to the schedule. “Once we get to the hotel, the whole team gathers for an inspirational movie of my choice,” says Bill. “Sometimes there is cheering. Sometimes there are tears.”

Basketball coach Arty Epstein brings a lifetime of experience. He has coached college and high teams over a career spanning five decades. He’s been known to drive around campus recruiting and persuading especially tall students to join the basketball team. What keeps him coming back is his joy working with young players. Arty says to keep his athletes interested he “emphasizes participation, self-improvement, learning and enjoyment, and camaraderie.”

And it works. Many first-time players wind up competing for all four years.

FROM PAGE TO STAGE

When Khalia Russell-Self ’11 first caught a glimpse of the iconic work of Thomas Kincaid, she fell in love with the storybook cottage and the woodsy landscape. She was just eight years old, and the Georgia native already knew that was the place she wanted to live. When she saw brochures for the Simon’s Rock campus nestled in the meadows and woods of the Berkshires, she “didn’t know if it was a fairytale or a scam.”

Turns out, it was a hard-earned dream come true for the 19-year-old theater/creative writing/German major, who took the SAT three times because she liked the challenge of it.

“But I thought it could be more challenging,” she says. “Because to me, challenging doesn’t mean getting A’s and still falling asleep in class.”

There was none of that for Khalia, who ironically came to the college as a self-proclaimed “shy person,” only to be introduced to the power of theater production. She immediately took to the stage and all its elements, completely immersing herself in the college’s productions of Shakespeare’s Much Ado About Nothing as well as the faculty-directed play Vinegar Tom.

“Believe it or not, I am a very shy person. I just happened to fall in love with theater,” says Khalia. “[And] my professors were always demanding more of me—to speak up, to be heard, to take my work further.”

One beloved professor, the late Wendy Shifrin, encouraged the young student to pick up the pen from the start. “Wendy told me to keep writing, to keep going for it.”

This past year, for her thesis project, Khalia wrote a novella set in a rural New England town about a “beloved” family that is full of dark secrets. But, just as with any fictional tale, it gets better. She also turned that novella into a nearly full-length play, a process that most budding playwrights and writers only dream about work-shopping.

“It was really difficult to develop into a play because it is my own work. It’s hard to get that distance, but having real actors read the novella, and then talking about the characters and who they are, that really helped me to develop the script,” Lia says. “In essence, I was the writer, director, producer. It’s a part of me now.”
From anyone other than Bernie Rodgers, those words might mean I’m fed up or I’m tired of it. But coming from Bernie, who will retire this May after 30 years at Bard College at Simon’s Rock, they demonstrate his love of the job. “I’m totally spoiled,” he says with a grin. “The students here are just so great. I could never do with students elsewhere what I regularly do here, like asking them to read a novel a week and actually having them do it.”

Known among students for his warmth and for the intellectual rigor of his literature classes, Bernie says he still enjoys the same things about teaching today as he did when he arrived in 1985. But he believes his approach to teaching has changed, for the better, over the course of his career. “I think I used to overprepare,” he says. “Over the years, I came to realize it’s better to open things up and see where students want to go. And that’s because of the caliber of our students.”

Bernie came to Simon’s Rock from Chicago in 1985 as dean of academic affairs, and then served as vice president and dean of the college from 1987 to 2004. After 19 years in these administrative roles—half the life of the college at that point—he decided to return to the classroom and was named the first Emily H. Fisher Professor of Literature. Since becoming a full-time faculty member in 2004, he has taught 17 different literature courses, as well as all three general education seminars. He has also published more than a dozen essays and reviews, helped coordinate national conferences on John Updike and Philip Roth, and edited two collections, Critical Insights: John Updike (2012) and Critical Insights: Salman Rushdie (2013).

As Bernie prepares to leave the place where he has spent three quarters of his career, he is more focused on his students than on memories of the past. Sitting in his book-lined office, with a stack of students’ response journals on his round wooden table, he is eager to talk about his current advisees. One of them just wrote and produced an opera, he says. “It was wonderful. To know someone for four years, and see them grow and take control of their learning like that is just wonderful.”

Indeed, when asked how he hopes to be remembered, Bernie is quick with an answer—and it’s one that has nothing to do with the 17 years he spent as the college’s lead administrator.

“As a really good teacher who helped students develop their passions and abilities,” he says.

Larry Burke, a professor in the Arts Division, began teaching at Bard College at Simon’s Rock when his daughter, Carrie Burke ’98, was a student. Burke, who will retire this month after 15 years teaching film studies and film production, says that his original role as a Simon’s Rock parent has always informed his approach to teaching younger students.

Prior to Simon’s Rock, Burke taught graduate students at Columbia University’s School of the Arts that he says was a very different experience. “They had already charted their course toward becoming filmmakers,” he says. In contrast, at Simon’s Rock, he’s been able to witness students discover their interest and help them get their start in film, or simply expand their awareness of cinema as an art form. “I’m happy I came to Simon’s Rock at the point of my life I did,” he says. “I’m happy I had parenting under my belt since there’s an aspect of that in the classroom and with my advisees, and I’m also happy that, while the context of my teaching has been on film, broader issues than cinema have consistently played a strong role.”

As he reflects on his time at the Rock, Burke talks primarily about the students and his relationships with faculty and staff. “The greatest pleasure for me has been being part of this fabulous community, working with wonderful dedicated people,” he says.

With his last semester winding down, Burke says he is looking forward to having more time for his own creative work. “I’ve found that teaching absorbs my attention so much that my filmmaking has tapered off, and I’d like to get back to it while I still can. And,” he adds with a laugh, “I just got a whole new set of fun camera toys.”

Burke’s particular interest right now is in making films that depict events in the real world but are visualized through forms more commonly associated with fictional films. An example, Autumnal, which he filmed on his own farm, will be screened at the Berkshire International Film Festival in late May.

Also on his agenda for retirement: more time to play an active role at the Flying Cloud Institute, which he and his wife, Jane Burke, founded and she now runs. Larry Burke plans to do some films about the teaching methodology at Flying Cloud, a nonprofit in New Marlborough that offers science enrichment opportunities for school-age children.

And perhaps appropriate for someone who likens his teaching style to that of a dad, Burke has one more key item on his retirement wish list. It’s something he calls a “pure pleasure”: the chance to spend more time with Aoife, his one-year-old granddaughter.
FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Living and Writing—Ireland

Professor Brendan Mathews reflects on his recent Fulbright scholarship

As the grandson of an Irish immigrant, Brendan Mathews thinks there’s often a sense in his community of Ireland as “the old country, a repository of history.” During the 2015 fall semester, Mathews, who has taught creative writing at Simon’s Rock since 2007, had the chance to see the old country anew when he spent four months as a Fulbright U.S. Scholar in the Irish city of Cork.

As part of his scholarship, Mathews taught a graduate class in creative writing at University College Cork, which gave him entry to a university community and what he calls “a really active artist’s life.” Mathews, his wife, and their four school-aged children all enjoyed the vibrant city, with “lots of music and theater and galleries,” as well as the Cork International Short Story Festival, during which he gave a reading in the city’s main public library.

“One of the exciting things was to see how modern and progressive the country is,” says Mathews. “Ireland’s history continued to unfold long after the emigration of many Irish-Americans. The Irish are not interested in being anybody’s museum.”

Still, part of Mathews’s goal for his time away from the Rock was to get a sense of Irish history, especially from the 1920s, a time period that informs his own creative work. When he was not teaching in Cork, Mathews spent most of his time writing and researching his first novel, The World of Tomorrow.

Although the novel’s setting is the 1939 World’s Fair in New York City, many of Mathews’s characters lived through the Irish War of Independence and the Civil War in the 1920s. Through archival research and travels with his family around Ireland, he says he was able to learn firsthand how differently the events of those tumultuous years are remembered. “It’s contested history,” he says. “It was great for me to see how fraught the historical terrain is.”

Explorations around the country also gave him fodder for descriptions and settings, especially of his characters’ homes and villages. “My imagination works best when I have something in the real world to feed on,” Mathews says. “There were small details that set off whole paragraphs and pages of the book.”

Now back at Simon’s Rock, Mathews is working to complete his novel in advance of a summer deadline. The World of Tomorrow is due to be published by Little, Brown in the fall of 2016.

ThinkFOOD Conference Connects Students to Community

The Center for Food Studies partnered with The Nutrition Center to deliver the second annual ThinkFOOD Conference on April 11, 2015. This year the conference theme, “The Future of Food Activism: Issues and Answers to Hunger in the Berkshires,” was designed to educate participants about food as a cultural force and raise awareness about their responsibilities as stewards of a sustainable food system.

Central to this year’s theme was the idea that the future of food justice lies with students. With that in mind, the conference agenda focused on educating and inspiring the community and our students to work together to find solutions to food security issues.

The keynote address by Andrew Morehouse, executive director of the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, and the two panel presentations, “Hunger in the Berkshires” and “Community Garden Activism,” examined local hunger, services currently in place, gaps in existing services to vulnerable populations, and whether community gardening can work in tandem with other social services to provide solutions to hunger in the Berkshires.

Inspired by students and their desire to put themes and ideas from the conference into action in the real world, the Center for Food Studies developed two new initiatives to complement the conference. A 1-credit module called Food Access, Food Justice, taught by Katie Boswell, faculty in social studies, introduced students to macro- and micro-level issues. A corresponding Spring Break Challenge encouraged students to gain hands-on experience by participating in activities from volunteering/interning at a farm or food pantry or living on SNAP benefits (the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) for a short time, to participating in other projects relevant to their academic interest areas. After the two-week break, students submitted written papers and illustrated their findings on posters that they presented during the conference.

Sophie Constantine ’14 and Chloe Hull ’13

Karen Advokaat, Coordinator of Academic Projects and Initiatives
STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

FORM & FUNCTION

To say that attending Simon’s Rock is a family tradition might be going a little far. But Amanda Johnston ’11 knew that early college was an option thanks to her uncle, who had attended the school back in the 1980s. It wasn’t long into her high school career when Amanda, a Berkshire County native, knew it was time to challenge herself. And she knew exactly where she needed to go.

“Simon’s Rock has always been something to go to, to strive for,” says the 19-year-old musician and ceramicist. “I think, for a local student, attending Simon’s Rock ends up being an academic pursuit for the most part. We are still in our families and social groups here, but we crave the challenge so much.”

Amanda wholly immersed herself in the challenge, first seeking out the music department and choral director Jack Brown, who is also the artistic director of the Berkshire Lyric community chorus.

“I joined every music group possible. Suddenly I was taking two or three music classes per semester,” says Amanda. “That’s when I realized that music wasn’t just a hobby for me.”

Ceramics was a less deliberate pursuit but has become Amanda’s primary calling, thanks to encouragement from Professor Ben Krupka. “I’m not a two-dimensional person,” says Amanda. “During my second semester I was wait-listed for painting class and so reluctantly joined a ceramics class. I totally fell in love with it. And the message here at the school is completely encouraging of that attitude. Of how you define success and what it should be. Critical thinking is the way to success.”

Her new love took her to Italy for a semester, where she studied metalwork and enameling as well as art history. The study abroad also planted the seeds for Amanda’s senior thesis project, an entire exhibition of her ceramic work displayed in a living room setting. Amanda constructed every piece of the exhibition including the couch that she dug out of her grandparents’ attic and enlisted the help of her grandmother to reupholster.

“I used my pieces in a very real way—functionality mixed with expressionism,” she says. “The things that we put into our home have a lot of meaning. Oftentimes people knew who their potter was and they lived right in town. There was an innovative connection there that was very significant. It should still be that way.”

Amanda is a recipient of the Leslie R. Sander Scholarship, given each year to a candidate for the BA who has demonstrated academic excellence and has served the Simon’s Rock community in a meaningful way. Regularly on the Dean’s list and chosen as AA Speaker at Commencement in her sophomore year, Amanda epitomizes Leslie Sander’s spirit. To support students like Amanda, contributions to the Leslie R. Sander Scholarship Fund are currently being matched dollar for dollar by a generous Rocker. To make your gift, visit the Simon’s Rock website simons-rock.edu/givenow or call Jacqueline Pierce at 413-528-7253.

Faculty and students often work together on research projects. This past March, Eric Kramer, faculty in science, mathematics, and computing, and student Ethan Ackelsberg ’12 coauthored the scientific paper “Auxin Metabolism Rates and Implications for Plant Development,” published in the scientific journal Frontiers.

Auxin, a multitasking plant hormone, can accumulate inside a cell and trigger a series of events that cause it to grow and divide—eventually becoming a whole new flower or leaf. Eric has been conducting plant hormone studies for the past 15 years. In the summer of 2013, he enlisted Ethan’s help to gather data, to help clarify the auxin economy of plants.

Ethan reviewed dozens of published papers on auxin metabolism, trying to answer questions like “How much auxin can a plant manufacture?” and “What level of auxin concentration must accumulate inside a cell to trigger the growth of a flower?” He spent months analyzing the data in these papers and building a database of auxin metabolism rates. This labor-intensive analysis, the first of its kind, revealed how fast plants manufacture and break down the hormone.

In the following 18 months, Eric continued to study auxin production, with Ethan periodically assisting in the analysis. They submitted their paper in December 2014, and two months later it was accepted for publication.
Peter Filkins Receives NEH Award

Peter Filkins, Richard B. Fisher Professor of Language and Literature, received a 2015–16 fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to support his research and writing of *The Life and Times of H. G. Adler (1910–1988): Poet, Novelist, and Holocaust Survivor.*

The $33,600 NEH stipend, combined with a 2014–15 residential biography fellowship from the Leon Levy Center for Biography from the CUNY’s Graduate Center, made it possible for Peter to focus on his project for a full year.


Career Development

The Office of Career Development went into high gear for the 2014–15 academic year, launching numerous workshops, information sessions, and networking events, giving students a variety of forums to learn about different industries and make contacts with veterans in their fields of interest.

Weekly events like *Coffee & Careers* invited students to drop by to discuss career and academic direction over a cup of coffee. The virtual *Rocker Live* series connected students with alumni in a variety of industries who shared their real-world experiences, perspectives, and advice with their younger cohorts. Talks included “A Young Actor’s Life,” starring Noah Appelbaum ’05; Andrea Barricca ’06, “Alumna and Entrepreneur Extraordinaire”; Margaret Dobbins ’05 on “Your Career in Health Science”; and “Opportunity and Injustice in Tech” with Lauren Moos ’06.

Alumnus Dan Lipson ’74 was back on campus last fall for an Information Session about the ever-changing music industry and his role as CEO of Emerging Artist Network (EAN). Dan, a serial entrepreneur, shared the genesis of EAN, from conception to business plan to funding and implementation. During the *The Anatomy of Music Technology: Lipson on his Startup,* students learned how EAN helps artists navigate a changing industry, and look for sources of revenue to support their creative efforts and recording costs through new channels—such as strategic relationships with brands willing to sponsor their work.

The annual *Dining for Success—The Etiquette Dinner,* a popular event, taught students how to shine at business dinners, interviews over meals, and any dining occasion. Lessons ranged from nuanced details to the history and importance of etiquette. Which glass is yours? What do you do with cherry tomatoes? How does professional etiquette differ from courtship etiquette? In this fun and practical session led by Robert A. Shutt, etiquette educator and founder of RASolutions, diners had the opportunity to practice their skills in a relaxed and comfortable environment.

The Career Workshop Series addressed a new topic each week of spring semester to help students learn about career options, hone their skills, and network: *Finding your Career Path; Finding Internships and Jobs; Resumes, CVs, & Cover Letters; Networking = Building Relationships; Whither Grad School—Pros and Cons.*

One popular workshop, “*A Career Startup in in Media Marketing,*” featured guest speaker CEO and founder of NetNewIdeas, George Blair Scribner. Students heard George’s real-world insights into media and marketing from a startup perspective. The brand strategist and self-professed corporate “intra-preneur,” whose career spans the world of advertising, integrated marketing, digital design, and newspaper and book publishing, worked with six students during the workshop, providing information and perspectives to help them explore and navigate communications careers.

The coming year looks bright. This summer marks the inception of the *Innovation Corps,* a collaboration between Career Development and the Silicon Valley Innovation Institute to build student experience and expertise in innovation. It features biweekly intensive instruction, an internship focused on community-based projects, and assistance with students’ own original work. Also in the works are a robust *Virtual Internship Experience* program and an *Internship Away* program building and streamlining student options for academic year internships.

Roommates, Best Friends, Win Fulbright Awards

Zara Anwarzai and Marisa Benitez, Simon’s Rock seniors, were awarded Fulbright Scholarships to teach English abroad. Best friends and roommates, Zara and Marisa will teach in neighboring European countries, Luxembourg and Belgium, respectively.

Zara and Marisa started college at age 16. Now 19 and 20, these two Rockers are among 1,800 Americans who will travel abroad on Fulbright scholarships for the 2015–16 academic year. Grant recipients are chosen based on academic and professional achievements, as well as demonstrated leadership potential. Read more about Zara and Marissa at news.simons-rock.edu.
Leon Botstein Celebrates His 40th Anniversary as President of Bard College
Since he became Bard’s 14th president in 1975, Leon Botstein continues to innovate, take risks, and broaden its global outlook. He has overseen curricular innovation—including the nation’s first human rights major; the Language and Thinking Program, an intensive three-week presemester workshop for first-year students; and Citizen Science, an intensive program that introduces all first-year students to natural science and the ideas of the scientific method—and the development of a new model for the liberal arts college as a central body surrounded by affiliated institutes and programs that strengthen core academic offerings. His many accomplishments including creating the Bard High School Early Colleges (BHSECs) in the United States and establishing a substantial international footprint.

Bard Prison Initiative Graduates 62 Incarcerated Women and Men
The Bard Prison Initiative (BPI) celebrated two milestones, its 12th Commencement, Saturday, January 24, 2015 at Eastern NY Correctional Facility, a maximum-security prison for men, and its 13th Commencement, June 2, 2015 at Taconic Correctional Facility, a medium-security prison for women. A total of 62 students received Bard College degrees. Timothy Cardinal Dolan, archbishop of New York, delivered the commencement address at Eastern in January and Robert E. Fullilove, assistant dean and professor at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University, delivered the commencement address at Taconic on June 2. The Bard Prison Initiative began as a student-led project in 1999 and now operates six in-prison campuses in New York State. Bard College has awarded nearly 350 AA and BA degrees through BPI since 2005.

The Hearst Foundations Award Bard College $100,000 in Support of Bard High School Early College Programs
The Hearst Foundations awarded Bard College a $100,000 grant to help fund the Bard High School Early Colleges’ (BHSEC) academic support services. The grant supports one-on-one tutoring across the curriculum, peer tutors in writing and other subjects, and the extensive college transfer advising program that students begin during their first year of the BHSEC college program (junior year of high school).

At BHSEC schools, students are enrolled as full-time students and earn up to 60 transferable college credits and an associate in arts (AA) degree from Bard College concurrently with their high school diploma. Bard early college programs include eight schools around the country. The Hearst Foundations are national philanthropic resources for organizations working in the fields of culture, education, health, and social services.

Bard High School Early College Cleveland Opens
The new Bard High School Early College Cleveland opened last September. The new campus is a partnership between Bard College and the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. President Botstein called the students “pioneers” in education, emphasizing the importance of engaging teenagers in learning by challenging them in the classroom and treating them with respect.

Bard High School Early College Baltimore Scheduled to Open Late Summer
Set to open in August 2015, Bard High School Early College (BHSEC) Baltimore will be a tuition-free public school serving 9th through 12th grades. Through a partnership between Bard College and Baltimore City Public Schools, the school will serve 500 students at full enrollment. To help students succeed, BHSEC offers comprehensive support including small classes designed to provide individual attention. College professors will teach BHSEC students in discussion-based writing-intensive seminar classes across disciplines.

Left: Bard High School Early College Baltimore leaders Dr. Frankie Gamber and (Simon’s Rock alumna) Allegra Abramson ’07 with Maryland State Senator James C. Rosapepe
The Early Overseer

Involved in college governance as a student, Loren AliKhan ’99 now gives back as a board member.

Bard College at Simon’s Rock is an early college, so it is not surprising that one member of its Board of Overseers has been part of the college’s governing body since the age of 18. Loren AliKhan ’99, served as the student representative to the board during her junior and senior years. After earning a BA in political studies, philosophy, and cultural studies, followed by a law degree from Georgetown University, AliKhan joined as a full-fledged board member in 2006.

She sees board membership as the natural outgrowth of her gratitude toward the college and her commitment to its future. “I loved my four years at Simon’s Rock and was very interested even then in how the school ran and how I could help improve it. Joining the board as an overseer seemed like the natural next step,” says AliKhan, who is now the deputy solicitor general for Washington, D.C., handling the city’s civil and administrative appeals.

As a board member, AliKhan is known for her sharp questions, says Provost Peter Laipson. “Loren brings to her work on the board not just a deep affection for Simon’s Rock but also a keen intelligence,” he says. “Her contributions to our discussions are always thoughtful, and she asks the astute and sometimes challenging questions that one hopes for in board members.”

While she has found board membership an excellent way to give back to the college, AliKhan sees her role as one point on a continuum of participation. She urges all her fellow alumni to find ways of contributing, whether donating as much as their means allow, providing students with advice on career opportunities and graduate schools, hiring students as interns, or joining the board, as she has. “If you really care about the college and have the time and means to do so, board membership is great way to give back,” she says.

For AliKhan, the best parts of her role are the chance to visit campus frequently, talk to students and faculty, and stay connected both to her fellow alumni and to the day-to-day life of the college. A note of excitement creeps into her voice as she remembers a recent visit to a linguistics class taught by Professor Nancy Bonvillain. “It was such a delight,” she says. “It was a really good reminder of why I am on the board.”

Greetings, Rockers!

Congratulations and thanks to the newest group of alumni appointed to the Simon’s Rock Board of Overseers: Andrea Barrica ’06, Rodney Christopher ’86, and Greg Greifeld ’05. We also thank the alumni who are finishing terms on the board: Alvin Loshak ’92 and John McWhorter ’81. More than half of our Board of Overseers is comprised of alumni—it is wonderful to see Rockers generously committing themselves to the care and leadership of our alma mater.

Alumni Leadership Council (ALC) members also continue to serve our community with zeal. Over the past year, ALC members and other alumni volunteers organized socials in Boston, western Massachusetts, New York City, Washington, DC, London, Portland, OR, Chicago, Seattle, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Atlanta, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Arlington, TX, Philadelphia, and Burlington, VT.

Additionally, we are grateful to the numerous alumni who participated in the Simon’s Rock Study Group on Institutional Transition and Mission, and the alumni advisory group for Bard Academy at Simon’s Rock.

All alumni, faculty, and staff were welcomed back to campus July 10–12 for Reunion 2015! We celebrated anniversaries for entering classes that end in 0s and 5s, honored retiring faculty members Larry Burke and Bernie Rodgers, and enjoyed our picturesque Berkshire campus in the height of the summer season.

Due to its popularity, the ALC has renewed its sponsorship of the alumni subscription to the JSTOR digital library of academic journals, books, and primary sources. Visit simons-rock.edu/alumni/jstor to enjoy all the library has to offer at no cost to you!

A few last bits: Look for the alumni directory mobile app later this year (see the teaser on the back cover of this magazine); connect with Rockers professionally on LinkedIn by joining the Simon’s Rock Alumni group and the Career Development Office’s Rocker Connect group; and please see the appeal in this issue about contributing to the Double Up fundraising drive. We need your help!

As always, let us know what Simon’s Rock can do for you as an alumna/alumnus. Your ALC is here to help however we can!

Sincerely,
Jochai Ben-Avie ’06
Nicole A. Fitting ’93JA

Your Alumni Leadership Council:
Charlotte Anderholt ’01, Jochai Ben-Avie ’06 (co-chair), Keith Brieler-Bowers ’80 (representative to the Board of Overseers), Jennifer Browdy ’78, Brian Conley ’96, Christopher Derhammer-Hill ’86, Cordelia Derhammer-Hill ’86, Jody Emmer ’86, Nicole Fitting ’93JA (co-chair), Hillary Gardner ’02, Bethany Geiger ’10, Audrey Kalman ’77, Kristopher Kapinos ’92, Michael Lawrence ’98, Ajay Madwale ’01, Kathleen (Kaki) Notestein Kasdorf ’93, Evelina Shmukler ’93, Brian Smith ’04

E-mail us at sralc@simons-rock.edu
Taking Care of Business

Every day, Samir Arora ’02 has a new job to do. As an investment specialist at Stonehill Capital Management, an NYC-based hedge fund that focuses on research-intensive “distressed investing,” that’s what he prefers.

“I get to wake up every day and solve puzzles, whether it’s with a new company or a new industry or a new country,” Samir says. “I think contrary to what people think about business, there is a lot of creative thinking that’s needed within a practical logical framework.”

Samir began his business pursuit while attending Simon’s Rock, although his intention was to be a premed major. He enrolled in multiple science courses on that track, but also “ended up taking a few economics courses” where he was struck by how much he enjoyed the subject.

“It was the rigor and the personal attention from professors—I could actually say that about all of my classes,” he says. “But that I was able to think critically about things from an economic perspective and utilize all of the things I was studying. I changed tactics when I left Simon’s Rock and became an econ major.”

Samir transferred to Stanford, where he received his BA at just 20 years old. He had several advantages over his older peers, not the least of which was a very strong talent for writing and a clear head for why he was there.

“My writing skills were off the charts because that’s all we did at Simon’s Rock,” he says, laughing. “Also, by the time I got to Stanford, I was there with the intention of building my academic career. I was prepared to do that.”

As Samir’s career in business has taken off, he has also taken the time to become an enthusiastic supporter of his early alma mater, in turn helping build up the college’s business programming including a soon-to-be partnership with the Munich Business School that will offer an accelerated bachelor’s/master’s degree. He is happy to watch the college grow, especially since, he says, Simon’s Rock gave him such a strong foundation.

“My time there was a very positive, if not transformative experience both socially and academically,” he says. “I was a beneficiary of a merit scholarship, and I know donations help fund that. I believe in the SR mission and am aware that continued philanthropic support is critical to continuing that mission.”

JOIN US FOR
DOUBLE UP 2015

Simon’s Rock alumni are doubling up our annual contributions to the College. We are asking all members of the Simon’s Rock community—alumni, parents, friends, faculty, staff, and students—to help in two ways: please make your own contribution to Simon’s Rock, and challenge a friend to join you in doing the same.

The Simon’s Rock Board of Overseers and other representatives from all corners of our community are working hard to plan for the College’s next 50 years through continuing enrichment of the baccalaureate program, the founding of a paradigm-shifting academy, enhanced national and international marketing strategies, career development services for students and alumni, and ambitious fundraising activities to support student scholarships, curriculum, and the physical plant.

The strongest way forward for Simon’s Rock requires us to commit to its care. That is why we have decided to double our usual annual gift to “The Rock.”

Some of us are Doubling Up because our Acceleration to Excellence Program (AEP) or merit scholarship was a life-changer. Some are excited by the new Academy and how it will impact the lives of students and revolutionize American education. Others of us will give in honor or memory of a beloved professor who made a lasting difference in our life or in our child’s life.

Please tell us your reason when you make your gift at simons-rock.edu/donate. Or enclose a note in the attached envelope with your gift about why Simon’s Rock matters. You can also post your reason on Facebook or Twitter using the tag #SRDoubleUP to show your Simon’s Rock pride and encourage others to join the drive.

No matter what your reason, Simon’s Rock needs your support to thrive. Please join us by doubling up, making your first gift, or starting a monthly contribution to our Simon’s Rock!

2015 Simon’s Rock Double Up Coalition
Jochai Ben-Avie ’06, Keith Brierley-Bowers ’80 P’08 ’12
Penny Brierley-Bowers ’81 P’08 ’12, Nicole Fitting ‘93JA
Bethany Geiger ’10, Kaki Notestine Kastorf ’93, Mike Lawrence ’98

MAKE A GIFT.
CHALLENGE A PAL.

simons-rock.edu/donate
1 & 2: Boston Social held on October 6, 2014 at the Eastern Standard. 3, 4, 6 & 7: NYC Social held on October 8, 2014 at Lea Wine Bar. 5: Amelia Giles ‘04 performed on May 3, 2015 at the Kellogg Music Center. 8: Emily Kalish ’98 performed at the Kellogg Music Center on April 19, 2015. 9: Long Beach Social was held on November 18, 2014 at the home of Craig Sauer ’90 and Michael Lawrence. 10: Northampton Social held on October 7, 2014 at Quarters. 11 & 14: Dallas Social at the Texas Rangers game hosted by Ed Roske ’90, CEO of InterRel Consulting, on May 16, 2015. 12 & 13: San Francisco Social held on November 19, 2014 at the Attic.
A humorist and journalist, Henry Alford ’80 returned to Simon’s Rock as commencement speaker. The author of five books and a frequent contributor to the New Yorker, he also writes a monthly column about manners in the New York Times. He spoke with Simon’s Rock magazine about manners, hotel room amenities, and getting kicked out of boarding school, among other topics.

How did you find your way to Simon’s Rock the first time back in 1980?
I knew Ba Win, the former provost. I had been a camper at a camp in New Hampshire called Interlocken, where he worked. We stayed in touch. I got kicked out of boarding school in my sophomore year, and Simon’s Rock seemed like a good fit at the time.

Why did you get kicked out?
Oh, various indiscretions and forms of malfeasance.

Interesting! Did those follow you to the Rock?
No, I think I worked them out of my system. I think being around other talented iconoclasts, as I was at Simon’s Rock, I no longer needed to act out in that way.

And how does it feel to be coming back as commencement speaker?
I am so honored. It’s like being awarded the Medal of Honor for the battle called life. It’s very exciting to come back and present a report from the front lines.

A lot of your writing has been in the realm of performance art. For a January article in the New York Times, you spent three weeks “trying to improve my life through apps,” as you phrased it. How has this kind of writing affected the way you live?
When you write about something, you have to explore every permutation. That’s had a trickle-down effect into my life. Like, if I stay in a hotel room and there are amenities, my training as a participatory journalist has me trying every amenity. I want all the steam facials. You can’t leave a stone unturned. It’s made me a more curious person and a more restless person.

Why restless?
You have a much longer to-do list if you start engaging with life that way.

Are there any personal topics that are off-limits for you?
Not really. There’s stuff that I’m tired of reading about, so I probably wouldn’t take that kind of assignment. And there are certainly things I wouldn’t make fun of. I’m not going to pick on anyone who can’t fight back.

You’ve written a book on manners—Would It Kill You to Stop Doing That?—and have a monthly column on etiquette in the Times. What appeals to you about the topic?
Oh, I love the wherewithal to tell people to watch their ass (laughs). No, it’s a great forum for discussing a hugely wide range of topics. It’s amazing how much of the stuff that people talk about falls under or could fall under the rubric of manners.

Based on reader questions, what etiquette topics do people struggle with most?
Cell phones. People want to know when they can talk on their cell phones. It speaks to the trickiness of modern manners. Every day we walk through a series of manners microclimates. It might be fine when you’re hanging out with your working mother friends to pick up your cell phone mid-conversation because they all do that, but if you do that at work with your boss it might be really rude. Modern manners are really about reading the room much more than they had been before.

How does a “participatory journalist” go about preparing a commencement address?
I will unravel the mysteries of the universe in a ten-minute speech! I’m going to reconfigure all of that audience’s molecules (laughs). No, in truth, ideally I’ll discuss some of the joys and dangers ahead without being prescriptive.

Henry Alford addressed the 2015 graduates on May 25. This interview has been edited for length.
60’s

The Boston Raphael, a new book by Belinda Rathbone ’66, chronicles the 1969 Boston Museum of Fine Arts purchase of a portrait by Raphael and the controversies surrounding its acquisition and authorship. Belinda’s story is enlivened by the fact that the museum’s director, Perry Rathbone, is Belinda’s father. Judith Lenore Gubner Terry ’66 is the owner of In-Site Design Group in Denver, CO. In-Site specializes in luxury residential interiors. Adelaide Frick Trafton ’66 is chair of the Helen Clay Frick Foundation Board and a board member at Pittsburgh’s Frick Art & Historical Center, where visitors can view the extensive art collection of Helen Clay Frick and the vintage Car and Carriage Museum. Kathrina de Witt Yost ’66 is an independent training and development consultant at Kathrina Yost Financial Services in the greater Philadelphia area. Wendy Jean Goodman ’67 is design editor at New York Magazine. The magazine’s many awards include the 2013 Magazine of the Year from the National Magazine Awards. Rebecca Wilson Armstrong ’68 is managing partner at Hebrides Partners, LLC in NYC. Mary Chase-Ziolk ’68 is professor of health ministries and nursing at North Park University and Theological Seminary in Chicago, IL. Michele Moore Burke Major ’68 is assistant professor in the European and American Clothing and Textiles Department at Bard Graduate Center: Decorative Arts, Design History, Material Culture. Sandra Smith ’68 is the training and deployment manager at Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, or as it is more popularly known, the DC metro!

70’s

Horace Nash ’71 is partner and cochair at Securities Group at Fenwick & West in the San Francisco Bay Area that serves technology and life science clients of national and international prominence. Meg Humes-Bartlo ’72 is a neuropsychologist at Senior Care Therapy in the NYC area. Larry Praeger ’72 is a family law attorney in the Dallas/Fort Worth, TX, area. David Castro ’73 is director, corporate affairs, and regional public relations at HBO in California. Ian Whitlock ’73 is the commissioner/chair of the Oregon Government Ethics Commission. Elizabeth Rosa Horan ’73 is a professor at Arizona State University; she studies the global contexts and intersections of U.S. and Latin American literatures. Mark Clifford ’74, executive director of the Asia Business Council, has a new book, The Greening of Asia: The Business Case for Solving Asia’s Environmental Emergency (Columbia Business School Publishing). One reviewer wrote, “Clifford now offers the outlines of a blueprint for Asian political and business leaders to follow in order to prevent the Asian miracle being wiped away by toxic rivers, ‘crazy bad’ air, and extreme weather resulting from decades of breakneck growth.” Dan Lipson ’74 is chair at Emerging Artist Network, a sponsorship marketing company that employs data aggregation and analysis to connect music artists and brands worldwide. Lori Portnoy ’74 is a chiropractor in Chicago, IL. Adeboye Adejare ’75 is professor of pharmacological sciences at the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia, PA. His research interests include drug targeting, mechanisms of neurodegeneration, and chemistry of fluororomatic compounds. Marie Kittredge ’75 is executive director at Opportunity Corridor Partnership in Cleveland, OH—a 3-mile boulevard revitalization improving access to jobs, education, and culture in Cleveland’s University Circle district. Alison Colby ’76 is a production manager at the New York Times. John Thompson ’76 is global vice president at Symantec that makes security, storage, backup, and availability software. Fun Home on Broadway, a musical based on the graphic memoir of Alison Bechdel ’77, received 12 Tony nominations for 2015 including Best Musical. Lucille Campbell Gubbins ’77 is a business analyst at JP Morgan Chase in the Columbus, OH, area—or OBUS, as it is affectionately called. Pegeen Wylie Eslami ’77 is a physician at UMass Memorial Medical Center in Worcester, MA, specializing in pediatric emergency medicine. Ron Rostow ’77 is the controller at Health Republic Insurance of New York. The Berkshire Festival of Women Writers, led by its founding director Jennifer Brown ’76, has become a key feature of the region’s literary scene. Jennifer is coeditor of Writing Fire, an anthology commemorating the BFWW’s fifth anniversary. Maggie Leonard ’78 welcomed her first granddaughter in December. Brenda Novak Adelson ’79 is a founding board member of the Christine Nardone Foundation that works to improve lives in the Dogon region of Mali. Kelly Brown ’79 is an attorney at the U.S. Department of Commerce. Melinda Russell ’79 is a professor at Carleton College. Her current research concerns the folk music revival in Minneapolis during the late 1950s/early 1960s. Neal Sacon ’79 is CFO at United Fund Advisors in Portland, OR. The firm provides low-cost flexible debt and equity to businesses and organizations that are unable to secure traditional financing for their community development and renewable energy projects.

80’s

Henry Alford ’80, a journalist and humorist whose work appears in venues such as the New York Times, Vanity Fair, and the New Yorker, delivered the keynote address at the 2015 Simon’s Rock Commencement exercises. Henry encouraged the graduates to remain curious, always explore ideas different from their own, and to pursue unfamiliar experiences. After almost 20 years in the San Francisco Bay Area, Elizabeth Rader ’81 is moving back to the Washington, DC, area—Rockville, Maryland, to be exact. She hopes to see more alums in the area. Zagat Boston named Barrington Coffee Roasting Company, owned by Barth Anderson ’84 and Greg Charbonneau ’84, as one of the Top 10 hottest coffee shops in the city. Kara Bingham ’84 is director of international programs at Colgate University. Kara develops new opportunities for Colgate students to study abroad in nontraditional locations. Micki Kaufman ’85 is the director of information services at the Modern Foreign Languages Association. Micki was recently awarded the prestigious Lisa Lena Opas-Hänninen Young Scholar Prize by the Association for Computers and the Humanities. The prize will support her research, titled “Everything on Paper Will Be Used Against Me: Quantifying Kissinger.” Armand Aquino ’86 is a senior account executive at Microsoft Corporation in the Boston area. Gwendolyn Hampton Van Sant ’87, along with Jennifer Fan ’99 (commodities trading), Gabrielle Gleeman ’99 (law), and Raj Mukherji ’00 (state policy), were part of a career day on campus focused on employment and professional issues for marginalized communities. Gwendolyn is a cultural proficiency coach and the CEO/founding director of Multicultural BRIDGE and the Berkshire County commissioner on the status of women. Minna Bromberg ’88 moved with her husband Alon to Jerusalem where she is working with American rabbinical students and enjoying learning how to teach voice lessons in Hebrew.

90’s

Bean Gilsdorf ’90, editor in chief of the contemporary art publication Daily Serving, has accepted a ten-month Fulbright grant to travel to Poland. She will work with the Zacheta National Gallery of Art and the Museum of Modern Art Warsaw in Warsaw, and will write about Polish art produced since 1989. Roman Mars ’90 hosts a popular design podcast, 99% Invisible. He also founded the podcast collective Radiotopia with the public media company PRX to support indie podcasts that feature narrative journalism. At TED2015, Roman spoke about why “City Flags Are the Worst Designed Thing You’ve Never Noticed” (and why it matters). Ed Roske ’90 and Melissa Vorheis Roske ’90 hosted area Simon’s Rock alumni, parents, and friends for a Texas Rangers baseball game at the ballpark offices of Ed’s company, interRel Consulting, which provides services to Oracle users. Meg Palladino ’91 is acting director of Yale Summer Session at Yale University, a program for Yale students, qualified undergraduates from other colleges and universities, students entering their last year of high school, and adult learners. Sarah Tomlinson ’91 saw her first memoir published this past April. Good Girl recounts Tomlinson’s unconventional upbringing and coming of age, including her experiences at Simon’s Rock, as colored by her complicated relationship with her hitchhiking,

Notes compiled and written by the Simon’s Rock Institutional Advancement staff and Alumni Leadership Council. Tell us about your news notes at simons-rock.edu/alumni/update.
acid-dropping, wannabe mystic father. A longtime journalist, music critic, and writer, Tomlinson has ghostwritten 12 books including two New York Times bestsellers. Having completed her memoir in Brooklyn, she now lives and writes in Los Angeles. Lucas Berrini ’92 recently accepted a position at Joyner Library on the campus of East Carolina University. He is the holds and missing items supervisor for the main campus library and spends his days looking for books both lost and found. Lucas still teaches composition and literature at a local community college and is mulling over the logistics of pursuing an MLS degree to further his bibliographic dreams. In February, Margaret Ladner ’92 welcomed son Corin Naveen into her family. His big brother Kian (now 5) is excited to have a little brother. In other news, Margaret passed her RN licensing exam last summer and works part time with Planned Parenthood. She is continuing her studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago and hopes to become a midwife in late 2016. Katherine Fleming ’94 recently left the Royal Bank of Canada Tax Credit Equity Group after seven years to take a vice president position with BRIDGE Housing, one of the top 5 affordable housing developers in the United States. Pack Up Your Sorrows—A Story of Illness, Hope, and Transformation is a new feature film documentary that follows singer/songwriter Meg Hutchinson ’95 as she interviews leading minds on issues of mental wellness. Muscle National d’Art Moderne—Centre Pompidou of Paris, France, has added Open House by Michael Zelehoski ’96 to its permanent collection. Michael’s New Order opened on May 7 at the Mike Weiss Gallery in New York City. Michael’s art deconstructs three-dimensional objects and renders them into two-dimensional planes to create experiences that challenge ontological assumptions. Tyler Bickford ’97, a professor at the University of Pittsburgh, appeared this past winter on New York City’s WNYC public radio show Soundcheck about how “teen-agers are saving the music industry.” Iana Siegel ’97 is proprietor of LifeWorks Studio for movement, healing, and well-being in Great Barrington, MA. LifeWorks offers classes for everyone in yoga, Zumba, and Pilates; courses about prenatal, childbirth, and toddler care; and belly dance actions, intellectual property disputes, and qui tam litigation. Lucy's practice specialties include antitrust class action, intellectual property disputes, and qui tam litigation. Lucy Clippinger ’04 is product manager in investment banking strategy at Dealogic Computer Software in the New York City area. Amelia Giles ’03 of Cleveland, a member of the Canton Symphony Orchestra and the Akron Symphony Orchestra, was back on campus in May to perform a program of violin sonatas and selected short works as part of the Alumni Concert Series. Amelia was accompanied on piano by music faculty member Larry Wallach. Lucy Clippinger ’04 earned her JD at Cornell Law School in 2012 and is an associate at Baker & Miller PLLC in the Washington, DC, area. Lucy’s practice specialties include antitrust class actions, intellectual property disputes, and qui tam litigation.

Brendan Flynn ’05 is an English teacher at Education First in Beijing. Phyu Hninnyeinn ’05 earned an MA in biostatistics at Boston University in 2012 and is head of knowledge and social impact teams at Proximity Designs in Myanmar. The company designs and delivers affordable income-boosting products and services that complement the entrepreneurial spirit of rural families. Georgia Byer ’09 owns and operates Candy’s, a vintage clothing store in Boulder, CO, with help from fellow Rocker Cameron Barrows ’09. Kirsten Peterson ’09 is campaign compliance associate at POMS LLC in the Washington, DC, area. Hilary Saviello ’09 earned her master of science in theory and History of international relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science and is a public affairs intern at the United Nations.

‘00’s

Abe Chu ’00, Bob Dunton ’00, and Youngro Lee ’00 have launched NextSeed, a Texas business crowdfunding portal that changes the idea of small business lending by making it possible for anyone to earn solid returns by lending as little as $100 to businesses they know, love, and visit regularly. NextSeed has been noticed and featured by the Houston Business Journal, Houston Chronicle, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, and Crowdfund Insider. Pip Deely ’01 became a member of NEW INC, the startup incubator for entrepreneurs at the intersection of art, technology, and design at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York. Heather Fisch ’01 is artist in residence at this summer’s Mass Live Arts 15, taking place at Simon’s Rock. Heather’s Tarot Show will be workshoped at the festival before making its official premiere in August. The show works like a Rubik’s cube of 22 distinct vignettes, each one representing one of the trump cards from the tarot deck: The Magician, The Fool, The High Priestess, and so on. A reading of seven tarot cards executed at the beginning of each performance dictates the story arc and the characters appearing for the evening. Edward Laux ’01 is cofounder of Bodbot, an individually customized personal trainer, nutritionist, and strength coach for your Android, iPhone, or Windows phone. Sarah Prussow LoCascio ’01 welcomed son Travis Kling ’11 in December 2014. Marianne Dologuin ’03 is artist in residence at the festival. The book includes contributions by several Simon’s Rock writers including Eden Chubb ’05, Pauline Dongala ’06, Jan Hutchinson P’89 ’95 ’97, Audrey Kalman ’77, Heather Meehan ’10, Brianna Pope ’12, Grace Rossman ’11, Heidi Rothberg P’06, and residence director Kuukua Yomekpe. Travis Kling ’11 was commissioned second lieutenant in the Medical Corps of the U.S. Air Force; he begins officer training and medical school this August.

Simons' Rock Bookshelf


Did we miss your latest publication? Please be sure to share your news with us at editors@simons-rock.edu.
Murray Liebowitz

It all started with a butterfly. As a teenager in Florida, Suzanne (Hoover) Klimek ’80 sat down with her mother and stepfather and told them how it was: She was a butterfly, and she needed to be allowed to fly away, all the way up to an early college in Massachusetts.

What was not in her pitch—and what none of them could have foreseen—was the way Bard College at Simon’s Rock would transform Suzanne’s relationship with her stepfather, the late Murray Liebowitz, or the way his generosity would help transform the college.

“Dad and I did not have a good relationship when I was growing up,” Suzanne remembers. But Simon’s Rock changed everything. “I became a critical thinker,” she says. “I started coming home and communicating my thoughts, and it transformed our relationship.”

While the family was grateful to the college, Murray also had ideas for ways to improve it. He thought Suzanne needed more help getting ready for life after graduation, and he complained about it to administrators at the time. “They said, ‘Well, if you’re so concerned, why don’t you get involved?’ says Suzanne with a laugh.

And did he ever. Murray Liebowitz became a member and later vice chairman of the Board of Overseers. He and his wife Patti, who died in 2013, were among its most generous and loyal donors. In addition to the Liebowitz Center for International Studies and the Liebowitz Scholarships, Patti and Murray made considerable contributions to most of the major capital projects in the last three decades.

While his role as a parent prompted his original involvement, Suzanne thinks Murray stayed engaged because of his close friendships with faculty, administrators, and other board members. He and Patti lived in Boca Raton, Florida, during the winter but spent six months of each year in the Berkshires and frequently hosted members of the Simon’s Rock community at their home.

One of those close friends was Bernie Rodgers, a former dean of the college and a professor who retired this May. Bernie and Murray attended their first board meeting together in the fall of 1985, Murray as a new overseer and Bernie as a new dean.

“One of the first things he did was organize a capital campaign and . . . asked Patti and me to give as a committed donor, and she immediately said yes,” Bernie remembers. “The commitment was the largest commitment they had ever made. Throughout the time he was on the board, whatever the economy was doing, whatever his business was doing, he never faltered in his support.”

In Bernie’s eyes, Murray’s support went far beyond the financial. “He was deeply engaged with Simon’s Rock,” says Bernie. “He thought about it, worried about it, wanted to know what was going on. He was a lifelong learner who always wanted to talk about the newest book.”

Bernie smiles at the memory of his friend. “I think he found here a group of friends who fed his extraordinary intellectual curiosity.”

In addition to Suzanne, Murray is survived by children Howard Liebowitz, Sheldon Liebowitz, Susan Rindner, and Pamela Palumbo, and by six grandchildren. A memorial concert in his honor was held on May 17.

IN MEMORIAM

Simon’s Rock Loses Beloved Dance Professor Wendy Shifrin

Wendy Shifrin, beloved colleague, teacher, and friend, died on March 25, 2015, after a long illness. A member of the Simon’s Rock faculty since 1984, Wendy was not only an accomplished dancer and choreographer but also a dedicated, compassionate, and gifted teacher. Her devotion to the College was legendary, and her door was always open to the many students—including over 150 advisees during her career at Simon’s Rock—who found her a caring mentor and guide and who remained in touch with her long after graduating.

Wendy will be remembered for the biannual dance concerts, a great Simon’s Rock tradition, which she arranged and orchestrated. Wide-ranging, highly participatory, and always joyous, the concerts embodied both Wendy’s spirit and that of the College—a spirit that, over the course of her 31 years at Simon’s Rock, she was instrumental in shaping.

Wendy also will be remembered for her energetic participation in College life. She served as Arts Division Head and as Chair of the Faculty Senate, sat on the Policies and Procedures and the Judicial and Appeals committees, and for twelve years served as a member of the merit scholarship committee.
Get Ready to Celebrate the Golden Anniversary of Simon’s Rock!

The 50th anniversary celebration will kick off at Reunion 2016 in July 2016. Join us for the year-long celebration. Closing celebration will take place at Reunion 2017.

Stay tuned for more info.
Want to get involved in planning the celebration? Contact Cathy Ingram, Alumni and Parent Relations Officer, at cingram@simons-rock.edu or 413-528-7266.

Get Ready to Celebrate the Golden Anniversary of Simon’s Rock!

Stay in touch with Simon’s Rock Community Mobile Directory.

Search by filters or browse the map.
Fully integrated with LinkedIn.

It’s the directory that is always up to date!

Coming soon in 2015.