Dear Friends,

As this is my first letter as academic director, I would like to confirm the University's commitment to the Bing Overseas Studies Program. It remains one of our most appreciated programs; it is run by a superb home staff; and it is complemented by dedicated and talented directors and administrators at each of the eleven international centers abroad. My predecessor, Norman Naimark, has left the venture in such remarkable health and innovation that, if I serve only half as well, BOSP will remain one of the key components of a Stanford undergraduate education.

In looking at the program from the outside, and knowing the University's interest in ensuring that more and more students take the opportunity to study abroad (about 50% of our students currently do so), it seems apparent that there are possibilities to strengthen our offerings even further. I am currently going through the process of discussing ideas with BOSP's various advisory committees, the invaluable Advisory Council of alums, and senior administrators in the university. All the current centers are performing excellently on behalf of our students, and we need to maintain their level of support. However it is not clear that there is a complete balance in our offerings. We are an outstanding global university. Yet about two thirds of our students studying abroad do so at the European centers (though Europe represents about 6% of the world’s population), while we have no significant presence in the rapidly expanding countries like India and Brazil, in the crucial area of the Islamic Middle East, in sub-Saharan Africa (besides Cape Town) and so on. A recent article in Dartmouth Review (May 3, 2010) articulated very succinctly the situation that we, Dartmouth and other excellent overseas programs face as we reach a mature and well-maintained status of our efforts. In the current pressing financial times, it would clearly require significant resources to expand our offerings while at the same time maintaining our current centers on which the whole program is based, and I see my role as initiating discussions with these ideas in mind. We continually accept and consider all positive suggestions, so please do feel free to drop me a line if you have any comments at overseasstudies@stanford.edu.

Currently, as I write to you, I am spending a lot of my time as the faculty-in-residence at the Oxford Center, having previously participated in the same position at Kyoto (1997) and Oxford (2001). As then, I appreciate highly the unique interaction that we faculty can experience with our remarkable undergraduates. Some of those previous encounters have even resulted in the formation of lifelong friendships, and I expect the same on this occasion. It is noticeable that the economic situation has necessitated many budgetary savings which I believe we have overcome by more careful and detailed planning of the curriculum and our activities. And I do believe that I am convincing my class that soccer (football) is a key element of English society! Oxford alums in turn will be pleased to know that Geoffrey Tyack, Stephanie Williams, Teo Reynoso, and now Rebecca Chaplin are thriving and that Ahmed’s canteen truck is still working strongly on the High Street.

In the coming newsletters, I will discuss other important issues which BOSP faces. It is with great enthusiasm that I take on this responsibility and I would like to acknowledge again the outstanding assistance and support that I am receiving from all our staff, our various committee members, our new Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Harry Elam, our excellent faculty and alums, of course our most important constituency, our students themselves.

Best regards,

Robert Sinclair
The Burke Family Director of the Bing Overseas Studies Program
Lessons in Stone

Kenneth A. Schultz (AM ’93 and Ph.D. ’96, Political Science) is Professor of Political Science, Director of Stanford’s undergraduate Program in International Relations (IR), and a member of BOSP’s Advisory Council. Here he writes for Abroad, adapting a talk presented to graduates of the IR Program at Commencement last June.

You all know that one of the things making the IR program special is the requirement that our majors spend at least one quarter studying abroad. We believe that a crucial aspect of an international education is to spend some time experiencing life in another country. What the students know, but their relatives and friends may not, is that the Bing Overseas Studies Program here is not just for students, but for faculty as well: every quarter one Stanford faculty member is sent abroad to each of our overseas centers.

So a while back [Autumn, 2008. Ed.], I decided to check out the overseas experience. It made sense for me to go abroad because I wanted to see what it was we were requiring of our majors. And, if I were going to go abroad, it made sense for me to go to Florence because, well, it's Italy and I do love pasta. Just as our students find the overseas experience to be eye-opening and transforming, so it was for me and my family. I'd like to share with you two things that I saw in Florence which really made an impression on me and which are relevant to our proceedings today.

The first was a small observation. As part of a class in art history that I audited alongside the students, we explored some excavations underneath Florence’s magnificent cathedral, the Duomo. Beneath the floor of the cathedral were the remains of past churches at that site. Among the objects uncovered there were two samples of stone, mosaic floor: one was a strikingly beautiful and complex piece of mosaic, showing amazing craftsmanship; the other was simpler and cruder, with less precise cuts in the stone, clearly not made with the same skill. What was remarkable about this display was that the cruder mosaic was made later: it was made by people who came after those who had made the more complex one. What happened? In the disorder and conflict that accompanied the collapse of the Roman Empire, the knowledge and skill—and maybe even the desire—to make beautiful mosaics was lost. We tend to have great faith in human progress and in the forward march of knowledge, but here, literally written in the stones, you could see mankind take a step backward. It was a striking demonstration that knowledge, if not cherished and actively protected, can be lost.

The second realization came after we walked through a gallery of statues outside of the Uffizi museum, which houses an impressive collection of Renaissance art. Here, commemorated in marble, stand many of the great figures who were connected to Florence and made it a center of art and science during the Renaissance: Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Machiavelli, Galileo, and others. As you walk past these statues you can’t help but marvel at what happened there in the 15th and 16th centuries. And as I thought about it, I realized that what connected all of these great people was their obstinate desire to see the world as it truly is, not just how they wanted it to be or how prevailing dogma told them it should be:

- The artists of the Renaissance observed that objects appear to diminish in size as they get farther away, and they revolutionized art by incorporating perspective into their painting and frescoes.
- Machiavelli is remembered for his unflattering prescriptions for what a prince must do to stay in power, but he was describing politics as he saw it—not as he wanted it to be—and in doing so became one of the founders of my own discipline, political science.
- Amerigo Vespucci pored over maps of the known world and determined, based on careful observation, that the land that Columbus had stumbled upon was not Asia, but a previously unknown continent that now bears his name.
- And, most important of all, Galileo made meticulous observations of Jupiter’s moons and the spots on the sun, and by insisting on the meaning of what he saw, overturned our understanding of the universe and humanity’s place within it.

Why do I raise these themes today? Because these two observations underscore some of my fears and hopes for this graduating class and the world they are entering.

As a country and as a people, we face real challenges at home and abroad, challenges that do not have easy solutions but will instead require painful tradeoffs. Can we educate our children and provide services for the needy without encumbering future generations with debt? Can we continue to enjoy the luxuries of modern life and bring others out of poverty without consuming the world’s resources or despoiling the environment? Can we protect ourselves from people that would do us harm without alienating our friends and growing the ranks of our enemies? These are difficult dilemmas, and the right ways to resolve them are sources of debate and increasing polarization in this country. In the face of such conflict, the lesson of the mosaics is a sobering one. They warn us that, at time of political discord at home and threats from abroad, it is all too easy for a society to step backwards: to retreat behind comfortable dogmas and ideologies and, in doing so, discard knowledge that is inconvenient.

I was reminded of this danger a few months ago, when I read an article in The New York Times about the conflict in Iraq. The author had spent several years in Iraq after the US invasion and reflected on what she saw as the major lessons that could inform future foreign policy. The main lesson she drew? That foreign cultures are often complex and hard to understand and that it is a mistake to assume that the American version of democracy is just waiting to spring up in countries like Iraq. My jaw dropped as I read this article. Not because I disagreed with the observation, which was entirely valid. What was distressing was that people had drawn the very same lesson from the Vietnam War three decades earlier. But in the panic after 9/11 and amidst the rush to war, that unwelcome insight was cast aside. It is a tragedy to forget and
then have to relearn such a lesson, especially one that must be purchased at so high a price.

And speaking of lessons purchased at high price, let me turn to the class of 2010… Set against the story of the mosaics is the story of the statues in the Uffizi gallery: people who changed the world by insisting on seeing the world clearly, by elevating observation over dogma. During your time here, we have tried hard not only to teach you about politics, history, and culture, but also how to study them: how to collect and interpret evidence, how to expose theories and ideas to critical analysis, how to build your vision of a better world by starting with a clear vision of the current one. I hope that you hold onto and hone these skills as you go forward, as they may be the most important things you take with you.

In this information age, we are blessed with easy access to facts, but also to assertions, opinions, and rumors masquerading as facts. Sorting out truth from fiction can be hard, and it is easy and comforting to see truth only in those arguments that support your preexisting views—just as it would have been easier for Galileo to deny the implications of what he saw in his telescope. Confronting the challenges that we face with well-reasoned and innovative responses will require people like you to fight this temptation, both in yourself and in others.

The novelist George Orwell famously wrote that “To see what is in front of one’s nose requires a constant struggle.” Class of 2010, we send you out into the world today hopeful and convinced that you are well equipped to join that struggle. And we wish you the best as you do.

Bing Overseas Studies Program Donors 2009-10

We gratefully acknowledge our contributing alumni and alumnae, parents, students, and friends for their generous gifts in support of the Bing Overseas Studies Program.

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Please accept our apologies for any errors in this list; we will be grateful for your calling them to the attention of Irene Kennedy, Executive Director, imk@stanford.edu.

† deceased
A Variation in Pattern

Gene Leonardson, ’62, was a member of Group IV at Stanford in Germany in Beultelsbach, January-June, 1960. Like many others, his group has maintained contact among its members and comes together regularly. In early October, many alums of Group IV came to Stanford for a special, milestone reunion with a varied and successful social and educational program. They were aided by the Alumni Association, which is exploring new ways in which alumni groups are connecting with one another online and in person. Your editor attended one of Germany IV’s events and supports this kind of reunion for groups that prefer, for whatever reason, not to organize a reunion overseas— or would like a variety of reunions. Abroad enthusiastically appreciates the Alumni Association’s assistance in this year’s venture and thanks Leonardson for providing this article.

Something very special happened at Stanford-in-Germany in 1960. There were 68 members of Group IV on The Burg January-June that year. We have told each other many times that those six months we spent together changed our lives and have worked to maintain the relationships.

We began our reunions before most of us graduated in 1962. Beginning with our 30th in 1990, we have come back together every five years, with additional mini-reunions during regular Class of ’62 reunions and at other times. In early October, 2010, we held our 50th-year reunion. Thirty-two members of the original group plus ten spouses attended. We are fortunate to have group members living on and around the Stanford campus who can help make arrangements and host events. The Stanford Alumni Association (SAA) provided significant help with arrangements this past fall. Many of the out-of-towners stayed at the relatively new Stanford Guest House [see http://www.stanford.edu/dept/rde/guesthouse/], which is rather spartan but comfortable and cost-effective. As preparation for the event, Rich Gregory compiled and published the latest edition of “Der Burg Wurd”—terrible German, but a treasured newsletter about the members of the group.

Our activities began with the early arrivers taking a docent-guided walk on the Baylands on Thursday afternoon, followed by dinner at a local restaurant. On Friday, a larger group met for a docent-led tour of the Cantor Arts Center, followed by lunch at the Cool Café at the Cantor. The SAA coordinated arrangements for the afternoon—a lecture by Professor Christophe Crombez on “Germany and the EU Today” followed by a nostalgic chance to enjoy tea and küchen, as we had done each afternoon on The Burg. That evening we met for dinner in a private room at the Faculty Club.

On Saturday we enjoyed our third docent-led activity, this time in the hills, observing the geological peculiarities created by the San Andreas Fault. We returned to campus for lunch in the Palm Court of the Arrillaga Alumni Center. A current Stanford student volunteer, a photographer invited by the SAA, took our group photo. We then convened for commentaries on life by three members of the group. Martha Collins, a well-known poet, introduced and read from her published poetry and then overwhelmed us with a work created for this event that was based on the letters she sent home from Germany. Dan Pierce, who has worked for several years at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, did his best to help us get our minds around nanotechnology. Russ Betts talked and showed slides of the years he spent as head of the World Wildlife Fund in Indonesia which led to his being knighted by the King of Belgium.

Saturday night we partied at the on-campus home of group member Jane Breeden Marmor and her husband, Mike. The reunion concluded with a Sunday brunch at the Palo Alto home of Ellen Friedman Turbow and her husband, Mike (a member of Group III). Ellen herself acted as one of the docents on our two outdoor hikes and helped make arrangements for others at the Cantor.

Here’s some information for other groups considering such a gathering. Any group holding an event on campus must be part of the University or sponsored by someone who is. The Alumni Association sponsored us with skill and good cheer. For this gathering, Dacia Halaschek and others at the association provided significant help by providing current contact information for some stray members of our group, arranging for meeting space, and facilitating contact with campus catering and the Faculty Club. Near the end of the preparations, SAA added a new staff member whose job is to cultivate alumni communities based on shared experiences or interests, beyond class and regional affiliations. This new person is fellow alum, Julius Paras, ’91, Manager of Alumni Affinities & Diversity Outreach, who was on board in time to participate, experience, and learn from our event.

Over the years we have tried to schedule our reunions to encourage maximal attendance. We have considered meeting overseas and have held small reunions at other locations in the U.S., but we have found Stanford to be the best location. Getting the reunion on everyone’s calendars requires an early start, with a survey a year in advance to determine the dates when the most people can attend and preferred locations. Members of our group have enjoyed staying at one location; if you want your group to be housed together, you should check the availability of potential sites before setting the dates. Once the dates are determined and a “save-the-date” announcement and information about housing reservations have been sent, organizers can relax and wait awhile. We have tried to keep the cost of all reunions low. If you decide to meet during the summer, it is possible to stay in a dorm on campus and arrange for meal service for the group. Arrangements for speakers, meeting rooms, meals and refreshments should be made six months in advance; the Alumni Association can help with these. Our on-campus reunions have lasted four days. Because not everyone is able to attend everything, events are priced separately. The final registration form, to be returned with payment for the events the individual (and guest) will attend, should be sent out three months in advance so that the organizers can determine the final meal counts while contracted numbers can still be adjusted.

All of this is a lot of work for the organizers, SAA and other campus partners, and a big time commitment for those who attend. Why do it? Most of us agree that the six months we spent together in Germany significantly affected our lives, expanding our understanding of ourselves and our place in the world. As a result our lives have been richer, we have followed paths we might have missed or avoided, and we have ended up fifty years later as an incredibly diverse and interesting group. As we talk with each other now, we can still remember the individual incidents, experienced day-by-day with other members of the group, which shaped the rest of our lives. Our time together now is a time of wonder as we reflect on what made us what we became and on the fascinating journeys that the other group members have taken.
Top Left: Photographer - Liliane Shannon Hsu ’11, Stanford Program in Beijing, Spring 2010. Pagoda on WeiMing Lake at Peking University.

Top Right: Photographer - Annie Loggins ’11, Stanford Program in Australia, Autumn 2009. Standing on the rocks overlooking the outback at the Undara Volcanic National Park, during a Coastal Forest Ecosystems course.

Learning—of All Kinds—in Berlin

Margaret Jean Kimball, '80 (History), is known to generations of students, faculty, and staff as Maggie Kimball, the University’s Archivist Emerita, the ready and eager source of answers even to the most obscure questions about the University. She also served with distinction as an advisor to students and in 2003 was named a winner of the respected Kenneth J. Cuthbertson Award that recognizes extraordinary contributions to the achievement of the goals of the University. Here she tells us how her study at Stanford in Berlin (January-June, 1978) influenced her life.

In January 1978, a group of Stanford students arrived in West Berlin. I was one of the exhausted undergraduates eager to begin her studies. When I was accepted at Stanford, I hoped my years would include study abroad. I had heard from my older brother and sister what wonderful experiences they had enjoyed at overseas campuses and I wanted to follow their path. Exactly how I ended up at the Berlin campus winter quarter of my sophomore year is a complicated story, but the six months I spent living and studying there changed my life.

Arriving that cold January morning, wearing a coat I quickly knew would never keep me warm, I wondered what I had gotten myself into. Over thirty years later, as I recall many of the wonderful experiences and remarkable professors and fellow students with whom I shared those experiences, I wish I could do it all over again. And perhaps that is why, as an academic advisor for many years, I strongly urge all my students to go overseas.

Living in West Berlin in 1978 was an experience unlike that at any other overseas campus at the time. We were in a city surrounded by a wall, patrolled by armed guards. We were granted temporary residency in West Berlin, which enabled us to travel more easily between the west and the east. And travel back and forth to East Berlin as well as to eastern bloc countries we did. Thanks to Stanford contacts with East Berlin residents, we learned first hand what it was like to live there. We visited museums and bookstores, went to plays, ate in restaurants, and drank coffee in both the west and the east. Certainly the temperament of the two cities was different. The stresses and strains of living in a divided world added a dimension to people’s lives that direct contact with the citizens made it possible to understand.

Classes were interspersed with field trips. Among the cities we visited were Leipzig, Potsdam, East Berlin, and Dresden. In Dresden bombed-out buildings were still evident more than thirty years after the end of the war, evoking a time that I knew only from books. To witness first hand the devastation war had caused was a powerful and immediate history lesson. Evenings and weekends were filled with concerts, operas, lectures, and plays. As part of our music in Berlin class, taught by Professor Paul Robinson, I attended performances of The Marriage of Figaro in East Berlin, Schumann and Brahms songs, Bach’s B-Minor Mass, and The Magic Flute in the west. My experience with such music was extremely limited, and I had never attended a symphony performance, certainly not one by a symphony of Berlin’s caliber. To sit in a prime seat (at student price, mind you) while the Berlin Philharmonie, conducted by Rafael Kubelik, performed Beethoven’s Symphony Number III, The Eroica, was magical. While attending graduate school in Cleveland several years later, the first thing I did was to buy student season tickets to the symphony.

Somewhere, amidst all those activities, I went to class in the Villa, the Villa Muthesius. The dedication of Stanford’s new home for the Berlin campus was held ten days after we arrived, so we considered our group somewhat historical. Spring quarter brought Professor Gordon Craig, renowned historian of Germany, to our campus. For his class, Germany in the Twentieth Century, we read historical works, novels, and plays and listened to captivating lectures. Professor Craig was a dedicated diarist and faithfully recorded that quarter in Berlin. Years later, as University Archivist, when asked questions about our time in Berlin I was able to answer by referring to his volume for that year to supplement my own memories.

Looking back at my 1978 calendar and class notes, it is evident I was busy and intellectually engaged. I cringed a bit rereading my papers, but my notes bring back vivid images of sitting in various rooms in the Villa listening to lectures or discussing readings. I treasure those physical reminders of a past time in my life, but what has stuck with me from my time abroad is less tangible and deeply important to me.

As a child I often eavesdropped on adult conversations and was accused of having elephant ears. While in Berlin, perhaps because I was hearing through the filter of a different language, I became more aware than ever of the importance of careful listening. Hearing what is spoken as well as what is unspoken can be a powerful tool in dealing with others. And in a place where historical events still impacted people on a daily basis, it was important to consider more than just the immediate circumstances. Conditions beyond their control continued to affect people’s lives and dictate choices for decades. Berlin taught me quite dramatically how the layers of history impact us all, even those who choose to ignore or dispute them. But those layers of history exist everywhere and are equally important no matter the place.

I knew the decision to study abroad involved moving out of my comfort zone. My German was not particularly strong and as a result I felt at a disadvantage and probably missed more than I knew. It was a good lesson in humility and in putting to use all means of learning. Reading, listening, and discussing were important, but attending to body language and eye contact and observing the visual landscape were part of my learning process as well. Hand signals came in handy too! In retrospect, I wish I had been more adventuresome with my time abroad than I was, but those two quarters at Stanford in Berlin provided a foundation and a lifetime reminder of what one can learn if you open your mind and your heart. Those wonderful six months gave me tools to live by. And I gained friends I will forever cherish.
Summer in the House of Hope

Teresa Wu, ’10 (Human Biology), studied in Spring, 2009, at BOSP’s Stanford Program in Kyoto, Japan. The Center arranges internships in Japan for all students following their quarter there, and here Teresa tells us what she did and learned that summer.

After three hours of train ride from Kyoto, I was excited to finally arrive at my destination. Kibouno-ie Care Facility for the Disabled, Gunma-ken, Japan, would be the place where I spend the next three months completing an internship—living with, learning from, and doing what I can to help the members of this closely-knit community.

Before coming to Kibouno-ie, I had my heart set on a project that would allow me to work with people with psychological or physiological illnesses, to learn about their environment and the resources available to them, and to understand the challenges they face from their own perspectives. Kibouno-ie, “the family of hope”, offered exactly this opportunity. The Care Facility is a large institution comprising several departments and care centers attending to the needs of different patients. The intensive-care unit in the main hospital provides care for children and adults with severe congenital motor and intelligence deficits, the Oozora Sky Day Care Center hosts young adults with autism, and the Aoi Tori Care Center provides 24-hour supervision and education for children with emotional disturbances.

Many of the patients in the ICU had genetic deletions that left them with missing limbs, inability to blink, and even inability to ingest food from the mouth. Some of my daily responsibilities there, alongside the nurses, included switching the lying positions of the patients on the bed to aid their circulation, changing diapers, feeding patients, singing and talking to them during social hour, and massaging their extremities during physical therapy sessions. The patients who could hear and vocalize would always respond enthusiastically when I talked to them and we would hold delightful “conversations”. Through such genuine socialization, staff and patients formed strong bonds to each other. The patients struggled with ruthless diseases that robbed them of even the ability to perform tasks like chewing. Yet I could feel their contentment and an unceasing desire to thrive under the attentive care of the nurses and doctors.

The patients at Oozora Sky suffered from a range of autistic spectrum disorders, and many needed one-on-one care. The children at Aoi Tori, in comparison, were bright and energetic children who, without outside knowledge, would never easily give the impression that they suffer from any psychological disorders. At Aoi Tori I led daily social activities such as group clean-ups and arts-and-crafts sessions, and encouraged healthy interactions among the children themselves. Here, I witnessed occasional psychological breakdown, but also experienced many invaluable moments when a child overcame a psychological challenge and made triumphant progress.

Yui, a 7-year old girl at Aoi Tori, would not let anybody touch her or even hold her arm. As a toddler, she was severely abused by her biological father, who burnt part of her skin not visible to the public. Yui seemed too small and fragile for her age, and she cried almost every other minute claiming that she was in physical pain. I first approached Yui carefully, wanting to make sure she felt comfortable with me around. As days passed by and we learned more about each other, she slowly opened up and even let me give her pretend shots when we played doctor.

Since I thought we had bonded so well in the past weeks that one sunny day, I decided to take her roller-skating in the facility playground. Yui held my hand excitedly and wanted to go as fast as possible down a small hill. Although I was holding on to her, she seemed to be going faster and faster, and in one split moment, she lost control of the skates and I could not keep my balance as I tried to catch her. The next thing I knew, we both fell. What impressed me, after she fell and dragged me up the small hill to do it again. At this moment, I knew that somewhere in her heart, Yui had overcome a long residing fear—she was able to be a child in the most natural sense, no longer constantly afraid. She had always been brave, and it showed especially at this moment. It is these moments that will forever remain with me, providing unrelenting encouragement.

At Kibouno-ie, I learned in extensive detail about physical therapy and care provided to children and adults with developmental disabilities. Although I was there to help the patients and provide services to them, what I gained from them was so much more than I could ever give in return. Members of the Kibouno-ie family opened my eyes and heart to truly see and feel what life is like for patients suffering from a disease. They taught me the important lesson of empathy and of deep respect for those who are disabled in body but never in mind.

Before I left Japan at the end of my internship period, I received a special card, among other departing gifts from friends at Oozora Sky and Aoi Tori. The card was handmade by Te-chan, my friend, who suffered at an early age from poliomyelitis that left him nearly paralyzed in the arms and completely paralyzed in the lower half of his body. It took him one and a half hours to type up the two-sentence message he had for me on the card. It read in Japanese, “Teresa, fighting! We are waiting for you to come back to Oozora Sky as a doctor one day.”

Te-chan was battling a disease that threatened his life everyday, yet he still encouraged me, with such optimism, to look forward and reach my goals. He is my role model, as are many other people I have had contact with at Kibouno-ie.

Germany VII at Landgut Burg Fifty Years Later

Alums of Germany VII are asked to save August 30-September 1 (inclusive), for a fiftieth-anniversary reunion at Landgut Burg in Beutelsbach. For further information contact Linda Cook Hickman at lindacook.hickman@stanfordalumni.org.

Jason Brown ’12
Thoughts from Cape Town

Mimi Chau, '11, Anthropology and Human Biology, recently spent a quarter at BOSP's new center in Cape Town. Here she tells us in poetic form why she went and what she learned.

What do you hope for?
The assignment asked.
I wrote a line or two on digital paper
and off it went
binary bits flying,
across interwebs spun by spidery proxies
past oceans underneath
and landing in a box
labeled Janice McMillan
coordinator of service learning experience.

Untranslate from binary and my line or two read
“I like compassionate action” --
In whatever way that meant
“and I would like to be helpful” --
In whatever way that meant
“I like kids too” I ended
“And helping.”
“Oh and most of all I would like to be helpful.”
Thank you.

And so I came to South Africa,
with an idea that I could help
with what
I did not know.
and how,
I also did not know.

This is how my time began,
And it is also here I begin
my service to you
as I try to teach my learnings.

Help
The word is a cry of distress,
four small letters wrapped around a sentiment of vulnerability.
Letters creating a dark chasm open for all to see.
Help me.
Those who shout help are weak,
isolated to a cliff on the other side of a world
divided by an arbitrary line,
where north and south are determined
by institutions of money
first and third defined
by biased histories of Enlightenment
brought by those who felt like they wanted to help.

On the other side of the chasm
green grass grows
and those who build bridges for other to cross
are touted as heroes
champions of morality,
principled and righteous
They are the pioneers
bringing civilization
to the weak,
developing infrastructure
for those who know none.
They are consultants to the ignorant
leading in the most honorable way.

Little four letter word help
carves canyons as a raging river,
coursing through a terrain
dotted with road signs:
100 kilometers to “Power Dynamics”
veer right towards “Tradition”
and by all means, keep left.
A ruthless river
bubbling over with race relations
creating a bottomless pit of subterranean history
separating on two sides
opposite each other
those who cry help
and those who give it.

Who dares to step out
on the rickety suspension bridge
landing first on the bruise
all purple and blue
formed by the overbearing caution
of the self awareness
of the consciousness
of oneself
as a privileged
educated
foreigner?

Who dares cross unsteadily
when the path is riddled by gaping boards
created by apartheid education
gripping rope thread-bare from
millions of learners
grasping numbers
given too little
too late
reading books
too old
for their age?

Who dares to stand in the middle
of the rickety suspension bridge
when swarms of mosquitoes
buzz around
labeled politics
labeled history
labeled injustice
drain the blood of the hope
that someday, one day
maybe
something can change?
I do.
Insecurity breeds unstable footsteps,
so if you take the first step and fall,
no need to catch yourself
for bruises fade and cuts heal.
In the midst of stumbling
understand everyone fails,
you don’t have to be privileged, educated, or foreign.
When you get back up smile and walk on knowing
no matter how you bend your knee
everyone else knows how to bend their knee in the same way.
We all share a common joint
mutual understanding of humanity.

I do.
Bantu boards eventually mended
by democratic perseverance will allow you to walk steadily
Remember to link arms
and don’t look down unless it is to ensure steady footing.
Don’t step too confidently unless you know your way
and when the rope seems too bare offer a hand instead.
Together promise each other you are going somewhere better than here.
This is all we can hope for.

I do.
Mosquito repellents wear off eventually
but stagnant waters are the least deep
sprinkle it with dirt and plant a seed in its stead.
Draw clean water from the reservoir named Resilience
which is shared by many in neighborhoods called “locations”
in houses not “lived in”
but merely “stayed at”
who quench their dying thirst with the cooling nectar of water
saved for the young pumped by the old
driven by a hope that one day, someday something will change.

Help
A four letter word no longer than a dash between two ideas,
shorter than a pause preceding each breath.
A word which gives as much as it takes,
a simple word marinated in sweet, sticky, salty, sauce grilled to perfection and eaten among friends.

“Help me.
For all I want to do is help you.
Funny though in the end, how much you have helped me.”
Top: Photographer - Alexei Koseff ’12, Stanford Program in Madrid, Winter and Spring 2009-10. Marta Hanson examines Salvador Dalí’s Woman at the Window at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid for an art history class.

Oxford Instructor Emma Plaskitt Wins Annual BOSP Teaching Award

Timothy Verdon, instructor in Florence, won BOSP’s first Teaching Award for 2007-08, and he was followed by Jochen Wohlfeil, Berlin, for 2008-09. Here is news about the latest winner.

Dr. Emma Plaskitt completed her doctorate on eighteenth-century women’s writing at Merton College, Oxford, not long after she began teaching at BOSP’s Thomas and Janet Montag Centre for Overseas Studies in Oxford. She had already acquired extensive teaching experience by tutoring Oxford undergraduates in English Literature over a wide range of genres and periods, and from the beginning she received glowing reports from Stanford students. Since 2000 she has taught tutorials to between one and three students almost every term, mainly on aspects of 18th- and 19th-century literature, but also on certain 20th-century topics, including children’s literature, fantasy literature, and the works of C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, et al. Emma’s students praise her as a warm, engaging and understanding tutor who sets very high academic standards and expects them to read copiously, both in the primary and secondary literature. Director Geoffrey Tyack adds that she encourages discussion and is respectful of students’ opinions, but is critical where necessary, and helps the students to improve both their writing style and their powers of critical analysis. “All in all she is one of our most successful tutors, and many Stanford students have benefited greatly from being taught by her,” says Tyack.

In addition to offering one-on-one tutorials, Dr. Plaskitt has also taught classes at the Center: on Romantic Literature (originally jointly with students from St Catherine’s College); on Jane Austen and other Women Writers; on the Victorian Novel; and on ‘the Novel of Sensation’ (from Wilkie Collins to Bram Stoker via Robert Louis Stevenson and Oscar Wilde). It is quite rare for an Oxford tutor to make the transition to organizing and teaching a class for Stanford students, but students’ evaluations make it clear that she has done so with great success: ‘Emma is pretty much the ideal teacher. She is caring and attentive to her students’ needs. She knows her subject backwards … Emma is a wonderful person and professor. She is respectful, flexible, interesting and inspiring … Emma’s awesome. I’d never taken an English class before and this has gotten me hooked on them … Emma is one of the reasons that my experience at the Stanford in Oxford Centre has been so wonderful!’ (selected comments from her Spring 2009 course evaluations).

Bing Overseas Studies Program is committed to encouraging, offering, and recognizing superior teaching. Thus we are proud to recognize Dr. Emma Plaskitt with BOSP’s Teaching Award for 2009-10.

WASC Wants to Hear from BOSP Alums!

David Boyer, ’95 (Economics and Anthropology), studied at Stanford in Santiago in Autumn and Winter, 1993-94, and is now an Associate Director of the Bing Overseas Studies Program. Here he tells us about BOSP’s role in Stanford’s accreditation and invites your participation.

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) is an organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education that conducts accreditation reviews of schools, both public and private, from kindergarten through senior-college levels. The primary goals of WASC, as taken from its website, are to 1) promote institutional engagement with issues of educational effectiveness and student learning, 2) develop a culture of evidence that informs decision-making, and 3) foster active interchange among public and independent institutions. As part of WASC’s regular review of all institutions within its jurisdiction, Stanford is currently undergoing a multi-year, comprehensive reaccreditation.

Stanford’s commitment to liberal education and public service dates back to the university’s Founding Grant, which states that the institution’s objectives are to qualify students for personal success and direct usefulness in life and to promote the public welfare by exercising an influence on behalf of humanity and civilization. This review of the University’s accreditation enables it to ensure that it continues to provide the highest quality education to our students and maintain our commitment to improve society.

The Bing Overseas Studies Program (BOSP) has been an active participant in and object of study during this WASC review. A significant part of the University’s assessment has involved evaluating different aspects of the experiences of students who have participated in BOSP’s academic programs.

We would like to ask assistance from BOSP’s alumni with this comprehensive assessment related to WASC. We ask that you take just a few minutes of your time to complete a brief questionnaire. Regarding your undergraduate overseas experience with Stanford. Your thoughtful responses to the questionnaire will allow us to improve our programs and opportunities for future generations of students. Your input is invaluable to Stanford’s reaccreditation efforts; we need your thoughts. This questionnaire may be completed online at:

http://bosp.stanford.edu/abroad/survey

We encourage you to complete this questionnaire as soon as possible and no later than April 15, 2011. Please address any questions to David Boyer, Associate Director of BOSP, at david.boyer@stanford.edu. For a comprehensive look at the University’s reaccreditation initiatives, please visit http://wasc.stanford.edu. BOSP sincerely thanks you for your time and input.

All-Oxford Reunion Planned for 2011

David Arulanantham, ’00, chairs the Stanford-in-Oxford Alumni Council. He and his colleague, Emily Petroski ’99 (Oxford Fall, 1997), along with other members of the Council and with support from the Thomas and Janet Montag Centre for Overseas Studies in Oxford, are planning a reunion in Oxford that will be open to all alumni of Stanford in Oxford.

The Stanford in Oxford Council and the Bing Overseas Studies Program look forward to welcoming alumni back to Oxford for the Program’s first ever reunion, from Thursday, September 1, to Saturday, September 3, 2011. We hope that the reunion will prove to be as unforgettable as the time you spent in Oxford.

Indeed, our goals for the reunion include the following: to enable you to re-connect with your classmates; to experience Oxford as you did while you were students there; to offer an academically and culturally enriching program; and to open the doors of 65 High Street to you once again. Cheers to an amazing reunion, and the fondest of memories of those who have participated in the Stanford in Oxford Program since its inception. An e-mail message with more information will be sent soon to all alumni of Stanford in Oxford. If you are a former Oxford student without an e-mail address, we will send information via regular mail.
**Beutelsbach Reunion in Big Sky Country**

*Tim Gillespie, ‘71, member of Group XXIII in Beutelsbach (July-December, 1969), and others in his group enjoyed an unusual reunion —inspiration for others? Here Tim tells us of the group’s recent gathering in an imaginative new venue.*

Last summer, for their third reunion in three years, members of the Stanford-in-Germany Gruppe XXIII tribe met for a reunion in Missoula, Montana, thanks to the hospitality of Dana Headapohl (‘72), her husband Lance Martin (‘69), and their extended clan. We rendezvoused on their property on the banks of the Bitterroot River, the acreage dotted with colorful tents for campers, blooming plants, hanging lamps, llamas, goats and dogs. Music from 1969 played continually from the big porch. Dancing broke out regularly. Conversation was unaltering. The Montana sky was as big as advertised.

Gruppe XXIII veterans—and assorted children, grandchildren, spouses, partners and friends—came from North Carolina, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, Minnesota, Texas, Washington, Oregon, and California. Forty people joined the lively, far-flung, multi-generational congregation at one time or another during the festivities. And festive it was. From the Headapohl homestead, people ventured out for multiple events over the three-day moveable feast.

Those arriving Thursday afternoon caught up, took a lesson in African drumming from a local performer, and ate. (During the entire three days, unending platters of wurst, sauerkraut and other delectables appeared as different group members jockeyed the grill and stove.) Friday was rich with activity. In the morning, one crew had a yoga session; others took a fly-fishing lesson with a local guide. In the afternoon, many rafted down the Alberton Gorge. Saturday began with a 6 a.m. hike up to the “M” on the hillside above the University of Montana campus. A big group met for breakfast at Food for Thought café. Then most of us spent the morning downtown at the farmers and crafts markets along the Clark Fork River. In the afternoon, some folks took Dana’s Lazy Mama River Float Challenge. Others fished and had a porch-side blues jam.

Our final barbeque of salmon and more feastings on friendship unfolded that evening. Margaret Hasse (‘71) graced the group with a reading from her latest book, *Milk and Tides*. Tod Tolan (‘71) brought along a copy of his anthology, *Travels with Rico*, and various group members read selections from the book. We toasted aloud each person in the group by name, present and absent, a fitting celebration for the experience we shared together 41 years ago. Sunday morning, those still in town shared a farewell breakfast of huckleberry pancakes. We left full of food and fellowship and gratitude for the gifts of longtime friendship. The only unfulfilled event was a planned trip to Big Sky Brewing; our agenda proved too packed. To redress this oversight, we’ve vowed to lift bottles of Moose Drool at our next get-together.

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**In Memoriam**

Irene Blumenthal was Associate Director of then “Stanford Overseas Campuses” for a time in the 1960s and spent several quarters in Beutelsbach as resident director and faculty member. *Abroad* has just learned that she passed away on January 3, 2008, a few days short of her 89th birthday.

In Beutelsbach, the Krauter family was among the best known and most loved of the Beutelsbach families that welcomed generations of Stanford students into their homes. *Abroad* has recently learned that Frau Krauter (“Mutti” Krauter, as so many knew her) passed away last year. Her beloved husband, Albert, preceded her in death in 2002. We send condolences to their children, Dorle and Fritz, who still maintain contact with many of those students.

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Questions about the Bing Overseas Studies Program?

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http://bosp.stanford.edu/abroad

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