



Austin College e-magazine Spring 2011



2011 Jan Term

# *Austin College Magazine—Spring 2011*

The Spring 2011 e-issue of Austin College Magazine contains information on a number of campus happenings, from continued construction to sports highlights.

[January Term](#), a favorite of alumni, continues to provide special opportunities for students to discover new interests, explore career options, complete independent research, and make tremendous memories in study around the globe.

[Commencement 2011](#) offers a look at the agenda for a day greatly anticipated by members of the Class of 2011.

[Activators Celebration](#): In January, the Austin College Activators celebrated its 500<sup>th</sup> ministry event.

[The Homesick Texan](#): Meet Lisa Fain, living in New York, but hungry for Texas cuisine—until she began to create her own.

[Remembering Chase Gaddy](#): The Austin College community mourned the loss of a Class of 2014 student this winter.

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## [In Other Words](#)

An “Insider’s” Look at the Middle East by Michael Dorsey ’02



## From the President's Desk

I have been traveling a great deal this season seeing 'Roos all over the country, meeting with donors and foundations, and joining Larry for some of his shows and presentations.

In Holland I was able to visit the Van Gogh Museum. For a long time I didn't understand why Van Gogh was considered an artistic master; the reproductions of his work didn't inspire me. It wasn't until I saw his pictures in person that I really grasped his genius. Van Gogh uses color so intensely that his paintings are almost too much to take in.



On this trip I saw one of his loveliest pieces up close for the first time: *Blossoming Almond Tree*. The color tones almost knocked me over. There is no way a photograph of the painting can capture its depth. I feel the same way about the chance to meet alumni and friends of the College in person. Especially in this day of mediated e-communication, there is something uniquely special about meeting face to face. I hope that you will join us for the next Austin college alumni event in your area. And I hope you will come to campus to see us soon. The colors here also are too beautiful to be left to photographs and memories!

As the campus grounds have begun to come to life with the arrival of a beautiful spring, we at Austin College are reminded to “Think Green.” The environmental awareness campaign launched last spring renewed a long-held College commitment to environmentally sound practices and encouraging sustainability, recycling, and intelligent consumer choices.

This online-only magazine is an effort toward sound environmental practices. We can't do away with all paper, and we do not plan to stop printing an *Austin College Magazine* that you can linger over and share with your friends. But, we can do that less frequently and still provide news of campus happenings and faculty, student, and alumni updates to you through resources like this one.

Throughout April the campus community has many opportunities to Think Green. Student, faculty, and guests will share environment-related research, and the College will host a second GreenServe April 17—combining our strong emphasis on service with a commitment to the environment—with volunteer groups working in environment-themed service at 15 sites in the area.

Several students will get back to nature with an overnight campout at the McCarley Woods Preserve, one of the College's five nature preserves, with a search for owls after dark. Students and faculty continue their long-term prairie restoration project at Sneed Research Center and are working to restore a native post-oak savannah habitat at the Buckner Biological Preserve.

Of course, these are just a few of the many things are happening on campus this spring. We all are involved in a flurry of activity as we near the end of another term and soon will celebrate new beginnings with the Class of 2011.

I know that the spring also is extremely busy for many of you and I wish you well in all your activities. Remember to come back to campus soon to experience the colors for yourself!

Gratefully,

Marjorie Hass, Austin College President

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Welcome to the Spring 2011 online-only edition of *Austin College Magazine*. I hope you enjoy it! We plan to create online-only issues in Spring (April) and Fall (October) and print issues in Summer (June) and Winter (December). The print issues also will be available in online editions, providing some WebExtra content.



Since responsible budget decisions had limited us to two printed issues per year, the addition of the online-only issues allows us to provide readers timely information about campus happenings while doing our part to balance the college budget—and save some trees.

I'll be anxious to hear your thoughts about the online magazine and will consider those as we look to improve upon what you see here. We hope you find it simple, clean, and easy to navigate. Research indicates many people prefer to read *print* magazines; share your thoughts on your own preferences. For now, however, budgets allow only two print issues of our magazine, so even for those like me who would prefer to hold the “real” magazine in my hand, I hope the online issues will be helpful and enjoyable.

Each story has a place for comments; feel free to share your thoughts relevant to any topic. Or, if you have general comments about the magazine, ideas for future stories, or other thoughts to share, complete the [Feedback form](#) or [email me](#). I look forward to hearing from you.

We always hope the magazine is a bit like a “letter from home” that recalls college days and friends and brings you, at least figuratively, back to Austin College regardless of where your life journey has taken you!

Happy Spring!

**Vickie Kirby**  
**Editor**

P.S. If you aren't receiving our monthly e-newsletter, [@ac](#), subscribe and get all the news from campus a bit more quickly. Also, “like” [Austin College on Facebook](#) and read the news as it happens!

# A Look at JanTerm 2011

For many Austin College alumni, memories of January Term stand out as highlights of their college years. During the month-long term, students take only one course so have the opportunity to focus on a special interest or try something new, bring areas of study to life through walking the streets, or complete internships that may shape their career directions. On campus, the atmosphere is different than during the fall and spring terms. With only one course to prepare for, the pace is a little slower. Many students, including most freshmen, remain on campus so have a bit more time to “chill” with friends and become better acquainted with fellow students.



In 2011, on-campus courses included “Urban Wildlife Conflict;” “Expletive Deleted: An Anatomy of Swearing;” and Growing up on Sesame Street: How Sesame Street Supports Children’s Development.”

Of course, for many, the best part of JanTerm is the opportunity to see the world. This January, more than 200 students were enrolled in courses that involved study outside the country, bringing their subject matter to life and *experiencing* their learning. Don Rodgers, associate professor of political science, and the 22 students in his course, “Taiwan’s Political Environment,” didn’t just read about politics; they experienced daily life on the island.

The course included meetings with government officials, representatives of Taiwan’s major political parties, university professors and students, and NGOs. Discussions covered Taiwan’s domestic political processes, major social issues, foreign policy and relations with China, and economic development strategies.

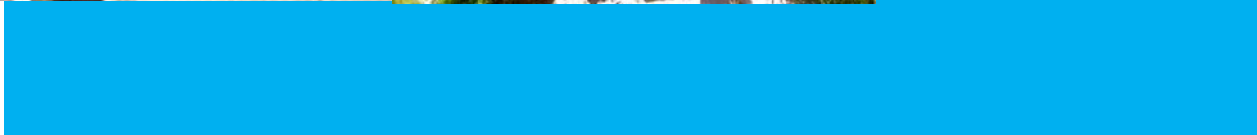
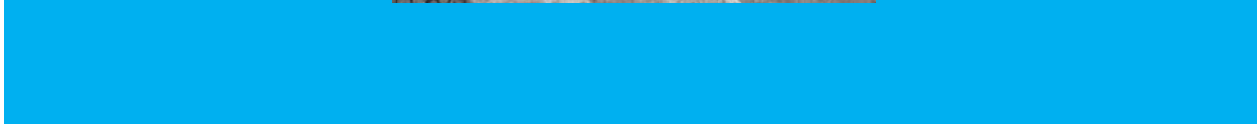
The trip was centered in Taipei, the seat of government and Taiwan’s commercial center, as well as one of the world’s most lively and interesting cities with fantastic restaurants and nightlife, beautiful temples and monuments, night markets, parks, museums, and Taipei 101, the world’s 2nd tallest building. The trip also included visits to other major cities and some of Taiwan’s most famous scenic and cultural areas including Taroko Gorge, Yushan (Jade Mountain, the highest peak in East Asia), the Wulai Aboriginal Village, Yangminshan Hot Springs Resort, Sun Moon Lake, and the beautiful north-east coast.

Ten other courses included international destinations, with students traveling to Argentina, China, Costa Rica, England, France, Guatemala, Italy, Morocco, Spain, and Turkey. Courses also involved travel to California, Florida, and New York.

**Travel with us to ...**



# Argentina





# Guatemala





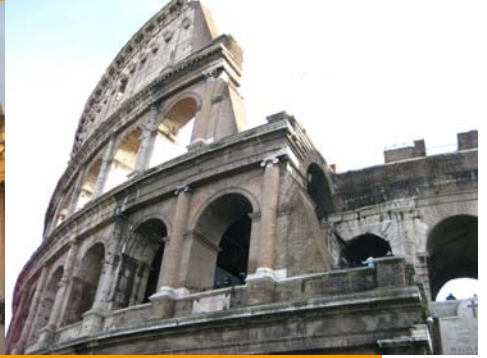
# London







# Rome





# Taiwan



# Austin College Seniors Prepare for Commencement Activities May 14-15

Anticipation continues to build for members of the Class of 2011 as their May 15 graduation nears. Austin College President Marjorie Hass will present diplomas to more than 315 graduates, include 17 Master of Arts in Teaching students, in [Commencement](#) exercises Sunday, May 15, at 8:30 a.m. on the Clyde L. Hall Graduation Court on campus.

Business leader and philanthropist [Drayton McLane, Jr.](#), chairman of the McLane Group and CEO of the Houston Astros Baseball Club, will present the Austin College Commencement address. Having made it his goal to base his endeavors on moral ethics and Christian values, he has received many awards and honors for his professional accomplishments as well as his service to a variety of community and educational organizations.



Baccalaureate services will be held Saturday, May 14, at 7 p.m. in Sid Richardson Center of Mason Complex, with the sermon presented by the [Reverend Bruce Reyes-Chow](#), moderator of the 218<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) from June 2008 to July 2010. He is the founding pastor of Mission Bay Community Church, a young and growing congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in San Francisco, California.



The Baccalaureate service also includes numbers by Austin College choral musicians.

During the Commencement exercises, McLane and Reyes-Chow will receive honorary doctoral degrees, along with Ernesto Nieto and Gloria de Leon, founders of the National Hispanic Institute (NHI), which provides Latino young people with opportunities to envision themselves as future community leaders. NHI has a long association with Austin College.

The weekend also will include the Golden Anniversary reunion for members of the Class of 1961 and all previously recognized classes of Golden 'Roos. Reunion activities begin Friday, May 13, and conclude with Commencement celebrations.

# ACTivator Event #500

## 143,000 Miles ... and Home

For more than 30 years, several hundred senior high youth and their sponsors have chosen Austin College as the site of the Grace Presbytery Senior High Youth Connection (SHYC) each January.

In January 2011, the 750+ guests (which happens to be the largest annual presbytery youth gathering in the nation) came from the usual churches—but several Austin College alumni came from farther afield as the weekend held extra meaning for them.



With leadership roles in the youth event, the ACTivators, Austin College’s youth ministry team, celebrated its 500th event.

The group had its beginning in 1995 when today’s Austin College chaplain **John Williams** ’84 (then director of church relations) and five students traveled to Albuquerque, New Mexico, to serve as leaders at an event for Santa Fe Presbytery. That successful program paved the way for future events. **Amy Allen Parker** ’95 was among those initial leaders. In an anniversary celebration of the program’s 15th year in 2010, she explained that those five individuals had no idea that a program would grow from that event or all that it would become.

“I’m so proud of Austin College and I’m proud that the ACTivators have made a name for ourselves in terms of a presence in the community and something people can associate with the College in a real, positive way,” Amy said. “But we never dreamed that was what we were doing; we just got in the car and headed for Santa Fe Presbytery.”

As the group met for SHYC, the program had, over 16 years, involved 441 Austin College students who had traveled more than 143,000 miles to help plan and lead 499 ministry events involving more than 41,000 children, youth, college students, adults, and senior citizens.

The original team members and their roles today follow. See photos and read more of the original team’s thoughts on the [milestone event](#).

# ACTivators 1995

**Amy Allen Parker '95**  
Director of Children's Ministry  
First Presbyterian Church, Fort Worth, Texas

**Noelle Castin '95**  
Director of Christian Education  
Bradley Street Presbyterian Church, Bethesda, Maryland

**Janet Chester '95**  
Director of Christian Education  
Covenant Presbyterian Church, Sherman, Texas

**Michael Harper '94, MAT '97**  
Associate General Editor  
Congregational Ministries Publishing  
Presbyterian Church (USA)  
Louisville, Kentucky

**Brandon Wert '96**  
PCUSA Young Adult Volunteers Site Coordinator  
Tucson, Arizona



The ACTivators program, with the continued guidance of Williams, has been coordinated for the past 10 years by the Religious Life program's Sallie Majors interns. The internship program was established in 1999-2000 with a gift from Joyce and **Robert M. Johnson '53**.

# 2011 Sallie Majors Interns

**Rachel Dodd '11**  
Austin, Texas

**Ashleigh Johnson '11**  
Austin, Texas

**Amy Kalmbach '11**  
Kingwood, Texas

**Hailey Malcolm '11**  
Richardson, Texas

**Philip Rawlings '11**  
Bronte, Texas

**Courtney Reynolds '11**  
Houston, Texas

**Rachel Wells '11**  
Trophy Club, Texas



Original ACTivators, Plus One: The five "founding" ACTivators and John Williams gathered for a photo during the celebration with SHYC speaker Cindy Rigby. Left to right are Brandon Wert, Cindy Rigby, Noelle Castin, Amy Allen Parker, John Williams, Janet Chester, and Michael Harper

# The Homesick Texan

## Meet Lisa Fain:

From the spicy to the succulent, the savory to the sweet, Lisa Fain '91 has a taste for it all. And she shares her discoveries—and, more importantly, her recipes—online, where she is known as “The Homesick Texan.”

Lisa originally moved to New York to pursue a writing career. Now, she is a full-time blogger and cookbook writer, thanks to her [blog](#).



She began blogging in 2005, mostly for her family, but she started cooking much earlier.

“It’s interesting: no one in my family is a professional cook, but we all love to cook. It’s just something we do a lot. I think I took one class on ‘how to use your knife,’ and that was the only cooking class I’ve ever taken,” she said.

The English major started teaching herself to cook as an Austin College student, making cheap meals for groups of hungry classmates. But she felt drawn to writing, so after college she lived in Houston and Austin, trying on different writing careers.

In 1995, she packed up and moved to New York City, and again found her love of cooking. By day, she climbed the ranks of the corporate ladder at *Advertising Age*, eventually becoming an associate editor; at night, she hungered for Texas flavors.

“One of the first things I noticed was that Texas food just couldn’t be found. My friends and I would try to cook the foods we loved from Texas, because we just couldn’t get it anywhere,” Lisa said.

But even cooking from scratch had its obstacles.

“For me, it was chili powder. It was a really basic ingredient, but I couldn’t find it in New York, or if I could, it wasn’t very flavorful. I live Manhattan, so for me it meant exploring beyond Manhattan. There are some strong thriving Mexican communities, and there I would find their groceries with dried chilies and things like that. It meant going back to basics with the ingredients I did find here,” she said. “The other thing was hot sauce; the only things you could find were brands from Vermont or Connecticut, and you could drink a whole bottle without getting

any heat. So I started making my own salsa.”

She had grown up in Dallas and Houston, spending summers in north Texas on her grandparents’ farms in Grayson and Collin counties. As a result, she relishes Texas flavors from Cajun boudin to corny dogs, kolaches to quesadillas.

“I think what’s cool about Texas is how diverse it is; every place in Texas has its own unique charm that makes it special and cool.”



In short, she had a lot to miss, even as she loved her new home.

“It sounds cliché, but it is an exciting place. You go on the street and there is always something happening. There’s so much art and theatre and film and music, and it’s almost overwhelming. The bounty of culture here is what attracted me,” Lisa said.

It was the discovery of New York’s high-speed culture that made Lisa’s love for Texas’ slower pace and how-do atmosphere blossom, and in September 2005, she officially became the Homesick Texan. She launched her blog to stay in touch with her Texas-based family, and began documenting her Texas-in-New York meals.

Besides her passions for writing and cooking, Lisa loves photography. “I would go on vacation and I’d come home and show my pictures, and over half would be of the meals I ate. The blog just seemed like a good place to combine those passions.”

By the next year, her luscious food photos and mouth-watering recipes had begun to draw a following. She began posting more regularly and with a stronger food focus, but she kept the story aspect. She writes about her life, her family, and, of course, Texas.

In her blog post about chicken fried steak, for example, she writes:

*“It’s been said there are three food groups in Texas: Tex-Mex, barbecue, and chicken-fried steak. And as [chicken-fried steak](#) is also known as the (unofficial) state dish of Texas, I can’t think of anything more appropriate to serve on March 2, Texas Independence Day.”*

Lisa constantly tests recipes and researches Texas facts to enrich her blog. Her grandparents’ Texas farms both have existed since the 1840s, and her family has kept many primary documents. She flavors her posts with updated versions of old family recipes—and original innovations. She explains the Spanish meaning of *al carbon* for tacos al carbon—thanks in part to her study of Spanish while at Austin College—and the mystery of whether an old recipe was buttermilk or chess pie.





Her loyal online following and never-ending list of recipes landed Lisa a book deal, and in September 2011, she will release *The Homesick Texan Cookbook*.

“Two-thirds of the cookbook will be new; 50 recipes will be old favorites from the blog, but 100 haven’t been on the blog,” she said.

She’s keeping the blog active—she publishes a recipe a week, and tests one to two new recipes a day. In May 2010, she was able to quit her day job and become a full-time Texas food writer, both for her blog and her cookbook. And she’s hoping this book won’t be the last.

“When I started, I was afraid it would be really finite—that as soon as I covered cheese enchiladas once, I would run out of material. But there’s no shortage of recipes,” Lisa said. “Texas is a very rich field to plow.”



## Remembering Chase Gaddy

The Austin College community experienced a tragic loss February 23 in the death of freshman **Chase Matthew Gaddy**, 19, in a motorcycle accident in Sherman.

The son of Sharon Ashmore and Brian Gaddy, Chase was a 2010 graduate of Bishop Lynch High School, where he excelled in football, diving, shotput and discus, and powerlifting.



In addition to being a strong and committed student-athlete, Chase exhibited an incredible entrepreneurial drive and spirit. Beginning with mowing lawns in grade school, he grew his business into the highly successful Gaddy Landscaping with dozens of clients. In 2008, Chase was recognized with the TCU Texas Youth Entrepreneur of the Year Award.

Arriving at Austin College in fall 2010, Chase quickly made friends among his college classmates and continued his passion in athletics as a member of the Kangaroo swimming and diving team. He had an excellent regular season, and in the Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference Championship meet on February 16, Chase placed eighth in the 1-meter diving event, scoring 338.95 and placing higher at the event than any Austin College male diver since the 'Roos joined the conference.

Chase is survived by his parents; grandmothers Marion K. Ashmore and Phyllis T. Gaddy; siblings David Bennett, R.T. Bennett, and Mary Catherine Bennett; and numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends.



Funeral mass was held February 28 at Saint Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church and a memorial service was held March 2 at Austin College. Donations may be made in Chase's name to the scholarships funds of Austin College or Bishop Lynch High School.

Several of Chase's friends and classmates spoke at the memorial service at Austin College, including fellow diver Chelsea Wylie '13, who shared her comments. See the [Memorial Blog](#).

## Chase Gaddy Memorial Speech

**Divers are strong.** Good divers have to be able to use their muscles to launch themselves into the air, make their bodies do some crazy stunt, and deal with the impact of the fall. Everyone knows Chase as being one of the strongest people they've ever met, and I'm sure I will hear no argument when I say that the guy was a beast. I used to describe him as being the hulk ... but mini. The best part is the amount of pride he had in his strength. He worked unimaginably hard to acquire all that muscle and had every right to be as proud as he was.

Chase Gaddy's strength went beyond the physical, because although he was able to physically carry you when you were weak, or pick you up when you had fallen, he also could do those things with his energetic spirit. He was a strong and true friend; bringing me DayQuil when I was sick, driving me to Taco Bell (anyone who knows me knows that's a really big deal), standing up for me in bad situations, making sure I always got home, and forever being there to support me.

**Divers are flexible.** We bend into weird positions, do crazy stretches, and fold in half like it's nothing. Flexibility is also about rolling with the punches and being able to adapt to what's happening around you. This is the kind of flexibility Chase had, 'cause with all that muscle you know he wasn't the first kind! When unexpected things would happen, he wouldn't stress, he just would tell you it would be alright and move on to whatever was next. He was always living in the moment, but looking toward the future.

**Divers are brave.** It is necessary to be up for anything and be excited to take risks. You are allowed to have fears; that's natural, but it is important to be able to overcome them. Chase was always up for a challenge and eager to pass his goals. He had a tremendous ability to have mind-over-matter and was able to overcome obstacles in a heartbeat. The kind of bravery he had was that of someone with guts, someone who is passionate about living and ready for a thrill.

For a diver, there is a moment in the air every once in a while when you feel your breath being taken away—adrenaline rushes through you, and excitement overcomes your mind. I believe that this is the kind of moment Chase loved. I know he enjoyed giving these moments to other people and helping them overcome their fears. At our conference meet, Chase sat on the side of the pool through my entire warm up and encouraged me to do my best. He watched every dive during competition, giving me looks of reassurance before the ones he knew I was afraid of. He pushed me to do things I've always wanted to do, and my memory of him will continue to motivate me. A lot of times we find ourselves afraid to be the person we want to be, but Chase was not that kind of person.

**Regardless of fears he may have had, Chase was true to himself and basked in the joy of being exactly who he knew he was. He did not just live, he lived courageously.**

# Along Grand Avenue

## Zainab Salbi Receives Austin College Posey Leadership Award

[Women for Women International](#) founder and CEO Zainab Salbi joined the distinguished ranks in February of those honored with the [Austin College Posey Leadership Award](#).

The guest of honor at the 2011 GO Forum, Salbi spoke to students, faculty, and guests on campus in a public lecture and during a luncheon, before traveling to Dallas to continue the GO Forum events.

That afternoon, several Austin College students who had received [Global Outreach Fellowships](#) to fund service projects around the world shared their experiences with a group of Dallas high school students who had been invited to a special session with Salbi. Salbi spoke that evening to a capacity audience at the Wylie Theatre of the AT&T Performing Arts Center.



Since its founding in 1993, Women for Women International has served more than women worldwide, providing women survivors of war and other conflicts with the tools and resources to move from crisis and poverty to stability and self-sufficiency.

The Posey Leadership Award, which promotes and recognizes service and leadership in a global context, was created through the generosity of Sally and the late Lee Posey, founder of Palm Harbor Homes.

Previous recipients include Wendy Kopp (2006), founder of Teach For America; Dr. Paul Farmer (2007), Harvard professor, medical anthropologist, physician, and subject of the best-selling *Mountains Beyond Mountains*; Geoffrey Canada (2008), president and CEO of the Harlem Children's Zone; Greg Mortenson (2009), educational activist and author of *Three Cups of Tea* and *Stones into Schools*; and Muhammad Yunus (2010), Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and founder of Grameen Bank.

[Nominations for the 2012 Austin College Posey Leadership Award](#) will be accepted through May 1, 2011.

## Spring is in the Air



Grand Avenue has taken on new spring colors as construction continues on Austin College's new student housing The Village on Grand. Each of the 23 two-story cottages will provide four bedrooms and four bathrooms for senior and junior students.

The construction project, which began in October 2010, also include the three-story Flats at Brockett Court that will provide additional suite-style housing, west of the Robert M. and Joyce Johnson 'Roo Suites.

The new facilities, scheduled to be complete in August, provide additional housing to accommodate the College's three-year residency requirement and offer living opportunities for seniors near the campus.

See details and [construction photos online!](#)

## Ghost Light: Theatre, Music, and a Ghost Called Mortimer

Past and present come together as Austin College theatre alumni and current students join forces to present the musical revue *Ghost Light: A Celebration of Austin College Theatre, Music, and a Ghost Called Mortimer* on Friday and Saturday, April 15 and 16, at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, April 16, at 2:00 p.m.

Tickets are \$10 each and may be purchased April 5 through April 14 in Ida Green Communication Center, Room 103, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tickets also may be purchased by calling 903-813-2281. Credit card sales require a \$20 minimum purchase. Tickets are free to members of the Austin College community with a valid campus ID.



The original script, written by **Kim Powers '79** and directed by **Casey McClellan '79**, takes the audience through four decades of iconic music, plays, and performances at Austin College, while relating the history and antics of the local theatre ghost, Mortimer. Members of the cast represent Austin College performances since the opening of Ida Green Communication Center in 1972.

The production includes numbers from *South Pacific*, *Pippin*, *Sunday in the Park With George*, *Working*, *The Fantasticks*, *Company*, *Chess*, *Fiddler On The Roof*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *I Do! I Do!*, *The Boyfriend*, and others. A large cast of alumni and current students bring the songs and script to life.

## An A Cappella Pilgrimage: Choir Tour 2011 to France



Imagine the sweet strains of the Austin College A Cappella Choir resounding through the heights of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Alumni and friends who happen to be in France's capital city on May 22 can do more than imagine as the famous landmark is just one venue on the choir's summer 2011 tour schedule. Touring France from May 18 to June 2, the choir will perform in Paris, Lyon, Aix-en-Provence, Bordeaux, Angers, and Chartres.



### The Tour

Date	Venue	Location
Friday, May, 20	La Madeleine	Paris
Sunday, May 22	Notre Dame-Paris	Paris
Tuesday, May 24	Eglise Bonaventure	Lyon
Wednesday, May 25	Cathedrale St. Sauveur	Aix-en-Provence
Sunday, May 29	Notre Dame-Bordeaux	Bordeaux
Monday, May 30	St.Maurice	Angers
Wednesday, June 1	Cathedrale de Notre Dame	Chartres

### President Marjorie Hass Shines

**President Marjorie Hass** has shown considerable star power in the nearly two years she has led Austin College. Recognition of her accomplishments extended beyond campus in February when she was honored as a Texas Luminary during the Conference on American Leadership at North Central Texas College.

The award honors leaders who “demonstrate remarkable innovation and dedication to improving the lives of Texans.” Criteria include expression of a compelling vision for Texas’ future, a proven history as a trailblazer or path maker, and history of innovative work.



Dr. Hass was a speaker on the conference agenda, addressing “Accountability, Leadership, and the Purpose of Education.” Other speakers were Steve Perry, a nationally renowned education contributor for *U.S. News and World Report*, CNN, FOX News, and MSNBC; and Dr. Patricia Crisp, the special representative for U.S. Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan, whose office is responsible for implementing federal education initiatives.

Earlier this academic year, Dr. Hass attended the Council of Independent Colleges meeting in California and was on the program for a session on “Creating a Great Workplace,” sharing insights on what faculty and staff value about working on a college campus, what distinguishes a great workplace, and what strategies colleges can employ to attract strong candidates for faculty and staff positions.

She is scheduled to present the commencement address for the Episcopal School of Dallas in June.

## Baker Goes “Extreme” at the Smithsonian, Wins the “Oscar”

Mention of “the most extreme places in the universe” isn’t an everyday conversation starter. This spring, however, **David Baker**, Austin College Physics Department chair, has opened with it pretty often.

[\*The 50 Most Extreme Places in Our Solar System\*](#) is his award-winning book, published in September 2010 and written with his colleague Todd Ratcliff, planetary geophysicist at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory.



Since September, he has spoken to groups at schools, community events, special interest meetings, and book signings, and been interviewed on television and radio programs about the book.

Baker’s spring has been busy with book signings and presentations too, highlighted by an April 3 signing at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.

Later this month, Baker will lead Master Naturalist Certification participants on a journey of “Extreme Weather and Climate in Texas” during an interactive training session in McKinney, Texas. He also will be the featured speaker for the April 30 Barnes and Noble Astronomy Book Fair in Plano, Texas. The fundraising effort will benefit 3 Rivers Foundation, a non-profit astronomy outreach program.

Written for readers of diverse age and knowledge, *The 50 Most Extreme Places in Our Solar System* (Harvard University Press) explores extreme regions on Earth and beyond—giant turbulent storms, explosive volcanoes, and the possibility of life surviving in harsh conditions.

Illustrated with explanatory figures and stunning NASA photographs, the book fuses the human fascination with extreme natural events and the allure of outer space by reporting new scientific discoveries in a fresh and often quirky way.

In February 2011, the Association of American Publishers awarded the book an Honorable Mention for Professional and Scholarly Excellence (PROSE) awards in the category of cosmology and astronomy.

The PROSE Awards annually recognize the very best in professional and scholarly publishing by bringing attention to distinguished books, journals, and electronic content in over 40 categories. Judged by peer publishers, librarians, and medical professionals since 1976, the PROSE Awards are extraordinary for their breadth and depth.

Baker said the PROSE Awards are the professional and scholarly publishing field’s equivalent of the Academy Awards. And that’s not just “extreme” talk ...

## Twisted Weather

With tornado season upon us, Kevin Simmons, Austin College Corrigan Chair of Economics, has had several opportunities to share his findings on the hidden costs of severe weather and the effectiveness of government policies in his book [\*Economic and Societal Impacts of Tornadoes\*](#), recently released by the American Meteorological Society.

This spring, he was interviewed by *USA Today* weather editor Doyle Rice and was included in Rice's "Spring ripe for tornado watch" in the print edition and also posted to [usatoday.com](http://usatoday.com) as "Tornado watch: Experts cite economic, societal cost of twisters"

Simmons, who has been studying the economic impacts and social consequences of tornadoes for nearly a decade, co-authored the book with Daniel Sutter, associate professor of economics at the University of Texas–Pan American, shared points from his book in discussing the high cost of severe weather incidents.

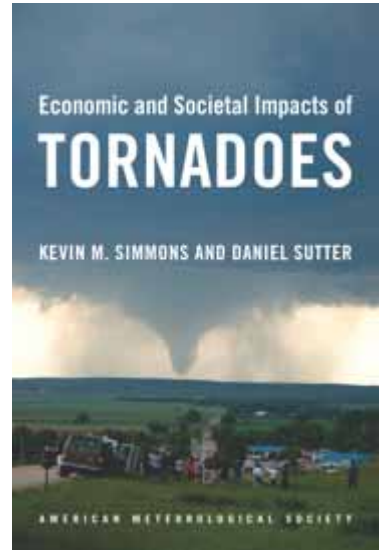
The *USA Today* articles also include statistics from the research of Dr. Jeffrey Czajkowski, assistant professor of economics, who also studies the economics of natural hazard risks. He currently is in Pennsylvania, having been selected for a prestigious post-doctoral research fellowship at the Wharton School for spring and summer 2011, involved in the school's Risk Management and Decision Process Center.

*Economic and Societal Impacts of Tornadoes* evaluates the impact of tornadoes on society and examines efforts to minimize the havoc tornadoes can wreak on communities and individual families. Simmons and Sutter use information compiled from sources including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and U.S. Census to explore how factors such as tornado warnings and false alarms affect casualties, whether Doppler radar and tornado shelters are worth the investment, and other societal impacts of nature's most powerful storm.



"Each year approximately 1,200 tornadoes rip across the United States, many of which are concentrated in the geographical region, consisting of North Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska, known as Tornado Alley," said Simmons. "In addition to inspiring fear and inflicting physical damage, tornados have a significant societal impact as well."

**Kevin M. Simmons** is the Corrigan Chair of Economics at Austin College. In 2009, he was selected as a Fulbright Scholar to work with the International Center for Geohazards in Oslo. Daniel Sutter is associate professor of economics at the University of Texas–Pan American and a senior affiliated scholar of the Mercatus Institute.



Read more or buy *Economic and Societal Impacts of Tornadoes*.

## Chemistry in the Kitchen

John Richardson is not a chef, but he's teaching cooking this spring—in a science course.

In “Mastering the Art of Chemical Cooking” Richardson, associate professor of chemistry, is teaching the practical applications of conventional (and some unconventional) cooking techniques to explore the philosophy of molecular gastronomy.



**Ingredients of milk, cream, sugar, and vanilla don't make much on their own. Add some liquid nitrogen and watch the magic (the chemistry magic) begin!**

The course introduces students to a full complement of scientific ideas and chemistry, including properties of matter, atomic theory, chemical reactions, gasses, thermochemistry, intermolecular forces, kinetics, equilibrium, acids & bases, and biochemistry.

“Chemistry is all around us,” Richardson said, “and nowhere is this more evident than in the daily transformation that take place in our kitchens.

“By taking the topics perceived as difficult, wrapping them in a layer of the familiar, and reinforcing with hands-on demonstrations, students have the opportunity to come away with a better understanding of what chemistry is all about.”

From exploring why a very specific set of ingredients is a must for the perfect southern biscuit to figuring out why it's so hard to get the right consistency for whipped cream and the real reason we cry when we cut an onion, Richardson is a molecular gastronomy enthusiast excited to share his passion for food and chemistry with students.

In class, Richardson and his students explore the molecules that make up food and their properties, discuss the facts behind the “universally accepted” proverbs of cooking and question their validity scientifically.

Work is not confined to the kitchen. Students read and discuss primary literature by authors ranging from Herve This, the co-founder of molecular gastronomy, to Nobel Prize-winning scientists Richard Axel and Linda Buck.

Students have been assigned an out-of-class project to test a family cooking myth. Students design their own experiments for the project, interpret their data, and present the results to the class—perhaps with some tasty demonstrations.

## Do You Believe in Magic?

Magic was in the air on campus when two of the world's most famous and influential magicians performed before a capacity crowd in Ida Green Theatre in February for "Magic: The Secret Art." The Las Vegas-style show featured internationally acclaimed magicians Jeff McBride and Eugene Burger, along with Austin College professor Lawrence Hass.



The performance was part of the Austin College Theory and Art of Magic series, which Hass coordinates through the Department of Communication Studies.

The artists performed a much different show the next evening at the Park City Club in Dallas. This unique fundraising event combined a Valentine's Day banquet, up-close magic and sleight of hand presentations, and scholarship support for fine arts students at Austin College.

### THE ARTISTS

[Jeff McBride of Las Vegas](#) combines mask, martial arts, kabuki theatre, world-class sleight of hand, myths and stories from around the world, and more, to create electrifying performances that thrill a wide range of audiences.

[Eugene Burger of Chicago](#) has been named among the "Most Influential Magicians of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century" by *MAGIC Magazine* for his deeply astonishing magic and for his reputation as the world's foremost teacher and philosopher of magic. Burger appeared at Austin College in two sold-out shows in February 2010, and he is back to create his special magic with his friend and colleague Jeff McBride.

[Dr. Lawrence Hass](#) is founding director of the Theory and Art of Magic program. He is a professor of humanities at Austin College, teaching courses in philosophy and in the history, theory, and performance of magic. While unusual for a professor, the focus in magic is rooted in the fact that he also is an internationally recognized magician, teacher of magicians, and speaker about the meaning and importance of the magical arts. He has performed his style of magic from coast to coast at such prestigious venues as the world-famous Magic Castle in Hollywood, Magic Chicago, and the Wynn Casino in Las Vegas.



## New Position Will Boost Communication

### Meet Lynn Womble:

Austin College has created a new position, director of public affairs, to provide strategic direction for both internal and external College communications. **Lynn Womble** stepped into the new role in March.



“I felt the College needed a leader and collaborator to help us spread the word about Austin College,” President Marjorie Hass said. “Lynn’s business acumen and background will provide the College with a strong foundation upon which we can build Austin College’s future communications.”

Womble earned her bachelor’s degree from Baylor, her master’s degree from UTA and her Ph.D. from the University of North Texas. She began her working life as a math teacher before moving into the business world. She has 20 years of experience in marketing, client-building, and education from the American Management Association, MLink Technologies, EDS, and Verizon.

“Austin College appeals to me because I can be involved in projects that allow me to bring my business expertise to an academic environment,” Womble said. “It’s particularly exciting to work in a place like Austin College, which offers a vibrant emphasis on experiential learning through the campus residential experience and numerous opportunities to study internationally.”

The director of public affairs, who reports directly to the president, will oversee communications with the College, Hass said, in a position that will evolve over time.

“My goal is to enhance the visibility of Austin College by extending relationships here at home in north Texas, across the state and nationwide. I am passionate about discovering stories with impact and enabling storytellers to illuminate those in their circles of influence,” Womble said. “I’ve begun to discover the diverse ways our faculty members engage with the community and the achievements of our students through prestigious fellowships, graduate studies, and career success.”

“I’m especially hoping to enhance relationships between the College and many exceptional business employers across the state,” she continued. “I believe there is a great opportunity for an intersection of business, community leadership and this institution, where all will greatly benefit from being introduced to Austin College students and alumni.”

# Home Team

The Austin College athletics teams have had a strong year, with 22 student-athletes earning All-Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference honors so far on the year, including one Player of the Year and one Newcomer of the Year. Three programs have competed in postseason play and three sports remain in competition.

## Volleyball

Among the several standout student-athletes at Austin College this season is First Team All-Conference volleyball player **Jessica Fleming** '12, who led all NCAA Division III programs in blocks for the second consecutive year. Fleming was the runner-up for SCAC Player of the Year honors and was an American Volleyball Coaches Association All-South Region First Team selection, leading the 'Roos to a 29-10 overall record, including a 9-5 mark in the SCAC.

Fleming wasn't the only standout on the volleyball team. First-year player **Shelby Eaves** '14 was named the SCAC Newcomer of the Year, and **Jordan Anderton** '11 earned Third Team All-SCAC honors, marking her third straight year as an All-Conference selection.



## Soccer

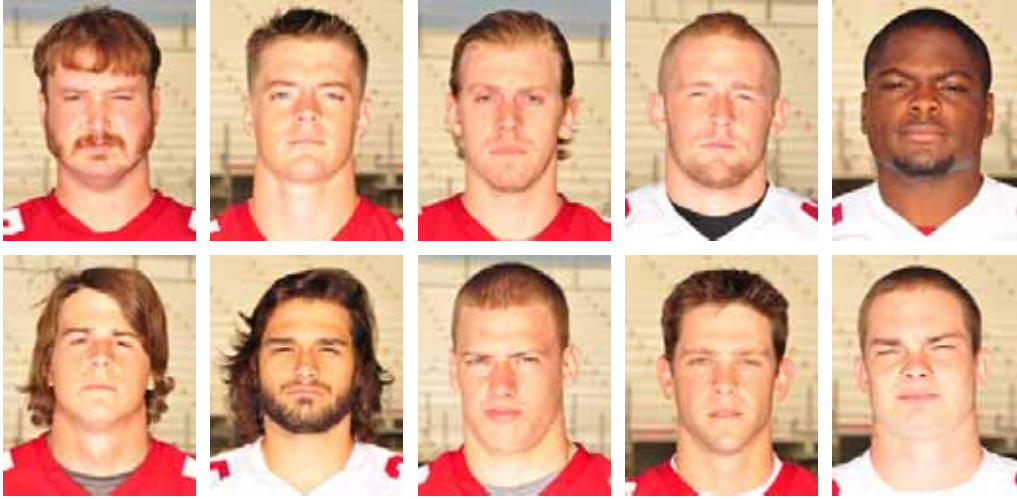
The women's soccer program put together its 14<sup>th</sup> straight winning season, thanks in large part to an outstanding defense that surrendered just eight goals, the fewest in the SCAC and placed among the fewest nationally and finished the year with an 11-4-2 record. The effort was led by **Ashleigh Johnson** '11 and **Kaitlin Elledge** '12, who were each named First Team All-SCAC, and Johnson was named the conference's Defensive Player of the Year. Elledge was superb in goal all year, collecting 10 shutouts, and was named to the ESPN Academic All-District Team along with **MacKenzie Lund** '11 and **Andrea Schneider** '12.



The men's soccer team finished the year with an overall record of 6-8-3, behind the outstanding play of **Chris Melton** '12, who earned Second Team All-SCAC honors and was a standout academically, named a National Soccer Coaches Association of America Scholar-Athlete. Melton finished the year tied for third in the SCAC with 12 goals on the season.

## Football

On the gridiron, head coach **Loren Dawson** led the 'Roos to a 4-5 record in his first year at the helm and the team landed 10 players on the All-SCAC teams, led by First Team selections **Austin Light** '11, **Matt Finke** '11, and **Greg Harrell** '11. Light was also named First Team All-Region as an ESPN Academic All-Region honoree for his outstanding work in the classroom. Other players who earned All-SCAC accolades include **Ethan Tanner** '12, **Kenneth Eneh** '12, **Evan Coachman** '11, **Braydon MaQuar** '12, **Joshua Willis** '11, **Travis Zambiasi** '11 and **Tanner Martin** '12.



## Basketball

The men's basketball team returned to the SCAC Tournament for the fourth straight year, narrowly falling to eventual conference runner-up DePauw in the first round of action. The 'Roos finished the year 12-14 overall and had four players earn All-SCAC honors, led by 3<sup>rd</sup> Team All-Conference guard **Jordan Hancock** '14, who finished among the leading scorers in the SCAC. **Josh Saunders** '12, **Scott Straley** '12 and **Walter Phillips** '13 each earned Honorable Mention accolades, with Saunders leading the SCAC in blocked shots while all three players averaged double digits in the scoring column on the year.



The women's basketball team had an up and down year under first year head coach **Michelle Filander**, winning five of their first nine SCAC games before dropping their final eight games of the season to finish with a 7-17 overall record. **Kersti Marusich '12** was among the leading scorers in the conference and was named an All-SCAC Honorable Mention performer for the year, while several first year players including **Erin Riley '14** and **Brooke Melton '14** showed tremendous promise as Filander guides the team into next season.



### Swimming and Diving

The men's and women's swimming & diving teams had solid seasons and competed well at the SCAC Championship meet, with several swimmers turning in career best performances, while **Chase Gaddy** became the first Austin College swimmer to earn All-SCAC honors before tragically passing away this spring.



### Still In Play

#### Baseball

The baseball team has gotten off to a bit of a slow start under first year head coach **James Rise**, going 3-13 thus far on the season, though their record has been a bit deceptive as the team has been in every ballgame thus far only to see luck go the way of their opponents in several late game situations. **Tyler Steed '11** has gotten off to an outstanding start on the mound, and is currently among the conference leaders in both innings pitched and strikeouts.



#### Softball

The softball team has gotten off to a 9-15 start on the year and has already had some big highlights, including **Stefanie Faith '11** becoming the SCAC's all-time leading home run hitter. Faith currently has 34 career home runs, and is also on pace to challenge both the single season home run and runs batted in records as well as the career RBI mark.



#### Tennis

The men's and women's tennis teams have also gotten off to solid starts this season, with the women currently boasting an impressive 6-2 record behind the outstanding play of **Minnie Satyavada '11**, **Kelly Lewis '11**, **Lizzie Flint '12** and **Arianne Goddard '14** while the men are currently 1-7 as **Tyler Roush '13** has followed up his strong freshman season with an outstanding start to 2011.



## On the Sidelines Meet Bobbi Schulle:



Long before she ever stepped onto the sidelines as a graduate assistant at Austin College, **Bobbi Schulle** '10 knew she wanted to be a coach. She took a step toward that goal this year, but in an unlikely setting for most young women looking to lead sports programs. That's because Schulle became one of the rare women to join the coaching staff of a men's athletics team, working under head coach Rodney Wecker with the Kangaroo men's basketball team.

A woman coaching a men's sport is a sight rarely seen even in the modern sports world, with the most notable exception of former women's basketball great Nancy Lieberman, currently coaching the Texas Legends, the NBA D-League team of the Dallas Mavericks that plays its games in Frisco. With so few women having coached men, Bobbi knew there would be challenges, but her anxiety about those challenges quickly subsided.

"I was nervous initially about being taken seriously and even being respected by the guys," said Schulle, "but from day one that was never a problem. We all meshed and got along and they treated me like one of them. I couldn't have asked for a better group to work with."

The respect and trust that developed helped her become a very important component of the team, which reached the Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference Tournament for the fourth straight season.

"While initially it might have seemed strange hearing constructive criticism on the court from a female, they respected my presence and trusted that I would not waste their time with pointless information and from that our coach-player relationship took off."

Of course, there were some obvious obstacles to fully immersing herself with the guys, namely the pre- and post-game meetings in the locker room. While the men adjusted their routines to accommodate the best that they could, it still proved to be a bit of a tough situation from time to time for the coaching assistant.

"The hardest part for me was probably after a big win or that tough conference tournament loss, having to miss out on being in there with the guys and not getting to share those experiences with them."

Bobbi gained a great deal from her experience this season, and she credits much of that to Coach Wecker, who taught her valuable lessons relating to basketball as well as life.

“I learned that every day presents a challenge, and it is up to you to take advantage of that opportunity to learn something,” Bobbi said. “If you’re not careful, you regress and the game passes you by. The tools Coach Wecker gave me have helped me really to form my own blueprint of what it takes to succeed in coaching at any level.”

Since helping to instruct some young girls at her little sister’s softball tryout when Bobbi was just a freshman in high school, she’s been preparing herself to coach at whatever level an opportunity presents itself. The passion of coaching was just too great to resist.



“I was never able to sit back and watch a game without wanting to be out there helping and trying to make somebody better,” Bobbi said of her first real coaching experience at that softball tryout. “My ultimate goal is to be a part of building a successful program with high character student-athletes. Whether with a college, a high school, or a club team, the emphasis always will be on the kids and finding ways to make them better and grow as individuals on and off the playing field.”

Bobbi, who will receive her Master of Arts in Teaching degree from Austin College this May, will continue coaching this summer with a club softball team. While she’ll soon begin the process of job hunting, she has no plans to stop working with teams and will continue to network with other coaches in the hope a position with a college or high school team presents itself. And, the idea of working with another men’s team is an option.

“If the opportunity presented itself, I would not hesitate to work with a men’s team again. “So much of the game relies on understanding fundamentals and having a mental edge over your opponent, so I would feel very comfortable working with a men’s team and being a positive presence.”

Bobbi isn’t limiting her options to any particular sport, either. In fact, she would some day like to try her hand at coaching football, though she realizes that her lack of playing experience in the sport would make landing a job on the gridiron a difficult endeavor. That doesn’t rule the possibility out, however.

“I can see myself starting out with a junior high team and working hard to earn the trust of the coaching staff and move up from there,” Bobbi said. “Coaching any sport is a challenge and takes the willingness to learn year after year in order to ensure that you are giving your team the best shot at success. I am not afraid to put that work in regardless of whatever sport I am given the opportunity to coach.”

## A Home Run Season

Kangaroo softball player **Stefanie Faith** '11 already has made Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference history this spring by becoming the conference's all-time home run leader, and the four-year starter at first base is poised to leave an even larger imprint in the SCAC record books.

With her second home run of the season, Stephanie broke the SCAC career home run mark and at press time, had 10 homers on the year, 37 in her career. She also has 45 RBIs, leaving her just six shy of tying the SCAC single-season mark. Those 45 RBIs also give her 148 in her career, needing just 10 more to tie the SCAC career mark.



In addition to her record-breaking performance this season, in which she also is batting .434 in 32 games, Stephanie became just the 19<sup>th</sup> player in SCAC history to reach the 150-hit milestone. Twice this season the three-time All-SCAC performer and two-time First Team All-SCAC selection, has been honored as the SCAC Player of the Week and looks to be one of the top contenders for SCAC Player of the Year honors, leading or near the top in virtually every statistical category in the conference. With eight regular season games plus the possibility of competing at the SCAC Conference Tournament, Stephanie looks to solidify herself as one of the most dangerous hitters in conference history.

## Save the Date ...

# Legends 2011

Mark your calendars for Legends 2011: July 15-17

Watch for details online and in the mail.

<http://www.austincollege.edu/legends>

## 'Roo Notes: Profiles

### An Inspired Teacher Meet Chris Smith:

**Chris Smith** '84 received the Texas A&M Inspiration Award in December 2010—an unusual award based on extraordinary inspiration. Sponsored by the Office of the President, the purpose of the award is to recognize Texas high school teachers who have inspired Texas A&M graduates at the high school level, challenging them while preparing them to excel at the collegiate level and beyond.



Smith, a world history teacher at S&S Consolidated High School in Sadler, Texas, was nominated for the award by former student Philip Murtaugh. Smith was recognized during commencement ceremonies at the university in December, receiving a certificate and check for \$2,000, as well as a \$1,000 check for his high school.

He also had another privilege—formally presenting Murtaugh’s bachelor’s degree to him during the commencement ceremony—an act normally reserved for the university president.

Murtaugh said his high school graduating class had 52 people in it, and that because of the small, rural area, many teachers stay only a short time before moving on to larger schools. “Chris Smith, however, is one of those teachers who stands out above the rest,” Murtaugh said. “He has stayed at the school through good times and bad, dedicated his nights and weekends to University Interscholastic League (UIL) events, pushed his students to succeed, and above all, he cared.”

The senior-level world history course taught by Smith is known and feared throughout the high school because he challenges his students, Murtaugh added.

“He prepares his students for college, whether they plan on going or not. His tests teach you how to study, his projects teach you how to be creative, and his twisted sense of humor teaches you how to think outside the box.”

Smith also has coached the school’s UIL current events team to 15 consecutive state championships, the longest winning streak in the state.

“I ask that you please consider Chris Smith because the impact he makes is truly remarkable,” Murtaugh said in his nominating letter. “The man is the epitome of teaching excellence. I am forever grateful for the impact he’s had on my life.”



## The Dance of Her Life Leads to Fulbright Award

**Ashwini Shridhar** '05 dances to tell a story.

Her dancing—geometric, precise, and colorful—is traditionally intended to explore religious mythologies.

“While the mythology is important, we have new stories to tell, as well,” she said. “Why not tell the story of traffic moving through a city?”



In a video clip on YouTube, Ashwini and a team of dancers demonstrate the intense physical control of Bharatanatyam, an Indian dance form thought to be rooted in the technique of ancient temple dancers.

Although she has been dancing since childhood, Ashwini only came to professional dance recently.

While at Austin College, Ashwini majored in English and Spanish.

She continued her off-campus practice of Bharatanatyam and never considered majoring in dance. “I never felt I had to. It was a part of my life. (Dance) is just what a good south Indian girl ‘should do,’” she said.

Though she loves to read, choosing to major in language was a challenge because of her ethnicity.

“It’s a cliché to major in biology – it was a struggle to tell my parents ‘I’m not going to do that.’ Even saying ‘I can major in English’ was difficult,” she said.

Ashwini has struggled with her cultural identity her whole life; her family moved from India to Garland, Texas, when she was 7 years old. She grew up in a world divided: public American schooling and friendships balanced against traditional Indian expectations and family support.

“I never could place myself in one box,” she said.

Feeling neither wholly American nor Indian, Ashwini learned to straddle the two cultures.

Ashwini’s internal conflicts about the intercultural immigrant experience enriched her English research work her senior year, when she earned a Mellon Foundation grant on literature. Her work, titled, “Immigrant Experience Through Narratives of the Indian Diaspora,” analyzed the feelings immigrants had about themselves and the cultural assimilation they underwent.

Carol Daeley, professor of English and Ashwini's research advisor, was impressed with Ashwini's work. "She was coming to grips with all the questions that come out of colonization and immigration and having to define what it means to have those cultural threads," Daeley said. "Working with Ashwini was unique in my long teaching career because she worked through literature and out of it to find what she wants to spend her life doing."

Though Ashwini said she enjoyed working with Dr. Daeley, the hefty literary research showed her what graduate school would be like, and caused her to reevaluate her goals.

"I didn't want to read about people doing things," Ashwini said. "I wanted to *do* something."

"I thought, 'I'll just go to India and dance!'" she said, laughing.

Ashwini's long-time dance teacher spent her summers in India, and Ashwini decided to follow her for the time being.

"My parents made me come back," she said. After her return, Ashwini worked for a magazine for six months, but the allure of dance remained.

"I remember I had to interview a dancer—and that was the day I decided to quit," she said.

In 2007, she moved to India, where she danced and taught a creative movement class for children as young as three. She joined Shiri dance company, a group of classically trained Bharatanatyam dancers who fold in neotraditional elements and fluidity to their art.

"I think at some point I realized I wanted to do something more. I couldn't be a pure classical dancer," Ashwini said.

Ashwini turned her attention to a new goal: a Fulbright grant to earn a Master of Arts degree in movement studies.

Again drawing on her immigrant experiences, Ashwini's proposal to create an arts collective to grow intercultural dance forms caught the attention of the Fulbright Scholarship Board, who awarded Ashwini one of the most competitive awards. She is spending the 2010-2011 academic year at the renowned University of London Central School of Speech and Dance.

"I want to create something where people can interact with other cultures. People *can* understand real things about others' cultures," she said. "Culture shapes these things, but under it, we are all just human."

"It really seems that kids learn better when they learn with movements. I want to learn how the body moves in dance, theatre, etc.," Ashwini said. "Those are both things I love to do: studio dance work and book-learning."

Through dance, Ashwini tells stories, and through dance, Ashwini found her own story.

[Watch Ashwini Dance](#)

## Leading by Example Meet Natalie Eustace:

**Natalie Bencowitz Eustace '68** was among 30 women educators nationwide selected to attend the Delta Kappa Gamma summer 2010 Leadership/Management Seminar at the McCombs School of Business at the University of Texas.



The intense educational experience was taught by experts in the field of leadership and management and included course work in interpersonal communication, leading across generations, conflict resolution, effective decision-making, advocacy, negotiation skills, grant writing and fundraising, and wellness.

The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International (DKG) is a professional honorary society of more than 100,000 women educators. The society promotes professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education.

Natalie was selected based upon her work with DKG, her abilities as a professional educator, and involvement in her community. In 2007, she was the Midland Gold Winner of the Chamber of Commerce Excellence in Teaching Award; as well as Teacher of the Year for her campus and the 2007 winner of Abydos Learning International's top award, the Sue German Award for Excellence in Teaching.

A member of Zeta Xi chapter of DKG, Natalie is the group's state music chair. During the June 2010 state convention, Natalie directed and was responsible for all music activities, which included four performances by the state chorus of 90 members from across the state, plus many small group activities. Later, she was in charge of various activities during the International Convention in Spokane, Washington.

Natalie retired from teaching in 2007 with 33 years of experience—27 of those in Midland ISD. After earning her degree at Austin College, she completed a master's degree in music and education at SMU and an all-level music certification at University of Texas-Permian Basin.

Natalie operates a private piano studio in Midland.

She and her husband, Tom '66, have two alumnae daughters, Tanya '01 and Natasha '97.

## Ron Kirk Honored For Extraordinary Contribution: Ron Kirk Receives UT Honor



**Ron Kirk '76** has been selected to receive the prestigious University of Texas Presidential Citation for 2010. The recognition was created in 1979 to recognize the extraordinary contributions of individuals who personify the university's commitment to transforming lives.

As United States trade representative, Kirk is a member of President Barack Obama's Cabinet and is the president's principal trade advisor, negotiator, and spokesperson on trade issues.

Prior to becoming U.S. trade representative in 2009, Kirk was a partner at Vinson & Elkins. He served as mayor of Dallas from 1995 to 2001, and previously had been appointed Texas secretary of state by Governor Ann Richards. His career also included service as a legislative aide to U.S. Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, chair of Texas' General Service Commission, and City of Dallas assistant city attorney.

Kirk was named one of "The 50 Most Influential Minority Lawyers in America" by the *National Law Journal* in 2008, and one of the nation's top government relations lawyers by The Best Lawyers in America from 2007-2009. He also received the University of Texas Distinguished Alumni Award in 2001, the Woodrow Wilson Center for Public Policy's Outstanding Public Service Award in 2000, the Young Texas Exes Award in 1995, and the Austin College Distinguished Alumni Award in 1994. Kirk received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters Degree from Austin College in 2006 and the Mickey Leland Leadership Award from Texas Southern University in 2004. He also is a senior member of the Austin College Board of Trustees.

Kirk earned his law degree from The University of Texas at Austin School of Law in 1979.

## Save the Date...

Plan now to attend Homecoming 2011  
on October 28-30!

Watch for details online and in the mail.

<http://www.austincollege.edu/homecoming>



## Save the Trees

Amber Childress '07 wants you to save the trees.

But she isn't a stereotypical tree-hugger. She spends more of her time in dress suits in Washington, D.C., than in dirty jeans in a national park. She's more likely to be speaking to African delegates than protesting logging.

Amber works with the Terrestrial Carbon Group (TCG), an international group of specialists from science, economics, and public policy with expertise in land management, climate change and markets.

At its most simplistic level, TCG translates complicated science into policies that enable countries to stop cutting down their trees.



"When you cut down trees, it sends carbon into the atmosphere, but it also stops the trees from taking carbon out of the atmosphere. It's two-fold," Amber explained.

It's more complicated than just "save the trees," though. Amber's research deals with balancing whole ecosystems: trees, moss, and peat, down to the soil itself.

"On the broad level of climate change, the focus has been on fossil fuels. But what's been left out of it —the terrestrial system. Everything but the oceans," Amber said. Terrestrial carbon is up to "40 percent of the solution to climate change."

Terrestrial Carbon Group wants to encourage countries to balance their ecosystems and preserve the carbon. It isn't enough to save the trees: "Agriculture is really a big driver, so if you only address deforestation, it puts pressure on other types of land."

Without a balanced approach, food would become scarce and drive up basic costs.

Amber's team of five truly is international: She works in Washington, D.C., but her coworkers are in Sydney, Australia, and London, England.

She credits Austin College's Posey Leadership Institute and interdisciplinary curriculum with teaching her to handle her work alone.

"Being on such a small team, we each take ownership of what we are doing. A lot of the structural models of the various aspects of the leadership I've learned have really been helpful—how to be a leader even if you aren't 'the leader,'" she said.

As a student, Amber also was involved in Model U.N. With TCG, Amber attended the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen, Denmark in 2009 and in Cancun, Mexico in 2010.

"It was so crazy how the real U.N. is just like the Model U.N.," she said. "But it's not a game; it's someone's life we're talking about."

*Note: Amber will end her work at TCG this summer and pursue a master's degree at Colorado State University in the interdisciplinary graduate degree program in ecology. She will continue doing similar work, with a focus on spatial analysis required to measure and monitor land cover and land use change.*

## Still Reaching Out Meet Casie Luong:

**Casie Luong '10** discovered her passion for combining music and service during an internship in Vietnam during summer 2008. She completed an Austin College Lilly vocational internship in Ho Chi Minh City at The Little Rose Shelter, which housed 20 girls, ages 8-19. Casie shared her love of piano with the residents, teaching 15 girls and organizing a recital at the end of her stay.



A requirement of the internship was to follow the summer experience with a project that reflected what was gained from the experience. Casie organized a campus benefit concert called "Resonance" and proceeds were donated to Education Through Music, a non-profit organization in New York.

She coordinated musicians to perform, including herself, and raised additional funds through a bake sale during the concert. A similar program her junior year raised funds for a scholarship for students with Crohns' Disease.



So, when she graduated in May and wanted to serve in her own community of Wichita Falls, Texas, she again turned to music. She founded Two Can Share and organized a benefit concert in Wichita Falls through her church's college student ministry, this time in support of Faith Mission.

"I love the idea of bringing everyone together for a sole cause. In the case of a benefit concert, the musicians get to make music, the audience members are active participants, and a cause is served. It's such a beautiful thing," she said.

More than 100 people attended, raising \$50 for the mission as well as more than 340 canned good items. "This was a small beginning but everything counts. Many young volunteers donated their time, energy, creative ideas, and talents, and this gives me hope for bigger events to come to serve our community. It all starts small and I hope no matter how big any charity event becomes, we all remember where it started," Casie said.

## X Team: Superheroes for Artists

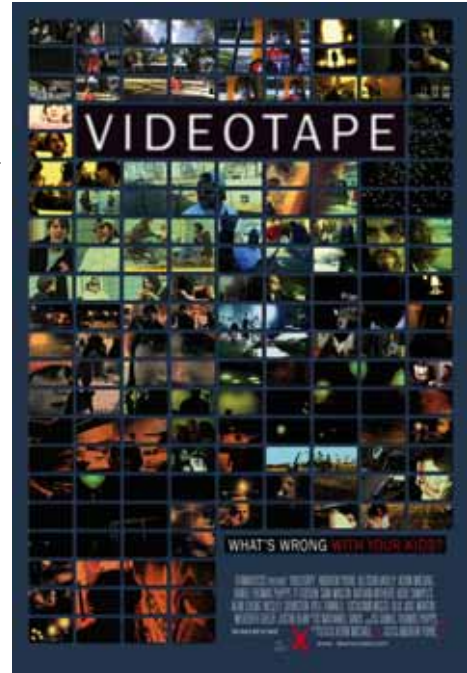
After graduation, a group of Austin College students stayed together and formed X Team Artists, a collaboration to promote artists of all kinds of media.

The 12 Austin College alumni and a current student built a [website to showcase their work](#). Their main project is “Videotape,” a film about murder, love and mystery.

**Steven Hayes** '08, who double-majored in history and media studies, founded the group in 2002. Under the pseudonym “Andrew Yorke,” Hayes and his team began work on “Videotape” in November 2007 and completed filming in October 2009.

“When X Team Artists was formed, this was *the* project,” Hayes said. “It was a real risk, because we didn’t know if it was going to work. We took these parts that don’t go together and tried to do it all ourselves.”

The X Team Artists previewed their film at Hoxie Thompson Auditorium in Sherman Hall in May 2010.



The film is dark and intentionally low-budget.

“Our objective with this project was to take advantage of the limitations of filmmakers. All the footage shot at Austin College was shot on a camcorder,” Hayes said.

The lower-quality cameras added a “home movie” feel to scenes of students playing in the snow at midnight on the quad-angle.

The film is split among scenes on the campus, scenes at casual house parties, and “after-the-fact” shots of the present, telling the fictional story in a documentary-style recap. In the story of “four college kids end up dead at a college in the middle of nowhere,” the sole survivor of the experience is asked to tell his tale for a documentary. The rest of the story, told in intersecting memory form, is filled in between his sullen explanations.

The team of artists hopes the film leaves the audience with a feeling of realism.

“The importance for us, in terms of context, language, violence, anything offensive—it’s real. These are things that happen on every college campus. There is an element at every single institution that is confused, lost, living in a bubble,” Hayes said.

The X Team Artists are submitting the film to various film festivals, from festivals in Austin, Texas, to Hollywood, California.

The X Team Artists have posted video podcasts on their website, documenting the behind-the-scenes of filmmaking, but the film is not available to general audiences.

Other media displays include a web comic called “The Tower” by **Carl Antonowicz** ’08.

#### **Austin College graduates in X Team Artists:**

- Steven Hayes ’08 “Andrew Yorke”
- Kevin Nethery ’07 “Kevin Michael”
- Daniel Phipps ’09
- Ty Gibson ’09
- Sam Maclin ’09
- Allison Varley ’09
- Alan Cheng ’09
- Lochlann McGee ’09
- Justin Dean ’09
- Meredith Greer ’08
- Wesley Johnson ’09
- Katie Samples ’11
- Carl Antonowicz ’08



**Editor’s Note:** No individual class notes are included in this issue as most alumni want to see their news in print. All notes received by April 10 will be included in the June print edition. Lots of adorable babies, weddings, and successes to report!!



# In Other Words

## An “Insiders” Look at the Middle East



**Michael Dorsey '02** completed a master's degree in Middle East studies from American University in Cairo as a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar in 2004-2005. He lived about 300 meters from Midan Tahrir (the Tahrir Square) that was home to recent political protests in Egypt. He said he walked through it a couple of times a day to get to school, buses, and restaurants. “One of the most surprising observations about that area and all of Cairo was the number of military and police dressed in white, protecting tourists and others at nearly every intersection in the city, but particularly in Tahrir square,” he said. “Frequently, we would see barricades and huge trucks full of police moving to different areas around the city, so it was unbelievable to see so many youth filling the area in what was the central feature, really, of the entire country.”

Michael provided the following reflections on recent happenings in the Middle East.

I went for my M.A. in Egypt, post-9/11, with the primary goal of understanding what was going on in the region. I wanted to understand why people felt so desperate that they would kill themselves in order to make a statement. I came away with four key observations:

**(1) Demographics:** a disproportionately large percentage of the population in nearly every country in the region is young. In previous decades, when countries like Egypt and Algeria were experiencing an oil boom, so many children were born in what seemed to be booming economies. Now that so much of the oil has dried up and other parts of their economies have stagnated, the large, young demographic is now reaching an age at which they need to earn a living.

Compounding this, the prospects for future employment for all but the most fortunate youth is very bleak. There are not enough jobs for the existing adults, while the regions teens are reaching workforce age at a record pace. Many are left hoping to work in part-time, government jobs in bloated national bureaucracies, or in menial labor—have no real prospects for work at all. As a result, there are literally tens of millions of youth across the region who know that their career opportunities will be limited. And if you have 100 million young men who don't believe they have a future, they are extremely vulnerable. How difficult is it to drive just a handful of them to become extremely radical, when you have a pool of tens of millions of depressed and impoverished young people?



**(2) Resource Scarcity:** Added to this, the population of countries in the Middle East and North Africa have essentially outgrown the agricultural and water resources available to them. As most of the land-mass in the region is desert and the booming populations now rely on a handful of large rivers for their water supply, the economic challenges are further compounded by this resources scarcity. Without sufficient access to water, everything else in life and business becomes more difficult.

**(3) Information Access:** Importantly, there was also a lack of access to information. During one sociology class I took at the AUC, one topic in our texts explained how information was transmitted among the illiterate citizens of Egypt. Rather than reading newspapers, it was common for people to get their information through cassette tapes that were distributed by local religious leaders. The point of the research was that instead of looking things up on the Internet and challenging the things their governments were saying, many people had one or two limited sources of information and few resources from which they could get more information.

Even for those who could read, information flow was certainly restricted. For example, in Egypt, one of my good friends worked as a writer at one of the English-language newspapers. He had to self-censor everything he wrote ... nothing negative about the government, about Mubarak, or any one of several other sensitive topics was strictly forbidden. It was a well-known reality that the newspaper would be immediately shut down by the national government should it test these restrictions. Now I am sure that things have changed and that this is not the case in every country in the region, but many of the things we take for granted about information flow were not true in Egypt and other parts of the region.

**(4) Regime Incentives:** One thing I really wanted to understand was why many of the people of the Middle East blamed the U.S. for their difficult situation. Granted, there is plenty of room to criticize different aspects of the U.S. foreign and economic policies, but I wanted to understand why the West had become so vilified among the youth of the region. I didn't understand why so many youth directly attributed their troubles to this image of a sinister West. One interesting aspect that I personally came to believe about this phenomenon was that the national governments' incentives were to sustain their own control, and so it was in their interests to point the finger beyond their borders, toward an easy target for blame: the West. Rather than hold themselves accountable for failures that were as much their fault as the West's (i.e., an inability to build strong educational systems and to overcome the challenges of developing solid economies), it was expedient to allow their people to believe that the West deserved the blame for all of it.

Finally, some positivity. While I am not proud of every aspect of our nation's foreign policy toward the region, I am somewhat grateful that our society has helped usher in a profoundly different form of information flow in the region. Now that I live within walking distance of Facebook and near the birthplace of Twitter, Google, and so many other companies ... I am proud that these Western services have created a situation where people can share information among themselves, organize themselves, and create a new form of democratic process that prevents autocrats from preventing their citizens from learning and mobilizing. I realize that the changes underway are frightening to many, but I truly believe that a more well-educated and informed public will make better decisions, regardless of where they are from.

And my number one hope for the region, both for the sake of its inhabitants and for U.S. national security interests, is that the countries of the Middle East and North Africa can begin experiencing economic growth and continue to receive greater access to education and jobs. To the extent that the U.S. can contribute to this development, we will help hundreds of millions of people, and also limit the number of people who are vulnerable to being convinced that it is the fault of the West.

Michael and his wife, Joan (Youngblood) live in Stanford, California. Michael is co-founder and managing director of Sagax Media, providing online marketing for small businesses. He completed study at the Stanford Graduate School of Business in 2010.

